



## Issue 143 - February 2015

### The Leader Letter

As I was preparing my slides for this month's **coaching and leadership development webcast** I rediscovered a powerful description of coaching I'd cited decades ago in one of my first books. In *A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference*, Nancy Austin and Tom Peters write,

"Coaching is the process of enabling others to act, of building on their strengths ... to coach is to facilitate, which literally means 'to make easy' -- not less demanding, less exciting or less intense, but less discouraging, less bound up with excessive controls ... Coaching is face-to-face leadership that pulls together people ... encourages them to step up to responsibility and continued achievement, and treats them as full-scale partners and contributors."

Ideally these skills start with executives who model and teach them to be managers and supervisors. Coaching is not something the top can order the middle to do for the bottom.

Too many managers still see performance management as black or white. Tough, hard-nosed, platoon-sergeant discipline often colors the gloomy side of performance management. At its darkest, this involves fear, punishment, and pushing forcefully for results. The alternative, traditional managers believe, is a "country club" style of leadership. This lighter approach is more concerned with relationships and team spirit than with getting the job done. It's a soft, easy-going environment with lots of socializing and fun -- and where performance slips. Where seldom is heard a negative word -- and results slide through the cracks.



That either/or view of performance management is a cop-out. The most effective organizations are filled with leaders who have mastered the skill of holding people accountable to tough, uncompromising standards and stretch goals while inspiring teamwork and building strengths.

This issue provides the latest research and how to methods for coaching, developing, and effectively leading for peak performance. You'll find webinars, implementation steps, video clips, and upcoming events to balance driving for higher performance and with coaching and developing those you lead.

Extraordinary leader coaches make clear what's expected and follow up. They emphasize the positive and look for ways to reinforce the behavior they want more of. And when things get off-track, as they inevitably will, strong coaches know how to step on toes without messing up anybody's shoeshine.

## Great Coaches Inspire Dramatically Higher Extra Effort

Many organizations have increased their efforts to strengthen the coaching skills of their supervisors, managers, and executives. That's because of mounting evidence showing that coaching effectiveness dramatically improves employee engagement, levels of customer satisfaction, productivity, safety, and profitability while reducing turnover, absenteeism, and costs.



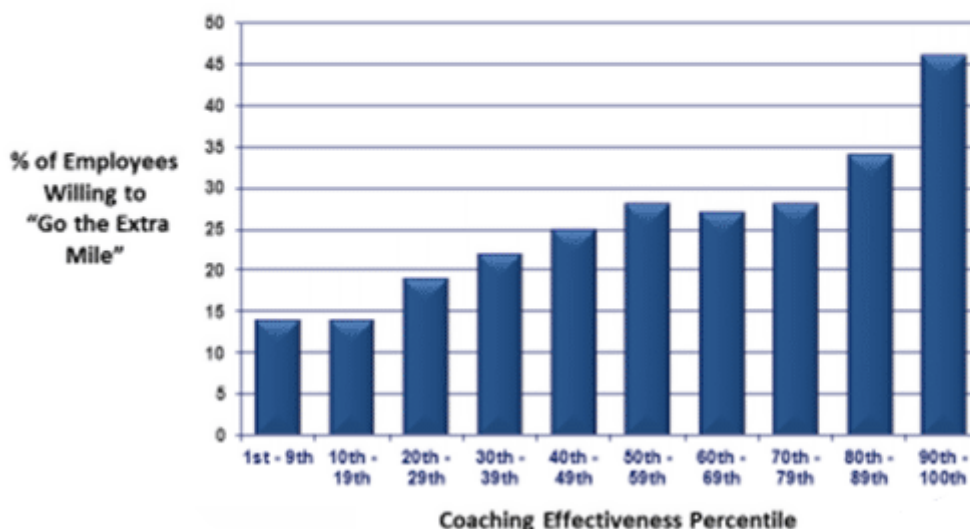
Coaching skills have an especially vital impact on "volunteerism." This is the discretionary effort that goes well above and beyond basic job requirements. Enthusiastic extra effort is at the heart of delivering outstanding customer service and the highest levels of teamwork, safety, or quality.

Zenger Folkman has a database of over 250,000 leader assessments allowing us to correlate degrees of extra effort and coaching effectiveness. The left side of this chart shows respondents who marked a 5 on a 5 point scale in response to the question "my work environment is a place where people want to go the extra mile."

Across the bottom are ratings of approximately 25,000 leaders on their coaching effectiveness. These scores are totals from *The Extraordinary Coach* 360 assessment covering 14 coaching competencies including skills such as supporting the development of others, generating trust, listening, questioning, providing and welcoming feedback, inspiring others to change, giving recognition, and others.

## Coaching's Impact on Extra Effort

Employees indicated the extent to which the work environment is a place where they want to "go the extra mile"



Terrible coaches in the bottom 20% of ratings generate very low levels of extra effort. Good coaches in the middle 2/3 of the chart inspire higher levels of volunteerism. Notice the big jump that outstanding coaches in the top 20% -- and especially extraordinary coaches in the top 10% -- foster in extra effort.

Extraordinary coaches aren't outstanding at all 14 competencies. The Halo Effect, so central to strengths-based leadership development, is reflected in our research. We've found that leaders can become extraordinary coaches in the 90th percentile by developing just 5 of the 14 competencies into profound strengths.

I'll be getting much deeper into this research, the 14 competencies, and how to develop extraordinary coaching and leadership skills in a complimentary webinar on February 10. Click on **6 Steps to Extraordinary Coaching Skills, Elevating Feedback, and Strengthening Leadership** for more information and to register.

## Webinar: 6 Steps to Extraordinary Coaching Skills, Elevating Feedback, and Strengthening Leadership

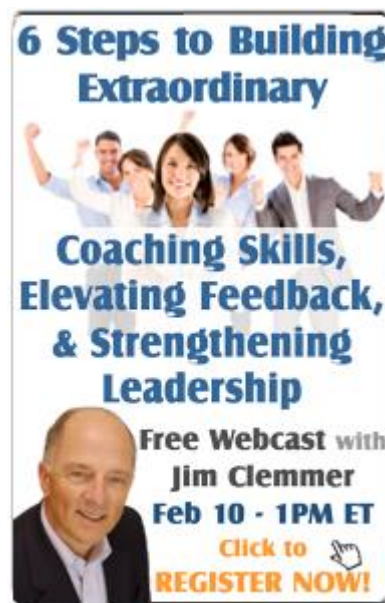
We once worked with an organization where "coaching" was a term that meant reprimand. When a manager said to a team member "I'd like to give you some coaching" it created fear and anxiety.

Coaching is a more positive term in most organizations. Many time-pressured leaders know this skill is pivotal to their team member's satisfaction and performance but struggle with having effective coaching conversations.

On February 10 I'll be delivering a fast-paced and information packed webinar on **6 Steps to Extraordinary Coaching Skills, Elevating Feedback, and Strengthening Leadership** covering:

### Six Steps to Developing Extraordinary Coaching Skills

1. **Defining What Coaching Is and Isn't** -- defining coaching versus training or mentoring in performance and career coaching.
2. **Showing the Huge Impact of Coaching** -- just how much a difference coaching really makes on engagement, intention to stay, extra effort, leadership satisfaction, and feeling valued.
3. **Using a Coaching Conversation Framework** -- common coaching traps, how improvement comes with structure, and our four-step FUEL process.
4. **Bringing Science and Other Best Practices to Coaching** -- 14 coaching competencies and learning from other research and disciplines.
5. **Building Coaching Effectiveness Through Skill Development** -- unique challenges in coaching skill development and shifting manager-employee dependence to empowerment.



6. **Strengthen Coaching Collaboration** -- empowering and encouraging "coachees," focusing on the coachee's agenda, and asking for feedback on coaching effectiveness.

**Elevating Feedback** -- what gets in the way of effective reinforcing and/or redirecting feedback, feedback pitfalls, and using the FUEL model.

**Building Coaching and Leadership Strengths** -- the power of focusing on strengths, why a strength focus doubles improvement rates, critical of a strengths-based 360 assessment, and how cross-training provides a revolutionary new approach to building strengths.

I hope to "see" you and perhaps your team or colleagues on February 10. Click on **6 Steps to Extraordinary Coaching Skills, Elevating Feedback, and Strengthening Leadership** for more information and to register.

## Archived Webinar: Learn How Leadership Drives Profits

Most of us intuitively know that leadership affects the bottom line. But how strong and clear is that relationship? Which leadership behaviors have the strongest impact on financial results?

A key reason The CLEMMER Group decided to partner with Zenger Folkman is because of ZF's evidence-based approach to leadership development. Rather than approaching leadership development as an act of faith, ZF has built a deep research base showing which leadership skills produce organizational outcomes -- and which ones don't.



ZF's data-driven approaches have attracted a number of large Clients looking to measure the impact of good, bad, and extraordinary leadership on profitability. For example, a major bank tracked net income of each branch and then correlated those results with the branch manager's performance on a 360 assessment of their leadership skills. They found that the bottom 10% or worst leaders lost an average of \$1.2 million. Branches led by the middle 80% or good leaders earned an average of \$2.4 million. And the branches led by extraordinary leaders assessed in the top 10% generated branch profits of \$4.5 million!

It's not that surprising that terrible leaders lose money and destroy value. But most people are surprised to learn just **how big the gap is between good and great leaders**. Top leaders doubled the profits of their average or OK peers.

Through their ongoing research Zenger Folkman have discovered what it takes to develop extraordinary leaders and confirmed that it is possible to measure leadership in dollars. ZF and a number of major Clients have shown that good leaders create more economic value than poor leaders. And extraordinary leaders create far more value than good ones.

Last month Dr. Jack Zenger and Dr. Joe Folkman delivered a webinar providing answers to these questions:

- How does leadership drive profit?
- How do organizations and leaders significantly increase profit opportunity?
- What issues can leaders impact that will most effectively drive profit?

In watching the webinar you'll also learn about these business outcomes, how they combine to create an overall profit result, and how leadership impacts each one:

- Retention
- Engagement
- Recruitment
- Customer Satisfaction
- Image
- Productivity
- Innovation

[Click here](#) to access the webinar.

## This is a Leadership and Coaching Conference You'll Want to Attend

Are you interested in learning from world class leaders and practitioners in coaching and leadership skill development? Would you like insights to new and ground breaking approaches you can apply immediately and bring back to your organization? Do you want to see the latest research and practical applications that break traditional molds to produce measurably higher personal, team and organization performance?



If so, please join us at Zenger Folkman's **Extraordinary Leadership Summit and Coaching Symposium** from July 20 – 25 in Salt Lake City, Utah. For less cost than a public workshop you have a rare chance to immerse yourself for three powerful days:

- Hear from -- and chat with -- Joe Folkman (renowned psychometrician and assessment expert) and Jack Zenger (HRD Hall of Fame and Lifetime Achievement Award from American Society of Training and Development)
- Learn about the latest coaching skill development research and take our new *Elevating Feedback* and/or *The Extraordinary Coach* workshops with Kathleen Stinnett, leading international authority on coaching and co-author of *The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow*.
- Listen to and meet with Kevin Wilde, VP Organization Effectiveness and Chief Learning Officer at General Mills -- a company recognized as one of the top 25 in leadership development in the U.S. and one of ZF's longest term Clients.
- Learn from the ground breaking leadership development approaches used by General Motors (Bill Huffaker, Global Director of Talent Management and Acquisition), McKesson (Andrew Wilhelms, Director, Management and Leadership Development and Michelle Freiberg, Director, Talent Assessment), and Salam International Investment LTD, (Suleiman AL-Khateeb, Executive Director, Corporate Strategic Planning & HR).
- Participate in Zenger Folkman's research-based and practical workshops; *The Extraordinary Coach*, *The Extraordinary Leader (includes our 360 assessment)*, *Elevating Feedback*, or *Developing Yourself as a Coach (includes our 360 coaching skills assessment)*.
- Have breakfast, lunch, dinner -- or just chat time -- with me or Brad Smith (our Director of Client Development) to discuss what you're learning and how you can apply the powerful leadership development approaches from this Summit.

- Network and share best practices with senior leaders and leadership/organization development professionals.
- Network and enjoy dinner at Jack Zenger's "manor estate" home on 80 acres overlooking Midway and the Wasatch Mountains.

This is not a massive convention with hundreds or thousands of people. It's a relaxed and intimate meeting in a beautiful setting. I've attended the last three Summits and they were outstanding. So **register now** (you'll save \$500 before March 31) to ensure a seat!

### **2015 Extraordinary Leadership Summit and Coaching Symposium**

**July 20 – 24**

**The Hilton City Center, Salt Lake City, UT**

**<http://www.clemmergroup.com/zf/2015summitzf.html>**

## **Courageous Leaders Ask for Feedback**

Ignorance may be bliss, but it's deadly to leadership effectiveness. And it's often the mark of a blind and weak leader.

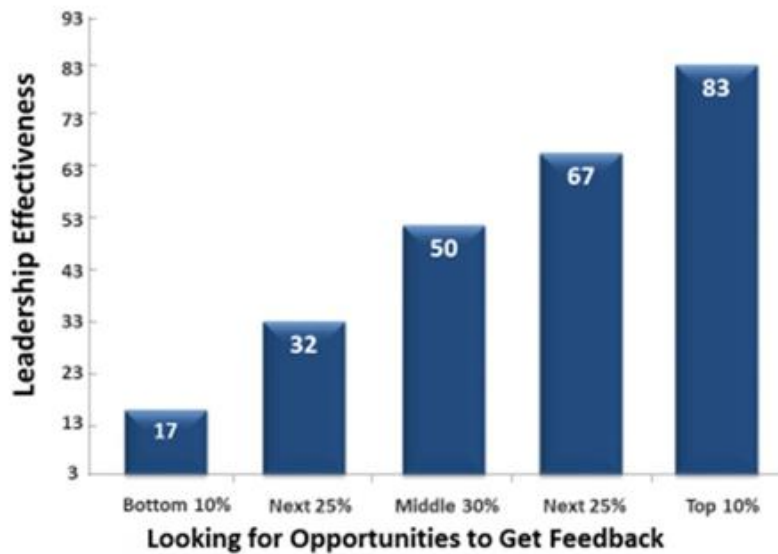
Feedback-impaired leaders often mistake compliance for commitment. They might, for example, proclaim an open door policy and when no one enters their office to raise problems, believe there aren't any serious issues to be addressed. Or when their strong position and lack of approachability shuts down any serious debate on a key meeting topic, they'll take that as agreement and push ahead. Later they're puzzled by lack of follow through.



Not checking blind spots can lead to deadly highway accidents. Leaders who don't seek feedback often develop deadly blind spots. And when the crash happens he or she is taken by surprise. "Why didn't anyone tell me about this sooner?"

Correlation studies drawing on Zenger Folkman's extensive 360 database shows the dramatic impact of a leader's inclination to ask for feedback and their leadership effectiveness. The blindest leaders who actively discourage feedback may be blissful in their ignorance -- and highly ineffective. Their counterparts at the opposite end of the feedback spectrum -- with their eyes and ears wide open -- are over four times more effective.

## Looking for Feedback and Leadership Effectiveness



In his *Forbes* column, "**Top Ranked Leaders Know This Secret: Ask For Feedback**", Joe Folkman reports, "there is power in asking others for feedback. Asking not only empowers employees to feel their opinions matter, but it also empowers leaders to know where they need to improve."

### Further Reading:

- "Feedback is Critical to Leadership and Organization Effectiveness"
- "Warning Signs: How Vulnerable is Your Career?"
- "Steps to Leveraging the Power of Two-Way Feedback"
- "9 Ways to Get Over Your Feedback Fears"
- "Five Keys for Accepting Feedback"

## The Performance Evaluation Meeting – Focusing on Strengths and Not Weaknesses

Tricia is preparing for a performance review meeting with Tom. She's very happy with his work and sees lots of potential for him to grow further in his career and move up to higher leadership roles. Tom is a strong communicator, good at building relationships, and inspires his direct reports and others to higher teamwork and performance.



Tricia is meticulous about detail, highly organized, and a model of time management. She especially values punctuality. Tom's desk is a mess, he shows up late for meetings, and his reports are often thrown together at the last minute with details missing. Tricia's actually a bit puzzled that despite these weaknesses, Tom is the most effective leader on her team.

Tricia starts their discussion by reinforcing Tom's strengths with lots of recognition and encouragement to continue. She then focuses the majority of their discussion on Tom's performance improvement plan. Tricia gets him to agree that his biggest improvement opportunity is getting better at time management, personal organization, and paying more attention to detail. Tom's normally energetic and positive demeanor becomes noticeably subdued as Tricia gives examples of how these weaknesses have frustrated her and others. They finish with an action plan centered on Tom fixing these weaker areas.

In six months from now what is likely the outcome of Tricia's improvement plan for Tom? How motivated is Tom to stick to this plan? Will moving these weaker areas from weaker to better increase his leadership effectiveness in employee engagement, customer service, teamwork, or motivating others?

What if Tricia had spent most of their performance discussion focused on how to help Tom take his strengths from good to great? And what if she'd had that discussion in the context of ongoing career coaching that linked Tom's strengths, passions, and organizational needs? Would most of the people Tom's influencing/leading see past his weaker areas if he became an outstanding communicator, team and relationship builder, and inspiring motivator?

Click on "[The Performance Evaluation Meeting -- Focusing on Strengths and Not Weaknesses](#)" for my video clip discussing how performance management situations like this can be dramatically improved by focusing on strengths. You can also peruse our [Focusing on Strengths](#) section for more blogs, articles, white papers, and videos.

## How to Positively Correct Negative Behavior (Video)

Many managers either don't address performance issues and negative behavior or do it poorly. Both cases lead to disengaged and demoralized team members.

Survey after survey shows that a great source of frustration for most of us is not being given effective feedback when our behavior creates problems or performance falls short. It's one of the biggest complaints many people have about their bosses.



These are courageous conversations. And how they're handled is at the heart of how effective a leader's coaching skills are rated. How often have you found yourself saying "it's not what he or she is saying that angers me, it's how they're saying it."

As part of our Face Time video series with MRO Academy I was asked to discuss how leaders can effectively address performance or behavior problems. It starts with a leader defining his or her role as directing and controlling people or building people and their capabilities. If it's the latter, then the discussion should be framed in a larger context of ongoing coaching and strengths building that's not just once per year at performance appraisal time.

In this four minute video clip I then outline a few key steps to minimizing defensiveness, building self-esteem, and making this conversation a joint problem solving discussion. Click on [Positively Correcting Negative Behavior](#) to view.



This vital discussion is part of "Elevating Feedback" that I'll be covering in my February 10 complimentary webcast. Click on **6 Steps to Extraordinary Coaching Skills, Elevating Feedback, and Strengthening Leadership** for more information and to register for this no-charge one hour webcast.

## Tweet Reading: Recommended Online Articles

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 follows each title and descriptor from the original source:



**A great review and checklist of the latest research we can use to enhance our personal growth and help others flourish.**

**"The Top 10 Insights from the "Science of a Meaningful Life" in 2014** -- Jeremy Adam Smith, Bianca Lorenz, Kira M. Newman, Lauren Klein, Lisa Bennett , Jason Marsh, Jill Suttie  
[www.greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://www.greatergood.berkeley.edu)

*"UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center: Our annual list of the top scientific insights produced by the study of happiness, altruism, mindfulness, gratitude -- what we call 'the science of a meaningful life.'"*

**Great HR leaders with strong strategic leadership skills are rare and exceedingly valuable to building organizational capacity.**

**"Why Chief Human Resources Officers Make Great CEOs"** -- Harvard Business Review  
<https://hbr.org>

*"Attracting the right talent, creating the right organizational structure, and building the right culture are essential for driving strategy -- and experience as a CHRO makes a leader more likely to succeed at those tasks."*

**And this live-giving optimism is often built through positive psychology and building on our strengths.**

**"Optimistic people have healthier hearts, study finds"** -- University of Illinois  
<http://news.illinois.edu/>

*"People who have upbeat outlooks on life have significantly better cardiovascular health, suggests a new study that examined associations between optimism and heart health in more than 5,100 adults."*

**So much research shows that culture -- the way we do things around here -- is the determining factor in long term organizational success.**

**"HBO's CEO Says Culture Trumps Strategy Every Day"** -- Erik Sherman, Inc.com  
[www.inc.com](http://www.inc.com)

*"According to Richard Plepler, it's not the top-down plan but the atmosphere for ideas and execution that create success."*

## 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 a leadership book. 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@ClemmerGroup.com](mailto:Jim.Clemmer@ClemmerGroup.com) or connect with me on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#), or my [blog](#)!

May the Force (of strengths) be with you!



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