

THE LEADER LETTER

Leading with *STRENGTH*

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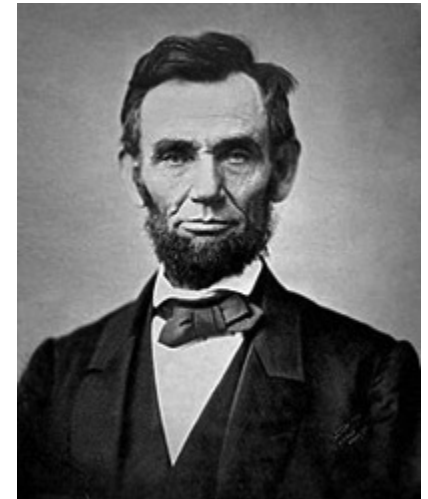
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JANUARY 2013, ISSUE 118

"I will prepare and some day my chance will come." This thought from 16th U.S. president, Abraham Lincoln, has long been an inspirational beacon for my own visioning and self-development. It was ringing in my ears again as I prepared this issue with its first two items on life's uncertainty and after watching the new movie *Lincoln* during the Holidays.



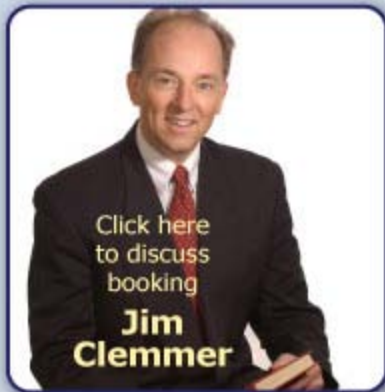
Lincoln is an outstanding historical drama directed and produced by Steven Spielberg with Daniel Day-Lewis as Abraham Lincoln and Sally Field as Mary Todd Lincoln. The movie is partly based on Doris Kearns Goodwin's biography of *Lincoln, Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. The story centers on the last four months of Lincoln's life. It's mainly focused on his leadership in January 1865 to have the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution passed by the House of Representatives. This will abolish slavery as the bitter and bloody civil war is ending.

Day-Lewis delivers an incredibly powerful performance showing Lincoln using his well-honed leadership skills to push, pull, and navigate the byzantine maze of Washington politics during one of the most tumultuous periods of American history (teetering on a moral cliff). He's clearly well prepared to seize all chances coming his way. Scholar surveys of American presidents since the 1940s consistently rank Lincoln in the top three and often in first place.

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This issue combines my December blog posts. The first two items focus on the folly of prophecies, predictions, and forecasts. As in Lincoln's time, no one can tell us what the future may hold. But we can prepare ourselves, our teams, and our organizations with strong leadership skills and high-performance cultures. Then as our chances come we'll be able to be victors rather than victims of change.

Although just available for the last four months of 2012, we'll look back at "**How to Be Exceptional** as destined to be a landmark leadership book." "Is your culture anchored in Strengths or Weaknesses" centers on "Culture Anchor Points." Where your team or organization falls on this continuum is central to how prepared you'll all be to deal with the unpredictable changes ahead.

A balanced approach for highly engaged employees, it looks at the need for leaders to both push and pull for high productivity, creativity, and customer satisfaction. Over the past four months we've produced many white papers, articles, blogs, and webcasts. The "strengths-based leadership development index organizes all the links so you can harness this powerful new approach to preparing yourself, your team, and your organization. And what better way to prepare for 2013 than "giving your team the gift of becoming a better boss."

May you be prepared to seize all the changes and chances coming your way in 2013!

'TIS THE SEASON OF PROPHECIES, FORECASTS, AND PREDICTIONS

We made it through yet another doomsday prediction! The world did not end on December 21 as some felt the Mayan calendar predicted. Around the world interest in survival pods, underground bunkers, and one-way tickets to "apocalypse safe havens" soared as D-Day approached. You should be able to pick up a Mayan calendar at half price now!



Wikipedia has a fascinating [list of dates predicted for apocalyptic events](#) that starts at 643 BCE and runs through hundreds of end-of-times predictions over the centuries. The last entry is that Mayan apocalypse prophesying the earth will be destroyed by an asteroid or supernova. And just so we don't get too secure, there are a few future predictions showing dates for the Second Coming of Jesus, Armageddon, and other end-of-the-world events.

'Tis the season for futurists, forecasters, and analysts to line up with seers, fortune tellers, and prophets to earnestly foretell what 2013 has in store for us. Instead of tea leaves, animal entrails, and crystal balls, the "experts" use data, charts, and logical sounding theories. See [New Year's Prediction Alert: It's Silly Season Again!](#) for an entertaining Timeline of Failed Predictions.

Harvard Business School professor, James Heskett, poses the right question in his blog [Should Managers Bother Listening to Predictions?](#) He points to all the uncertainty swirling around us today and observes, **"we've always been certain about two things: (1) predictions are never accurate, and (2) plans are obsolete the moment they are made."**

In providing provocative perspectives on this challenge, Heskett draws from three books on the folly of predictions, how some predictions can be made more accurate, and how to gain from disorder. He ends with, **"given our inability to predict, should managers bother to base plans on predictions?"** Dozens of thoughtful reader comments follow with many insightful comments and observations on the prediction predicament.

One of the classic books on this topic is [The Fortune Sellers: The Big Business of Buying and Selling Predictions](#) by William Sherden. He studied the dismal history -- and huge multi-billion dollar industry -- of forecasting (he calls it the second oldest profession). He concludes:

"of these sixteen types of forecast, only two -- one-day-ahead weather forecasts and the aging of the population -- can be counted on; the rest are about as reliable as the fifty-fifty odds in flipping a coin. And only one of the sixteen -- short-term weather forecasts -- has any scientific foundation."

When I hear an economist or anyone other than a forecaster making predictions a voice in my head says, "you have no idea what's going to happen."

A more recent book takes a comprehensive and updated look at predictions. In [Future Babble: Why Expert Predictions Fail - and Why We Believe Them Anyway](#) Dan Gardner writes:

"The now-defunct magazine *Brill's Content*, for one, compared the predictions of famous American pundits with a chimpanzee named Chippy, who made guesses by choosing among flashcards. Chippy consistently matched or beat the best in the business."

This explains the funny photo of a laughing monkey dialing a phone on the book's cover.

So what should leaders do about planning for the future? The clearest and most helpful guide to this question comes from the extensive empirical research of Jim Collins and his research team. Collins and co-author Morton Hansen summarized their findings in [**Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck - Why Some Thrive Despite Them All**](#). They put 20,400 companies through 11 stages of cutting, screening, and shifting over a 30 year period of study to identify "10Xers" -- companies that beat its industry index by at least 10 times. This nine year project started right after 9/11 to find companies that thrived through chaos and disruptive change. The book is structured around their main findings boiled down to three core behaviors; Fanatic Discipline, Empirical Creativity, and Productive Paranoia.

We can predict there are big changes ahead. How big, how catastrophic, and when are completely unpredictable. Our best approach is to build flexible and highly adaptable lives, teams, and organizations. These are the central leadership issues that will make for a truly Happy New Year!

THOUGHTS THAT MAKE YOU GO HMMM ON... PROPHECIES, PREDICTIONS, AND FORECASTS

"I confess that in 1901 I said to my brother Orville that man would not fly for 50 years. Ever since, I have distrusted myself and avoided all predictions."

- Wilbur Wright (1867-1912),
U.S. inventor



"Economists, in particular, are treated with the reverence the ancient Greeks gave the Oracle of Delphi. But unlike the notoriously vague pronouncements that once issued from Delphi, economists' predictions are concrete and precise. Their accuracy can be checked. And anyone who does that will quickly conclude that economists make lousy soothsayers.

... the sort of expert typically found in the media is precisely the sort of expert who is most likely to be wrong. This explains one of the most startling findings to emerge from Philip Tetlock's (professor at the University of California at Berkeley) data; the bigger the media profile of an expert, the less accurate his predictions are... using Google hits as a simple way to measure the fame of each of his 284 experts, Tetlock found that the more famous the expert, the worse he did.

Pundits 'forecast not because they know,' wrote economist John Kenneth Galbraith, 'but because they are asked.' We could stop asking. But if we insist on asking -- and we probably will, unfortunately -- we must at least think carefully about what we are told."

- Dan Gardner, *Future Babble: Why Expert Predictions Fail - and Why We Believe Them Anyway*

"expert wisdom usually turns out to be at best highly contested and ephemeral and at worst flat-out wrong ... we live in a time of acute frustration with experts, even as many of us remain dependent on them and continue to heed their advice --- we happen to be complex creatures living in a complex world, so why would we expect answers to any questions to be simple ... in particular, the problems that lead us to turn to experts -- how can we be healthy, wealthy and fulfilled; how can we get our businesses and nation to flourish -- tend to be bound up in extraordinarily high levels of complexity."

- David H. Freedman, *Wrong: Why Experts Keep Failing Us and How to Know When Not to Trust Them*

"You have been a world-class sap for years. Why? For listening to the economic and political forecasts of experts. We in the media have been irresponsible fools for reporting those forecasts. And the experts themselves? Delusional egomaniacs -- and maybe even con artists.

We desperately want to believe the world is not just a big game of dice, that things happen for good reasons and wise people can figure it all out. It may not be so; a school of researchers known as radical skeptics presents impressive evidence that the world is totally random, or at least that we humans are eternally unable to figure it out. But most of us can't bear to believe that, so we cling to the notion of experts."

- Geoffrey Colvin, "Ditch the 'Experts'", *Fortune* magazine

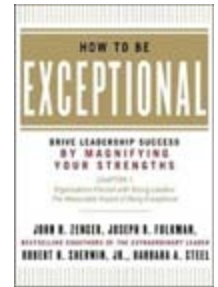
"None of us can predict with certainty the twists and turns our lives will take. Life is uncertain, the future unknown. This is neither good nor bad. It just is, like gravity. Yet the task remains: how to master our own fate, even so."

- Jim Collins and Morten Hansen, *Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck -- Why Some Thrive Despite Them All*

- Go to [Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm on ... "Great by Choice"](#) for more quotes from the book.
- Go to [Thoughts That Make You go Hmmm on ... Expert Forecasts](#) for examples of especially failed predictions.

HOW TO BE EXCEPTIONAL IS DESTINED TO BE A LANDMARK LEADERSHIP BOOK

Leadership has been a lifelong passion for me. I read thousands of books, papers, articles, and blogs on the topic. I've also written seven books, hundreds of articles and blogs, facilitated over a thousand retreats and workshops, and delivered hundreds of keynotes on personal, team, and organizational leadership.



As I wrote in the [September issue of *The Leader Letter*](#), in more than three decades of watching countless leadership books come and go in this business, I can count on one hand -- starting with *Corporate Cultures* and *In Search of Excellence* -- the very few that marked a major turning point in development focus and approaches.

[How to Be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success by Magnifying Your Strengths](#) is one of those books. It heralds a mega-shift in leadership training and development. In just a few months since the book's September release other highly experienced authorities in leadership and organization development are coming to similar conclusions. Dave Crisp is just such an authority with deep experience including 14 years leading HR at Hudson Bay Company where he took the 70,000 employee retailer to "best company to work for" status.

Reviewing *How to Be Exceptional* in *Canadian HR Reporter* Dave writes **"once in a decade, there's a business book worth reading and remembering ... there are many excellent books that simply reiterate things we should already know. Then there are those destined to become classics of new knowledge, the way Jim Collin's 2002 title Good to Great did ... Zenger and Folkman published an excellent book the same year as Good to Great called [The Extraordinary Leader](#) (click on title for my 2003 review) I have routinely recommended to audiences. Collins said, quite bluntly, he didn't know how to teach people the six key competencies he found leaders need (he subsequently rethought that, but hasn't necessarily hit the mark with direct advice). That same year Zenger and Folkman were laying the 'how to' out in their book, but many people didn't connect the two."**

You can read Dave's full review at [Some books deserve a long life: The next Good to Great?](#) He concludes the interview with his plans to "re-read a few times as more details click into place each time." This is very similar to the feedback I recently received from a municipal CAO who read [How to Be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success by Magnifying Your Strengths](#) after I presented the core concepts of its [Strengths-Based Leadership Development System](#) at the Ontario Municipal Administrator's Association conference in September. He wrote to me **"I've read How to Be Exceptional twice already and consider it**

one of the best leadership books I've ever read. It is truly an eye-opener."

And in case you missed it, last fall *The Globe & Mail* published a full length review of *How to Be Exceptional* that concluded with, "*It's a clear, easy-to-read book, despite the heavy focus on research, and a compelling alternative approach to our tendency to obsess over weaknesses* ([Excellent? Counterintuitive tips on how to be exceptional](#)"). As I outlined in [Leadership Lessons from Evidence-Based Medicine](#), that heavy focus on research is exactly what's so badly missing from the confusing world of leadership theories, models, and approaches. And most of them have no basis in any research at all. Zenger Folkman have written an easy-to-read and very practical book that's based on evidence.

If you'd like to see an overview of the key concepts in *How to Be Exceptional* and hear my interview with Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman it's archived at [Strengths-Based Leadership Development webcast](#). Here's part of what we discuss:

- Key research findings from ***How to Be Exceptional***.
- The sixteen empirically identified key leadership competencies in five clusters that cause leaders and their team/organizations to flounder or flourish.
- The huge performance differences between "good" and "extraordinary" leaders and the dramatic impact on his or her team/organization.
- Why building on existing strengths is up to 3 times more effective than fixing weaknesses.
- How developing just three existing strengths out of sixteen competencies catapults a leader's effectiveness from the 34th to the 80th percentile!
- When to work on weaknesses.
- Evidence-based strength development using Companion Competencies, cross-training, and non-linear approaches.
- Why many 360 feedback tools are developing a negative reputation -- associated with accentuating weaknesses -- and how to correct the problem.

You can also download and read ***Chapter 1: Organizations Flourish with Strong Leaders***. This special introductory chapter is embedded with brief video clips of Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman explaining key concepts. [Click here](#) to access it.

You can read about my rethinking and relearning on this radical new approach to leadership development in my downloadable whitepaper at [Manifesto for a Leadership Development Revolution](#). Earlier this month I published a second whitepaper on [Leadership Competency Models: Why Many Are Failing and How to Make them Flourish](#).

IS YOUR CULTURE ANCHORED IN STRENGTHS OR WEAKNESSES?

Most organizations we're working with today have declared a set of values. Posters, slides, banners, screen savers, newsletters, flyers, and framed parchments proclaim what the organization stands for.

**...there's a big
difference between
aspiration and
implementation**

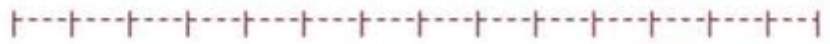
Many of these values statements assert a commitment to excellence, respect and integrity, customer focus, teamwork and collaboration, service/quality, responsiveness and the like. This is an important culture foundation. Values can provide clarity for key people practices like hiring, promoting, recognizing, and coaching. Clear values set clear priorities and guide the behaviors that shape the organization's culture ("the way we do things around here").

These statements of good intentions were put together for all the right reasons by sincere leaders who often sweated and debated every word and comma. But like New Year's resolutions there's a big difference between aspiration and implementation. Too often these well crafted values statements are a bunch of positive words hanging on a wall. In many cases they have a "high snicker factor." What's declared isn't what most people see their leaders living each day.

Very few leaders are Machiavellian manipulators deliberately mouthing values he or she doesn't intend to follow. Most are innocently ignorant. They are part of leadership teams who don't recognize the subtle and often unconscious disconnects between words and deeds.

As we're now helping leaders and leadership teams understand the powerful and transformative impact strengths-based leadership can have on their effectiveness, we're getting into eye-opening discussions on cultural anchor points. It starts with a look at this slide:

Culture Anchor Points



Weaknesses

- Power-based command and control
- Catch people doing things wrong
- Indifference and apathy
- Focus on fixing what's wrong
- See the worst in people
- Push and punish

Strengths

- Inspiring shared leadership
- Catch people doing things right
- Energized and engaged
- Leverage/build on what's right
- Bring out the best in people
- Pull and coach



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This shows a culture continuum from extreme focus on weaknesses on the left to strengths on the right. Of course, no culture is a pure form of just one or the other. Organizational cultures blend elements of both.

The discussion progresses along these lines:

- Which side are our aspired values anchored in? Values like excellence, respect, integrity, customer focus, teamwork, collaboration, or service/quality are anchored in strengths and positivity.
- Which approach do our frontline staff, customers, and other team members want to experience every day? Leaders instantly recognize we all want to live and leverage from strengths. Research ranging from engagement surveys, customer satisfaction, team effectiveness, Emotional Intelligence, to Positive Psychology proves it.
- Where are our management systems and leadership practices anchored? Performance appraisals, training needs analysis, competency models, operational reviews, continuous improvement programs, and such are ***focused on finding and fixing weaknesses***.

There's our basic -- and huge -- disconnect. We declare values anchored in strengths and positive energy while leading with a focus on weaknesses and negativity.

What's your culture anchored in?

A BALANCED APPROACH FOR HIGHLY ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

Many organizations recognize that highly engaged employees create dramatically higher levels of customer satisfaction. Highly engaged employees are less likely to quit and leave -- or to quit and stay. A workplace with engaged employees is 2 - 3 times safer, more productive, creative, and producing much higher quality.

Lots of organizations are measuring employee engagement levels through regular surveys. They'll often adjust compensation, benefits, working conditions, schedules, provide childcare, or focus on work-life balance to increase engagement.



Zenger Folkman research clearly shows that one variable is the best predictor of employee engagement, satisfaction, and commitment. And that's the daily leadership provided in the workplace. People **join** organizations and **quit** their leaders.

To increase leadership effectiveness that increases employee engagement there's often a debate about which works best: a management push or leadership pull? This leads right into the "tyranny-of-the-OR" trap. This black and white thinking sees it as one or the other. It's especially tempting to believe that creating an inspiring and motivating environment through a leadership pull approach will lead to much higher employee engagement than management push.

Here's where Zenger Folkman's extensive research shines a light on this vital performance topic. In his blog, [The Push and Pull of Employee Engagement](#) at Ivy Exec, Joe Folkman reports on the results of a study of 160,576 employees reporting into 20,597 teams or work groups and the effectiveness of their immediate leader's effectiveness on pushing and pulling. These surprising conclusions emerged:

"If a leader was not highly skilled (at the top quartile) at either pushing or pulling the average employee, engagement scores for that group were at the 42nd percentile. In other words they were below average.

If a leader was highly skilled at pushing (e.g., top quartile) but not at pulling the average employee, engagement scores

for that group were at the 61st percentile ... on the other hand, if a leader was highly skilled at pulling (e.g., top quartile) but not at pushing, the average employee engagement scores for that group were at the 63rd percentile. This is better, but not by much.

The magic formula here is when leaders were highly skilled (e.g., top quartile) at both pushing and pulling. When this occurred the average employee engagement scores for that group were at the 76th percentile. These work groups were at the coveted top quartile level in terms of their satisfaction, engagement, and commitment."

This surprising research is similar to what's outlined in [Powerful Combinations: Drive for Results and Builds Relationships](#). When both management push for results and leadership pull of building relationships are used, the odds of being rated as an extraordinary leader jumps from 12 - 14% to 72%!

So we need to develop "and-also" skills rather than an "either-or" approach for highly engaged employees. As the Danish physicist and winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics for his contributions to understanding atomic structure and quantum mechanics observed, *"the opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. But the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth."*

STRENGTHS-BASED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Harvey Schachter reviewed dozens and dozens of business, leadership, and management books for *The Globe & Mail* last year. As I contemplate my ever expanding must-read book list I am in awe of how many books he reviews. Harvey's either a speed reader or spends most waking hours with his nose in one book after another. If he's still reading physical books, his library shelves must have disappeared years ago under Book Mountain. Recently he proved what an astute bibliophile he is by putting ***How to Be Exceptional*** in the top five of his [top ten business books of 2012!](#)



The biggest highlight of 2012 for us at The CLEMMER Group was our new strategic partnership with Zenger Folkman. As I wrote in the [September issue of The Leader Letter](#) we spent an extremely busy summer getting up to speed on ZF's powerful and very revolutionary strengths-based leadership approaches. This was followed by a very busy fall of webinars, presentations, executive

briefings, Client meetings, implementation consulting, phone consultations, and public workshops.

We were quite impressed by what we first saw in ZF's approaches and this was further reinforced by our attendance at their Annual Leadership Summit at Sundance Resort in Utah. But now that we've had months of hands-on work with these radical new processes and approaches, my high expectations have been exceeded. Almost without fail, once senior executives and HR/training professionals are walked through the research, methodology, and evidence-based road map to building on existing strengths they experience a big paradigm shift. Future generations will look back at our "training needs analysis" and dwelling on weaknesses the way psychology researchers now regard Freudian sessions of laying on a leather couch digging back into childhood experiences as useless and often harmful.

Strengths-based leadership has deep and profound implications for personal, team, and organization development. I've been an especially avid student and supporter of the emerging science on emotional intelligence and positive psychology. ZF has managed to apply and advance these growing fields from philosophy or aspiration to implementation.

Below is an index of blogs, articles, and webcasts we've published in the last four months of 2012. You can pick and choose what you're most interested in, perhaps missed, or would like to pass along to others.

Overview of Strengths-Based Leadership Development System

- [Strengths-Based Leadership Development System](#) outlining the main differences of this approach, why we're partnering with Zenger Folkman and Client feedback.
- [Strengths-Based Leadership Development webcast](#) with me, Jack Zenger, and Joe Folkman
- [The Strengths-Based Leadership Development Revolution](#) webcast for The Canadian Society for Training and Development
- [Leadership Resource Center](#) for a variety of articles, white papers, and videos on Zenger Folkman's web site.

New Book

How to Be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success by Magnifying Your Strengths

- [How to Be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success by Magnifying Your Strengths](#) for my overview and review of this outstanding book followed by a few key quotations
- "[Counterintuitive tips on how to be exceptional](#)" for *The Globe & Mail's* review

- "[Some books deserve a long life: The next Good to Great?](#)" for *The Canadian HR Reporter's* review
- [A free e-book drawn from the first chapter of *How to Be Exceptional*](#) featuring video clips of Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman
- [McGraw-Hill Ryerson's site for a 40% discount](#) on *How to Be Exceptional* until January 31, 2013

The Revolutionary Leadership Development Paradigm

- "[Manifesto for a Leadership Development Revolution](#)" outlines my big shift in thinking after 35 years in this field
- "[Leadership Competency Models: Why Many Are Failing and How to Make them Flourish](#)" this includes the catalytic power of building 3 -- 5 strengths and how performance management practices need to change
- "[Leadership Lessons from Evidence-Based Medicine](#)" points to the need for a dramatic shift in leadership development toward evidence-based approaches
- "[Leadership Development: Are you Trapped by Paradigm Paralysis?](#)"

The Power of Focusing on Strengths

- "[Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm on ... Making Strengths Productive \(Peter Drucker\)](#)"
- "[The Enduring Impact of Focusing on Strengths](#)" featuring the story of a 7th grade teacher using a strengths-based approach
- "[Building Organizational Muscle: Why Building Strengths Pay Greater Dividends than Fixing Weaknesses](#)"
- "[Positive Psychology, Strengths, and Leadership](#)" shows the convergence of powerful research on how to shift from good to great
- "[Is Your Culture Anchored in Strengths or Weaknesses?](#)"

Cross-Training and Competency Companions

- "[Leadership Cross-Training is Powerful and Revolutionary](#)"
- "[Competency Companion Development Guide to Cross-Training](#)"
- "[Powerful Combinations: Drive for Results and Builds Relationships](#)"

The Power and Problems of Feedback and 360 Tools

- "[360 Feedback Tools Can Help or Hurt Leadership Development](#)"
- "[GPS for a Personal Development Plan](#)"
- "[9 Ways to Get Over Your Feedback Fears](#)"
- "[Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm on ...Using Feedback to Lead Forward](#)"
- "[9 Points for Getting 360 Degree Reviews Right](#)"

UPCOMING EVENTS



**Building
Extraordinary
Coaching Skills**

Free Webcast
with Jim Clemmer
Feb 12 - 1PM EST
Click to
REGISTER NOW!



**The Productivity
Improvement
Steering Wheel**

Free Webinar with
Jack Zenger & Joe Folkman
January 30
1PM EST

REGISTER NOW

GIVE YOUR TEAM THE GIFT OF BECOMING A BETTER BOSS

We are wrapping up another season of reflecting, giving, and planning. Most leaders care about their teams and organizations. Gifts, bonuses, parties, and good wishes abounded during the Holidays.



We all appreciate these seasonal expressions of gratitude and warmth. But the most lasting and profound gift a leader can give a team is uplifting his or her leadership skills from good to great. And by focusing on building strengths with the right roadmap it's not as tough as it appears.

In his *Forbes* blog, Jack Zenger, outlines these key steps you can take:

1. Inspire team members to high performance.
2. Focus on the big picture.
3. Make work and opportunity to learn.
4. Demonstrate concern for team members.
5. Resolve conflicts and insist on cooperation.
6. Ask team members to stretch.
7. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.
8. Walk your talk.

Gift yourself the pause that refreshes and read [The Best Gift An Employee Can Get: 8 Steps to Being a Better Boss in 2013](#).

Follow these steps and both you and your team will enjoy a truly Happy New Year!

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 find involving senior executives in rolling out "The XYZ (org name) Way" ensures successful culture and leadership development.

["How to Help Employees "Get" Strategy"](#) -- Charles Galunic and Immanuel Hermreck, *Harvard Business Review*
<http://hbr.org>

"We found that top management has a profound impact on how well employees grasp and support strategy -- far greater than any other variable we examined, and far greater than we'd expected."

Good reminders of common pitfalls and traps. We especially see [#4](#) "Adding Without Subtracting" snare lots of executives and their teams.

["Five Self-Defeating Behaviors that Ruin Companies and Careers"](#) -- Rosabeth Moss Kanter
<http://blogs.hbr.org>

"Too often people and companies exacerbate their troubles by their own actions. Self-defeating behaviors can make any situation worse. Put these five on the what-not-to-do list."

Every executive proclaims "people are our most important resource" but few build magnet organizations that attract and retain the very best.

["Extraordinary Performers: Why You Need Them; How To Keep Them"](#) -- Jack Zenger
<http://www.forbes.com>

"Much of the excellence comes from the host of people who conscientiously get work done and constantly look for ways to do it better."

With the same seasonal prediction silliness repeated each year here's a past blog showing a long line of

failed forecasts and prophecies.

["New Year's Prediction Alert: It's Silly Season Again!"](#) --
Jim Clemmer, The Practical Leader
<http://www.clemmergroup.com/blog>

"If the "experts" weren't so serious -- and often dire -- with their predictions for the New Year and beyond, this could be a highly amusing time of year. So have a good laugh when you hear pundits pour forth their "wisdom" about what's ahead."

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 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





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