

# THE LEADER LETTER

Leading with *STRENGTH*

clemmergroup.com



Online Version

View PDF Version

Past Issues

Practical Leadership Blog

## In this issue...

February 2013, Issue 119

[Coaching Skills Have a Huge Impact on Employee Engagement](#)

[The Enormous Coaching Skills Gap](#)

[What's Really Creating the Coaching Skills Gap](#)

[Six Steps to a Coaching Culture with Exceptional Leaders](#)

[Learning More about The Extraordinary Coach](#)

[Thoughts That Make You Go Hmm on... Becoming an Extraordinary Coach](#)

[Reflecting and Refocusing in Rewriting my LinkedIn Profile](#)

[Tweet Reading: Recommended Online Resources](#)

[Read The Leader Letter in Twice Weekly Installments](#)

[Feedback and Follow-Up](#)

## FEBRUARY 2013, ISSUE 119

Welcome to the coaching issue. My January [blogs](#) were built around the "the month of the coach." This followed our certification for Zenger Folkman's very powerful and unique **Extraordinary Coach** development process in early January.

As with so many other elements of leadership and organization development, there are a myriad of theories, frameworks, and approaches to developing coaching skills. The key question is what really works?



In their insightful white paper, "*Bringing Science to the Art of Coaching*," Jack Zenger and Kathleen Stinnett apply research from a variety of allied disciplines, draw lessons learned from other successful initiatives that are closely related to coaching, and use research conducted in business and public service organizations.

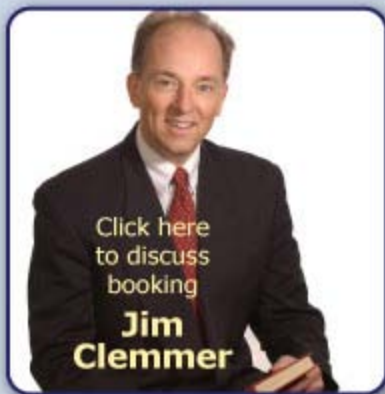
The key questions Jack and Kathleen address are:

- To what degree does coaching really pay off? Or, is this just one more in a long line of management fads?
- How can we increase the effectiveness of each coaching session?
- How can the process of coaching be made more consistent?
- What is the appropriate goal for coaching, and how much change can we expect?
- What is it about the coaches' personality or behavior that makes the most positive impact?

### Permission to Reprint

You may **reprint any items** from *The Leader Letter* in your own printed publication or e-newsletter as long as you include this paragraph:

"Reprinted with permission from *The Leader Letter*, Jim Clemmer's free e-newsletter. For almost thirty years, Jim's 2,000 + practical leadership presentations and workshops/retreats, seven bestselling books, columns, and newsletters have been helping hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. His web site is [www.clemmergroup.com](http://www.clemmergroup.com)."



This white paper provides an overview of a few of the tools and techniques:

- Coaching Topic Checklist
- Coaching Feedback Form
- FUEL model
- Stages in the coaching for change process
- 3 keys to Motivational Interviews

You can read or download a copy of "*Bringing Science to the Art of Coaching*" at [The Leadership Resource Center](http://The Leadership Resource Center). Once you're registered (free), click on "Articles/White Papers" and scroll down to *The Extraordinary Coach* section.

I'll be bringing key lessons learned from ZF's years of implementing this approach in next week's complimentary webinar on [\*Building Extraordinary Coaching Skills: Six Steps to a Coaching Culture with Exceptional Leaders\*](#). I am also providing a complimentary executive briefing on [\*Developing Exceptional Leaders and Coaches: Strengths-Based Leadership and Coaching Skills Development\*](#) on March 19 at The Holiday Inn Toronto Airport East, Dixon Road in Toronto.

## COACHING SKILLS HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

In his introduction to [\*The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow\*](#), bestselling leadership author and executive coach, Marshall Goldsmith, points out, **"a leader who is an adept coach can greatly enhance the organization's success; one who dabbles and doesn't take the process seriously can cause harm."**

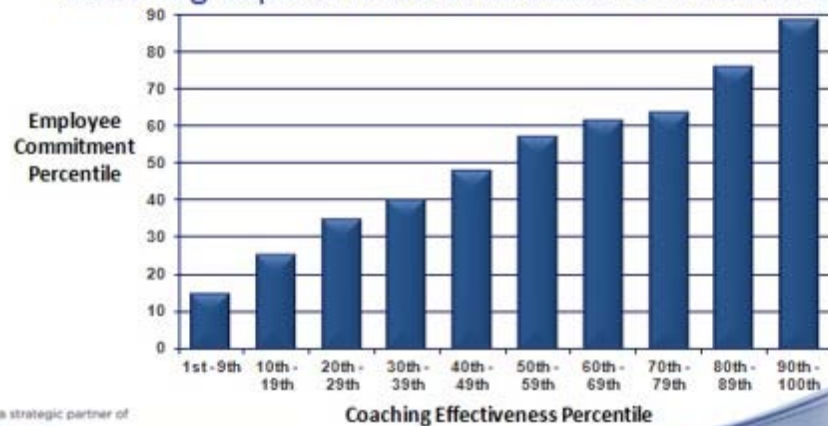
Marshall's insight is especially true when it comes to the critical issue of employee engagement. Research from Zenger Folkman's database of 250,000 multi-rater feedback surveys shows these huge differences in results produced by the worst and the best coaches:

click to enlarge



# Coaching Effectiveness and Employee Engagement/Commitment

Employees whose managers are more effective at coaching express more satisfaction and commitment



a strategic partner of



ZENGER | FOLKMAN



clemmergroup.com

Leaders who are highly effective coaches have employees who are almost 8 times more engaged than the worst coaches! Even the difference between good coaches at the 50th percentile and great coaches (90th percentile) is vast.

Here are other results our research shows are produced by extraordinary coaches:

- Over 3 times more willingness to "go the extra mile" for the team or organization.
- 2.5 times higher levels of "satisfaction with my involvement in decisions that affect my work."
- More than double the number of employees who were inspired to "put forth a great deal of effort every day."
- Twice as high ratings of supervisor effectiveness.
- Half as many employees thinking about quitting.
- Dramatically higher levels of customer service and satisfaction.

We've also found that all known drivers of productivity can be increased through improved coaching. As the leading management thinker, Peter Drucker, observed "*A 10% increase of productivity would double the profits of most organizations.*"

With this high impact on results coaching is often mislabelled as a "soft skill." Coaching is a vital leadership skill that produces very hard and tangible results!

## THE ENORMOUS COACHING SKILLS GAP

A study on the need for improved coaching skills development conducted by the consulting firm, CO2 Partners, found that only 11% of employees listed their supervisors when asked "**whom do you turn to for advice on problems at work?**"



Organizational surveys show that most managers believe they are providing coaching to employees and score themselves high. However, most employees state they receive little coaching from their leaders and score their leaders low.

Leaders often fall into these common coaching traps:

- Trapped by reactive problem solving that puts out short-term fires and doesn't build long-term personal, team, or organization capabilities.
- Jumping into coaching discussions with little planning and no framework to guide the conversation.
- Confusing giving advice/feedback with coaching.
- Perpetuating the Manager-Employee Dependence Cycle: Employee complains about what's not working, hopes for solutions and advice from the manager, and expects him or her to own the issue. The manager listens to the problem, gives advice, and expects results from the employee.
- Climbing **The Ladder of Inference** way too quickly; rapidly stepping up from data/observations, to adding meaning, making assumptions, jumping to conclusions, adopting beliefs, and taking actions that often damages relationships and doesn't deal with the root issue.
- Spending 85 - 90% of conversations with employees on project or status updates and very little time on coaching and developing. Employees want a 50/50 ratio.
- Confusing performance appraisal/management with performance coaching.

It's very easy to slip into these traps without realizing it. Which ones ensnare you? How about your organization's supervisors and managers? What's your coaching culture?

Coaching has become a popular "leaderspeak" buzzword. Like driving skills, many managers rate the quality and quantity of their coaching much higher than the people around them do.



## WHAT'S REALLY CREATING THE COACHING SKILLS GAP

When asked why they aren't providing more coaching, managers will typically say: I am overwhelmed and don't have enough time; my boss doesn't coach me; or, my employees don't need coaching. Our research shows these are excuses coming from low



performing leaders without coaching mindsets on wobbly foundations of weak coaching skills. Within the very same organization conditions and culture, working for the same senior leaders, with the same set of employees, exceptional leaders provide extraordinary coaching -- and deliver dramatically higher performance results than their lesser skilled peers.

Here are 4 main reasons many managers don't develop their coaching skills:

- Avoiding potentially uncomfortable discussions  
Like the moose-on-the-table or the elephant-in-the-room, it's often easier to avoid conversations that could be difficult.
- Insecure about the true value of his or her coaching  
Effective performance or career coaching often requires skill development and a framework to guide the conversation. Many managers have had little training and often don't have a process to follow.
- Misunderstanding the true nature of good coaching  
Popular images of coaching often come from sports where the coach is a seasoned veteran dispensing pearls of wisdom, providing advice, or giving instructive feedback. That's vastly different than the best practices of leaders in performance or career coaching.
- Direct reports seldom ask for it  
Leaders focus on energizing people to achieve results. Most of their conversations with their direct reports are short-term progress reviews, updates, and driving for results. In this typical culture, asking for coaching support feels inappropriate.

How are your coaching skills? How's your coaching culture? How do you know?

## SIX STEPS TO A COACHING CULTURE WITH EXCEPTIONAL LEADERS

In our *Extraordinary Coach* development system we define coaching as interactions that help the individual being coached to expand awareness, discover superior solutions, and make and implement better decisions. This is a broad leadership skill set that is most often used in career and performance coaching.



Extraordinary coaches can exist in an ordinary or even low performance culture. But that's fairly rare. The exponential benefits of outstanding coaching skills -- engaged employees, lower turnover, increased retention, higher quality, sales, service, and profits -- are dramatically magnified when there's a coaching culture full of exceptional leaders.

We've found 6 key steps lead to a coaching culture full of exceptional leaders:

- Set expectations that leaders will coach.
- Create structures and processes for coaches to follow.
- Provide coaching skill development.
- Bring science and other best practices to coaching.
- Increase "pull" opportunities and build organization capabilities.
- Monitor, measure, and strengthen coaching accountability.

I'll cover how to implement these steps in my complimentary (no charge) webinar on February 12, [\*\*Building Extraordinary Coaching Skills: Six Steps to a Coaching Culture with Exceptional Leaders.\*\*](#)

I'll also cover these points as well as overview our very powerful [\*\*Strengths-Based Leadership Development System\*\*](#) at a complimentary executive briefing on March 19 at The Holiday Inn Toronto Airport East, Dixon Road in Toronto. Click on [\*\*Developing Exceptional Leaders and Coaches: Strengths-Based Leadership and Coaching Skills Development\*\*](#) for more information and to register. Seats are limited.

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT *THE EXTRAORDINARY COACH*

There's been a big surge in coaching over the past decade. Part of this is driven by the pressing need for increasing bench strength and succession planning. It's also very clear that leaders with strong coaching skills have dramatically higher levels of employee engagement, productivity, safety, and customer service.



Scott Schweyer, Ed Haltrecht, and I were delighted to kick off 2013 at Zenger Folkman's international partners conference at the beautiful Swiss Zermatt Resort in Utah's scenic Rocky Mountains. We networked, exchanged best practices, and learned about ZF's new leadership research and development. We just missed the Sundance Film Festival later in January. Since I am not an autograph hound and don't want to be a paparazzi selling photos, missing the Festival was a good thing for getting hotel rooms and avoiding the crowds!

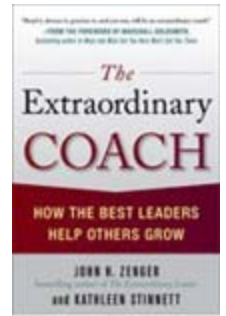
As we continue developing our strategic partnership with Zenger Folkman, a highlight of our week in Utah was being certified to deliver their highly effective development system called ***The Extraordinary Coach***. When it was published a few years ago I reviewed Zenger Folkman's book, [\*The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow\*](#). Long before Jack Zenger and I had any thoughts of forming a strategic partnership I fell in love with this powerful body of work. The more we're learning about the one and two-day versions of *The Extraordinary Coach* skill building system the more we see just how exceptional and highly effective it is. It's a unique combination of solid research, practical frameworks, and hands-on skill building.

If you're looking to develop coaching skills in yourself or others, I highly recommend you get a copy of the book. Click on [\*The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow\*](#) for a look at ZF's definition of coaching, what gets in the way of coaching, how "no time for coaching" doesn't hold water, the coaching mind and skill set, the FUEL coaching framework, and three guidelines for providing personalized feedback.

We're gearing up to introduce *The Extraordinary Coach* skills development system to Canada over the next few months. Registration is still open for my one hour complimentary (no charge) February 12 webcast [\*Building Extraordinary Coaching Skills: Six Steps to a Coaching Culture with Exceptional Leaders\*](#). Our no-charge webcasts have been quite popular -- we can always sell free! Webcast connections are limited so [register now](#).

## THOUGHTS THAT MAKE YOU GO HMMM ON... BECOMING AN EXTRAORDINARY COACH

Here are a few gems from [\*The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow\*](#).



"Coaching is the most tangible expression of the leader's personal commitment to the development of an employee. It sends a far more powerful message than merely budgeting money to allow an employee to attend some development program."

"All the known drivers of productivity can be increased through the leader's coaching. Peter Drucker hypothesized that if an organization could increase employee productivity by 10 percent, the organization's profits would double."

"If the manager's behavior is to provide advice and solve her employees' problems, the systemic response from her employees is likely to include waiting to be told the right 'answer' by the manager and/or going to the manager for advice on problems ... we will end up reinforcing this dependent system. Employees will expect managers to solve their problems and will also expect the managers to ultimately be responsible for their results (since it was the manager's advice that they followed)."

"A manager's mindset might be, 'I can get more done by controlling and directing,' whereas a coach's mindset might be, 'I can get more done by growing my employees and gaining their commitment.' The mindset must precede the skill set."

"Managers will very often describe the regular one-on-one meetings they have with employees as coaching discussions. The employees, on the other hand, report that 90 percent of the time they spend with the manager focuses on project status updates and virtually never describe that event as coaching ... In our interviews with the front-line workers, they would prefer to have 50 percent of the time spent on project updates and specific performance issues, and the other half spent on issues involving their growth and career development."



## REFLECTING AND REFOCUSING IN REWRITING MY LINKEDIN PROFILE

I've long found January to be a great time of year for reflecting on the journey so far and looking ahead to what direction I'd like to take in the coming year. This year's R & R time coincided nicely with revising my LinkedIn profile.



LinkedIn has become a major tool for connecting to people I've presented to in conference keynotes, workshop participants, coaching Clients, executive retreat and team building members, and readers of my books and blog. Since it's all about personal connections and relationships it was time to change my profile from a third person marketing pitch about what we do to a more personal first person format.

My profile starts with my first sales position in 1974. As I reviewed each step in my career it became an excellent way to reflect on career highlights and key themes. This culminated in the Summary at the top of my profile. Those four short paragraphs were the most difficult to write. How do I boil out the key elements of nearly 40 years of work pursuing my passion for leadership, team, and organization development?

Revising The CLEMMER Group section in a short summary was also a challenge. Our programs and services have evolved a huge amount since 1994. Our keynotes, workshops, retreats, team building, coaching, and customized training continue to grow and deepen. And our exciting new partnership with Zenger Folkman and their revolutionary [Strengths-Based Leadership Development System](#) and coaching skills is adding a whole new dimension to our work.

Check out my LinkedIn profile at <http://ca.linkedin.com/in/jimclemmer>. If we're not already connected, send me an invitation to connect and we can stay in touch through this fast growing and increasingly popular network.

## TWEET READING: RECOMMENDED ONLINE RESOURCES

This section summarizes last month's LinkedIn Updates and Twitter Tweets about online articles or blog posts that I've flagged as worth reading. These are usually posted on weekends when I am doing much of my reading for research, learning, or leisure.



My original tweet commenting on the article precedes each title and descriptor from the original source:

We need to start leadership development much earlier. Unlearning bad habits is a lot harder than forming effective skills in the beginning.

["We Wait Too Long to Train Our Leaders"](#) - Jack Zenger,  
*Harvard Business Review*  
<http://blogs.hbr.org>

*"Practicing anything mildly important, like say skiing or golf, without training is inadvisable. The fact that so many of your managers are practicing leadership without training should alarm you. Here are three reasons why."*

This research shows the incredible impact of highly effective leaders and highlights how five top companies are building leadership talent.

["40 Best Companies for Leaders 2013"](#) - JP Donlon  
<http://chiefexecutive.net>

*"...quoting Fortune's Thomas Stewart: 'The truth is that no one factor makes a company admirable; but if you were forced to pick the one that makes the most difference, you'd pick leadership.'"*

Jane provides a succinct summary of what culture is and is not, followed by three of the sloppiest ideas that need to be changed.

["HR's Sloppy Thinking on Culture"](#) - Jane Watson  
<http://www.talentvanguard.com>

*"Prescriptions for how we can change our organization's culture are tossed around like recipes, with barely a mention of what we mean when we say 'culture'. This is not just about semantics. It's actually really important."*

## **READ THE LEADER LETTER IN TWICE WEEKLY INSTALLMENTS**

The items in each month's issue of **The Leader Letter** are first published in my twice weekly [blog](#) during the previous month.



If you read each blog post (or issue of *The Leader Letter*) as it's published over twelve months you'll have read the equivalent of one of my books. And you'll pick up a few practical leadership tips that help you use time more strategically and tame your E-Beast!

## FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW-UP

I am always delighted to hear from readers of *The Leader Letter* with feedback, reflections, suggestions, or differing points of view. Nobody is ever identified in *The Leader Letter* without their permission. I am also happy to explore customized, in-house adaptations of any of my material for your team or organization. Drop me an e-mail at [Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net](mailto:Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net) or connect with me on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#), or my [blog](#)!

**Keep learning, laughing, loving, and leading - living life just for the L of it!!**

Jim



Please post or forward this newsletter to colleagues, Clients, or associates you think might be interested - or on a 'need-to-grow' basis. If you received this newsletter from someone else, and would like to subscribe, click on the link below: [www.clemmergroup.com/newsletter](http://www.clemmergroup.com/newsletter)

The CLEMMER Group  
10 Pioneer Drive, Suite 105, Kitchener ON N2P 2A4  
Phone: (519) 748-1044 ~ Fax: (519) 748-5813  
E-mail: [service@clemmer.net](mailto:service@clemmer.net)  
<http://www.clemmergroup.com>