



## Issue 179 - February 2018

The leading edge of an airplane wing is critical to slicing through the air and directing airflow around the wing to create lift.

Leaders form the leading edge of their teams or organizations. He or she shapes everyone's energy and behaviors. Highly effective leaders and outstanding leadership teams create powerful lift. Their teams and organizations soar.

Less effective leaders and weaker leadership teams form misshaped or dull leading edges creating a drag that reduces lift. Their teams/organizations may get off the ground, but they sputter and sometimes stall.

The most dangerous -- often deadly -- leaders and leadership teams slice and slash their teams and organizations. Mostly with good intentions and little desire to hurt anyone, these leaders and leadership teams are usually ignorant of the bleeding edges they've created and the damage they're doing.



### **On the Bleeding Edge**

Pushing and Punishing

Rules, Policies, and "Snoopervision"

Performance Management: Rank, Spank, and Yank

Search for the Guilty and Who Went Wrong -  
"Blamestorming"

Partial and Piecemeal Change Programs

Fixated on Fixing Weaknesses

"Motivating" and Manipulating Behavior

Overloaded, Overwhelmed, and Crazy Busy

### **On the Leading Edge**

Engaging and Enabling

Trust, Openness, and Modeling Core Values

Collaborative Coaching and Constructive Feedback

Search for Root Causes and What Went Wrong –  
Fostering Teamwork

Integrated and Aligned Processes and  
Development Systems

Building and Leveraging Strengths

Inspiring and Energizing Extra Effort

Strategic Focus on Leveraging Time

Are you and your team on the bleeding or leading edge? How do you know? According to whom? In this issue you'll find links to our time assessment quiz and results from others who have used this reflective tool to look at whether they're soaring, sinking, or slicing their teams/organizations.

Competency models can be a leading edge that lift leadership development efforts. Or not. A badly designed and poorly used competency model can be a bleeding edge that cuts confidence and performance. Watch Joe Folkman's archived webinar to learn about the five factors that make or break this developmental tool.

And this could be your lucky issue. Learn about Richard Wiseman's insightful research on how we can develop a lucky edge.

I hope this issue gives you insights and edges to lift your development efforts to greater heights.

## Are You and Your Team on the Bleeding or Leading Edge?

Is your team/organization overloaded with many priorities and conflicting activities? Does your team/organization load new projects and goals on top of existing workloads without rigorous "stop doing" pruning to make room for them?

These are the two biggest problems emerging over the last few months of work with our **Strategic Use of Time Assessment**. The survey asks 14 questions covering 7 deadly time traps. Hundreds of leaders have taken the survey online ([click here](#) to access it) or in CEO Forums where I've facilitated discussions on Leveraging Leadership Time.



After tallying scores for all questions, the average total has participants in the category of "Time is Slipping Away - you're getting sucked into daily busyness and not investing your time strategically."

In today's highly reactive and crazy busy world it's way too easy to allow the daily deluge coming at us -- e-mails, meetings, problems, or phone calls -- to control our time. This sucks us into playing trivial pursuit. That sets up a stress spiral; we're not using our time strategically so we have more fires to fight which means we have less focus on leveraging our time which means we have even more fires to fight and we're even less strategic..... So our days spin ever more wildly as we chase our tail in faster and faster circles.

Does your team regularly take time away from daily operations to reflect and refocus? Does your team periodically ask what we should keep doing, stop doing, and start doing/do more to increase our effectiveness?

These two questions are from the second biggest problem identified in our time assessment. They describe the time trap of working "in" versus "on" the team. As our organizations spin ever more quickly, many teams allow their priorities to be badly distorted. Things that matter most -- team dynamics, touchy moose-on-the-table issues, key priorities -- are often crowded out by things that matter least -- crisis du jour or technical problems better solved by those closest to the action -- and the team spins round and round.

Our time assessment and discussions are part of a new two-day workshop I am designing. **The Leading Edge: Transforming Team and Culture Performance** session draws from and condenses thousands of keynotes, workshops, and retreats we've delivered across a wide range of industries and organizations. Google leadership and culture or search Amazon for books on these topics and you'll be overwhelmed by theories, "secrets," 7, 10,

or 12 steps, personal experiences, fables, and such. But the big question is what works -- based on evidence and practicality. This two-day workshop is designed to update, consolidate, and translate proven principles into action. And it's right here in the center of the universe; my hometown of Kitchener, Ontario! [Click here](#) for more details.

Is it time for you and your team to take back your time?

## Webinar: 5 Factors in Effective Competency Models

Competency models can provide a central framework for defining the skills and behaviors essential to an organization's success. A well-built competency model provides a strong support structure for leadership development, talent, and performance management. A robust competency model outlines the behaviors needed to create the organization's desired culture.

But how effective is your competency model? Does it clearly and effectively identify the skills and behaviors that enable everyone at all levels to be more effective? Many don't. Less effective competency models fall into these traps:



- **Complexity** – different competencies for different levels and different behaviors for the same competency too often confuse and confound.
- **Unconnected to results** – many nice-to-do competencies don't reliably predict outcomes like engagement, turnover, profitability, sales, safety, and other key outcomes.
- **Vague targets** – an effective competency model helps everyone find their development sweet spot at the intersection of his or her passion, organizational need, and competence.
- **"Smooshing"** – to simplify their models, some organizations are combining several competencies (sometimes positive and negative) to form one competency.
- **Missing competencies** – some models focus on interpersonal or leadership behaviors and missing critical skills like getting results, technical expertise, or problem solving.
- **Improving everything** – 3 to 5 relevant, results-oriented competencies can be leveraged to boost performance to the 90th percentile.

These are some of the common pitfalls and traps of competency models that Joe Folkman covered in his 45 minute webinar **5 Factors in Effective Competency Models** that's now archived and available for viewing.

Joe is a leading expert in psychometrics or measuring psychological factors with nine books he's authored or co-authored. He's spent over 30 years working with AT&T, General Motors, General Mills, Wells Fargo, Yale University, and many other global leaders on competencies and leadership development. And he's a really nice guy!

[Click here](#) to view Joe's webinar and learn from his extensive research and experience with competency models distilled into 5 key factors.

## Just my Luck: Choice More Than Chance Determines Our Circumstance

Luckily, I caught Richard Wiseman in a radio interview late one night on my way home from the airport. When I got home, I immediately looked him up on the Internet and ordered his book. Wiseman is Professor of the Public Understanding of Psychology at the University of Hertfordshire in the United Kingdom. He's been extensively studying luck over a number of years by interviewing and running experiments with very lucky people who seem to lead charmed lives and very unlucky people who seem to have their own black cloud following them around.



His findings are further proof that we make choices to wallow in and create our own bad luck or lead ourselves toward attracting "lucky" breaks in our lives.

In his book ***The Luck Factor: Change Your Luck and Change Your Life***, Wiseman outlines four principles he has found define lucky people. Through his "luck school," he's retrained up to 80 percent of the unlucky to reverse their fortunes and attract good luck. His four principles involve key elements of leading:

- engage others in conversations and social interaction;
- listen to your intuition and trust hunches;
- develop positive expectations about the future; and
- strengthen resilience and persistence to eventually turn bad luck into good.

These few excerpts of his luck research further illustrate the magnetic power of the energy force fields we choose in framing, explaining, and acting on the good and bad events in our lives:

- *"My research revealed that the special kind of expectations held by lucky and unlucky people had a huge impact on their lives. The unique way that lucky people thought about their future was responsible for them being more effective than most when it came to achieving their dreams and ambitions. Likewise, the unlucky expectations held by unlucky people resulted in them being especially ineffectual at getting what they wanted from life."*
- *"Lucky people see any bad luck in their lives as being very short lived. They simply shrug it off and don't let it affect their expectations about the future. Unlucky people are convinced that any good luck in their lives will only last for a short period of time and will quickly be followed by their regular dose of bad luck."*
- *"Luck was not a magical ability or a gift from the gods. Instead, it was a state of mind: a way of thinking and behaving. People are not born lucky or unlucky but create much of their own good and bad luck through their thoughts, feelings and actions."*

A funny thing about luck: the harder we work the more we seem to have of it.

## 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. You can follow me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JimClemmer>

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

**Zenger Folkman shows the synergistic effect of getting results through people. Jack Zenger explains why.**

**"The Rewards of Being an Ambidextrous Leader"** -- Jack Zenger

[www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)

*"Are you better at driving for results or building relationships? Learn the benefits of being good at both in a recent study by Zenger Folkman."*

**Draw from Zenger Folkman research to learn how to strengthen your effectiveness as a leader and with your manager.**

**"7 Ways To Make Your Manager Your Biggest Fan"** -- Joe Folkman

[www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)

*"Managers typically want their employees to be effective at everything. To identify the behaviors that influence them the most, I looked at a dataset of 58,415 leaders."*

**Research shows the impact of a balanced approach. Take the self-assessment to see your preference.**

**"Research Shows The Best Way To Motivate Others"** -- Joe Folkman

[www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)

*"Leaders who learn how to pull can be very effective, but they will be even better if they also learn to push."*

## Read *The Leader Letter* in Weekly Installments



The items in each month's issue of *The Leader Letter* are first published in my 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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