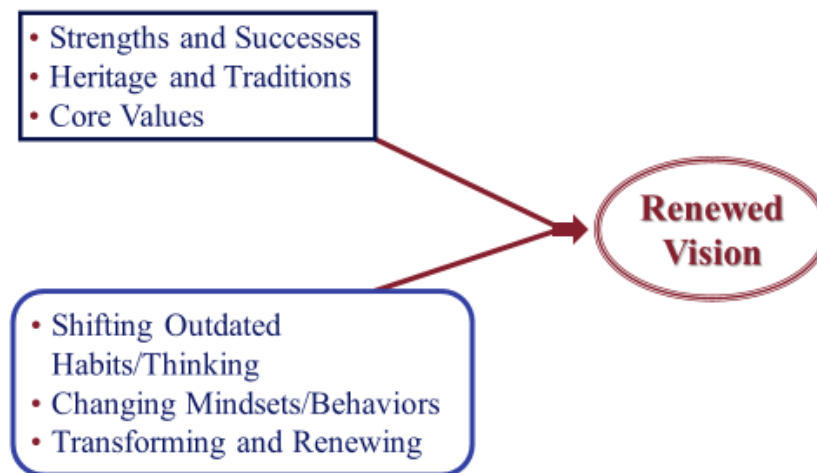**Issue 154** - January 2016

The Leader Letter

One reason organizational change efforts have failure rates as high as 70% is because too many newly appointed leaders take over a team or organization with overpowering messages of revolutionary change. Often the new leader implies that everything the team or organization did before they arrived on his or her white horse to save this day was wrong.

This is guaranteed to raise resistance and trigger the organizational immune system to reject this transplant. A much more effective approach honors and builds on strengths, values, and successes while blending new approaches, mindsets, and behaviors. Unless there's a widely acknowledged and obvious crisis, evolutionary change is often much more effective.

Evolutionary Change: Blending Strengths and Shifts

- Strengths and Successes
- Heritage and Traditions
- Core Values

Renewed Vision

- Shifting Outdated Habits/Thinking
- Changing Mindsets/Behaviors
- Transforming and Renewing

The dawn of a new year is an excellent time to review, refocus, and renew our approaches. This is best approached by blending our strengths, core values, and useful traditions with changes that feed our ongoing growth and continuous improvement.

As The CLEMMER Group continues our evolutionary journey we've been applying this approach to our programs

and services. As I wrote in "**New Keynotes and Workshops to Motivate, Energize, and Inspire Leaders**", last summer we reviewed and revised our **Custom Keynotes & Workshops** and **Leadership Team Retreats**.

This evolutionary exercise has led to our complimentary January 26, 2016 webinar on **Essential Building Blocks for Leadership, Coaching, and Culture Development**. As outlined in the first item in this issue, the webinar builds on and evolves our three core areas; frameworks for moving from inspiration to application, elevating leadership and coaching strengths, and strengthening people and processes for culture and organization development. A 12 point checklist also evolved from this work to help you assess your current team, coaching, and culture development.

May you find other material in this issue to blend your personal, team, and organizational strengths with the changes you need to keep you moving forward throughout 2016!

12 Point Leadership, Coaching, and Culture Development Checklist

Why does study after study continue to show that 70% of leadership, culture, change, and other improvement efforts fail?

There are many factors contributing to this persistently low success rate. The biggest element is leadership and organization culture. These two intertwined factors continually show up as the critical X factors. "Soft" leadership and culture boosts or blocks strategy, structure, and change initiatives.

We're now working on a **webinar** that pulls together and summarizes our decades of research and Client experiences on this critical issue. The big challenge is how to condense and share our key learning in 60 minutes.

This checklist has emerged from this work:

- Are you building a "leaderful" organization with everyone highly energized and engaged?
- Is your team/organization proactively changing so there's little danger of being changed?
- Does your team or organization balance the discipline of systems, processes, and technology management on a base of effective people leadership?
- Are you maximizing customers' perception of value by integrating with a systematic and strategic approach to customer service/quality?
- Do you have an evidence-based methodology to help leaders identify and magnify their strengths rather than focus on their weaknesses?
- Do you help leaders map out and leverage powerful combinations like drive for results and technical analytical skills with interpersonal skills and developing people?
- Do you have a process for building exceptional leadership and coaching skills in your organization?
- Is your team/organization culture boosting rather than blocking change and improvement efforts?
- Are your leadership and culture change efforts moving beyond partial and piecemeal programs to integration and alignment?
- Are your vision, core values, and purpose/mission linked to leadership behaviors and well lived throughout your organization?
- Do you have a culture of courageous conversations to raise and address issues before they quietly stifle performance?

- Do you have an integrated framework for assessment, planning, and implementation of your change and development efforts?

The more key factors you can check off, the higher the likelihood that your leadership, coaching, or culture development efforts will be successful. Pass the checklist around to your team for their input. For even higher honesty, you could make it anonymous through a tool like SurveyMonkey.

This **complimentary webinar** is January 26 at 1:00 EST. I'll cover three main foundational sections:

- Frameworks for Moving from Inspiration to Application,
- Elevating Leadership and Coaching Strengths, and
- Strengthening People and Processes for Culture and Organization Development.

Click on **Essential Building Blocks for Leadership, Coaching, and Culture Development webinar** for more information and to register.

Looking Forward to Facilitating another *Extraordinary Leader* Public Workshop

As organizations thin their ranks to run leaner, the need for building highly effective leaders becomes a strategic imperative. Stronger leaders create stronger organizations. This creates even stronger leaders across the organization in an upward spiraling circle toward peak performance.

Registrations for my facilitation of the **January 27 public workshop of *The Extraordinary Leader* in Toronto** are bringing us close to a full session. We have a few more seats left. As discussed in our recent webinar on "How Wilfrid Laurier University is Strengthening Leadership Skills and Culture," *The Extraordinary Leader* is customized and delivered internally. We rarely run public workshops and often they're sold out.

At **Leverage Your Leadership Strengths** you can watch a **brief video overview** of how *The Extraordinary Leader* has helped good managers become great leaders. Key points include:

- The huge difference between poor leadership and great leaders -- and the surprisingly large difference between good managers and great leaders.
- How do you develop great leaders (at the 80th to 90th percentile)?
- The worst person at predicting their leadership effectiveness is the leader.
- Fixing weaknesses is the wrong approach. All it does is point out what's wrong with leaders and is often a negative, punishing experience.
- Great leaders are not defined by the absence of weaknesses, but rather by the presence of a few profound strengths.
- Using a prioritization process that helps leaders choose a competency for further development based on what the organization needs from them and their passion for further development.
- Cross-training through non-linear development is a revolutionary new approach that creates powerful combinations taking a leader's strengths to the 90th percentile with the Competency Companion

Development Guide.
- Customized to the individual by building strengths makes for a personalized competency model with assessment and feedback becoming a positive process.

Too often leadership workshops are inspiring but quickly forgotten. I love delivering this workshop because of its powerful and lasting impact on participant effectiveness. Everyone leaves with a personalized, action-oriented, development plan that facilitates goal setting and follow through. Leaders continue developing and strengthening leadership skills, and apply leadership development in daily, on-the-job activities.

Click on **Extraordinary Leader** and **Extraordinary Coach public workshops** for more information on this process as well as its powerful companion, *The Extraordinary Coach*.

Avoiding 7 Coaching Traps That Snare Many Managers

"Research on the Dramatic Impact of Extraordinary Coaching Skills" shows that leaders who are the most effective at coaching have three times more employees that "go the extra mile." When leaders add coaching to their existing strengths they are ten times more likely to become a top-tier leader.

But as Aristotle observed "with regard to excellence, it is not enough to know but we must try to have and use it." This same advice applies to coaching skills. Today there's lots of "coaching speak" but little real coaching skills development.

Leaders often fall into these common coaching traps:

1. **Reactive problem solving** that puts out short-term fires and doesn't build long-term personal, team, or organization capabilities.
2. **Jumping into coaching discussions** with little planning and no framework to guide the conversation.
3. **Confusing giving advice/feedback** with coaching.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **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**.
7. **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?

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.

I am delivering *The Extraordinary Coach* **Workshop** in a public or open session (most are run internally) on January 28, 2016 in Mississauga, Ontario (15 minutes south of Toronto's airport). **Click here** for a two minute video overview of this session.

The High Cost of Failing to Deal with Toxic Employees

Cornerstone OnDemand analyzed their dataset of 63,000 employees spanning 250,000 observations and concluded:

- *Good employees are 54 percent more likely to quit when they work with a toxic employee, if the proportion of toxic employees on their team grows by as little as one on a team of 20.*
- *As toxic employees make their co-workers significantly more likely to leave, replacement costs rise greatly; hiring a single toxic employee into a team of 20 workers costs approximately $12,800, whereas hiring a non-toxic employee costs an employer an average of $4,000.*
- *Employees are many times more likely to engage in toxic behavior if they're exposed to other toxic employees.*

This research underscores the critical need for leaders to provide feedback and coaching to employees at the first signs of potentially toxic behavior. Unfortunately, we've found that a majority of leaders avoid giving corrective feedback. Yet almost every employee wants more feedback.

Here are a few tips for giving corrective feedback:

- **Immediately play the background music** – like music in a movie signaling something serious is about to happen, your facial expression, setting, or tone of voice can help your receiver prepare for the discussion.
- **Make and follow a plan** – this should include you calmly and objectively describing what's happened or the receiver's behavior that concerns you, getting his or her view of the situation, outlining how you'd like to see things to be going forward, and getting his or her agreement and ownership of the plan.
- **Don't tackle multiple topics in one discussion** – stick with your main concern and don't pile on other issues. Save those for another day.
- **Rehearse any serious discussion** – the more delicate or emotional the issue, the more critical it is that you're well prepared and have rehearsed how you'll frame and guide the conversation.
- **Treat the receiver with an extra measure of respect** – asking rather than telling, being calm and factual, and not insisting on a quick fix are marks of respect.

See our whitepaper, **Feedback – The Powerful Paradox**, for more insights and research underlying our *Elevating Feedback* coaching skills approach.

All the Best of 2015: Our Most Popular Content of the Year

Here is a recap of our most popular resources over the past year. I hope you'll have a little extra time over the

holidays to catch up on any that you missed, or review any you found especially helpful:

Blogs:

- **"The Quality of our Communication Determines the Quality of our Lives and Workplaces"**
- **"8 Factors That Frustrate and Disengage Employees**"
- **"8 Ways to Build Leadership Development on the Job**"
- **"How to Positively Correct Negative Behavior (Video)**"
- **"9 Key Behaviors Transforming Good Managers into Great Leaders**"

Videos:

- **Positively Correcting Negative Behavior**
- **Creating Empowerment and Growth**
- **Managing Things and Leading People**
- **Keys to Extraordinary Coaching**
- **Working on the team versus working in the team**
- **The FUEL Model for Coaching Conversations**

Articles:

- **"Management vs. Leadership**"
- **"Communication Strategies, Systems, and Skills**"
- **"Bad Boss: Learn How to Manage Your Manager**"
- **"Manage Things, Lead People**"
- **"Customer Satisfaction is a Reflection of Employee Satisfaction**"

Webinar Archives:

- **Leading a Peak Performance Culture**
- **6 Steps to Extraordinary Coaching Skills, Elevating Feedback, and Strengthening Leadership**
- **6 Leadership Levers that Drive Extraordinary Results**
- **BOLD Leadership Webinar**
- **How Laurier is Strengthening Leadership Skills and Culture**

Whitepapers:

- **"Creating a Competency Model that Works**"
- **"How Developing a Coaching Culture Pays Off**"
- **"Feedback -- The Powerful Paradox**"
- **"9 Vital Leadership Behaviors That Boost Employee Productivity**"
- **"Turning Feedback Into Change**"

Case Studies:

- **"Can Banking Leaders Change?**"

- "**Multinational Mobile Telecommunications Company**"
- "**Symantec Leaders Show Extraordinary Results**"
- "**Top U.S. Ivy League School**"
- "**Learning to Provide Feedback a Big Win for U.S. Grocery Chain**"

Just one form for all of our resources. With our site-wide registration, you can register once (free, of course), and have full access to all of the resources on the site, as well as any of the new resources we are constantly adding. You can **register here.**

Despite Dire Headlines the World is Getting Much, Much Better

Mass shootings, ISIS, the Charlie Hebdo attacks, November Paris massacre, climate change, economic upheaval, infectious diseases, Syrian refuges, crashing airplanes, hurricanes, corporate greed and deception, Donald Trump ... 2015 news headlines were full of disaster and despair. One national newscaster reflecting on the year solemnly declared 2015 the "year of darkness."

But that's mass media sucking us into the dark side of life. As Nicholas Kristof writes in *The New York Times*, "we journalists are a bit like vultures, feasting on war, scandal and disaster. Turn on the news, and you see Syrian refugees, Volkswagen corruption, and dysfunctional government. Yet that reflects a selection bias in how we report the news: We cover planes that crash, not planes that take off. Indeed, maybe the most important thing happening in the world today is something that we almost never cover: a stunning decline in poverty, illiteracy and disease."

Here's a partial list of what an incredibly better world we're building:

- Deaths from war have dropped from 300 per 100,000 people in the Second World War to 1.4 in 2014.
- Mass killings of unarmed civilians were 350 per 100,000 in World War II and 0.1 now.
- Rape and sexual assault in the U.S. has dropped from 750 per 100,000 women in 1993 to about 1/3 of that number.
- Since 1973 violent crime in the U.S. has dropped over threefold from 47 victims per 1,000 to 15.
- IQ scores have risen 24 points in the past 100 years.
- The ozone layer is on track to recover fully in the next few decades.
- Life expectancy has jumped from age 50 in 1900 to over 80 in most western countries.
- The percentage of children in poor countries who die before age 5 has been cut in half in the last 25 years.
- There are now 1 billion less or half as many people living in extreme poverty as in 1990.
- HIV can now be controlled and even cured.
- The U.N's Human Development Gender Inequality Index shows over a 20% decline in the past 20 years.
- Child labor has declined by 1/3 since 2000.
- Guinea worm infected 3.5 million people in 1996 and is now almost eradicated.
- Smoking rates in North America have dropped in half since 1945.
- Nuclear weapons have been reduced over 700% across the globe since their peak in 1986.
- Dictatorships and autocracies have fallen sharply since the 1970s and democracies now outnumber them by a wide margin.
- Years of education in USA, UK, Japan, France, India, and China averaged 2 years in 1820. It now ranges

from 16 to 21 years, and is continuing to increase, in those countries.

- Illiteracy rates have dropped dramatically and continue to fall.
- America's unsheltered homeless population has fallen by nearly 32% since 2007.
- Decades old Moore's Law -- the number of transistors on a chip will double every two years -- is still applicable and continuing to drive exponential growth in computing power and technological revolution.
- Access to the Internet is up to 80% in most western countries and rising rapidly in developing countries.
- The cost of producing solar power has dropped almost 300% since 2007 and battery technology to store that power is becoming ever more efficient.
- 22% of the world's electricity now comes from renewable generation through wind, solar, and hydro.
- The threat of overpopulation is fading fast as world population growth rates has fallen from 2.19% at its peak in 1963 to 1.13% today. This steady decline is expected to continue to less than 1% by 2020 and under .5% by 2050.

To paraphrase the super popular *Star Wars* movies, we need to see and use the force of optimism and positivity to counterbalance the dark side. When I was writing my book, **Growing @ the Speed of Change**: **Your Inspir-actional How-To Guide for Leading Yourself and Others through Constant Change** I posted an excerpt on **Range of Reality: Choosing the Best or the Worst of Times**. Creating the reality of the world we live in every day is a choice

What's your reality? Which force do you draw from most each day? These are vital questions for our health, happiness, success, and well-being. And for the energy we ripple back into the world around us.

Sources

- "**The Most Important Thing, and It's Almost a Secret**," Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*
- "**The world looks like it's getting worse. Here's why it's not**", John Stackhouse, *Reuters*
- **Worldometers – World Population Clock**
- "**25 Charts and maps that show the world is getting much, much better**"
- "**18 Undeniable Facts That Prove the World is Getting Better**"
- **2015 Gates Annual Letter (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)**
- "**Now for the good news: things really are getting better ...**", Steven Pinker, *The Guardian*, September 11, 2015

Most Brand Management is Misguided and Makes Things Worse

Many organizations are making major investments in external branding. But often less attention or investment is made in improving the organization's internal effectiveness.

If frontline staff isn't living the brand, customers' raised expectations are dashed and their anger and cynicism grows. One of the biggest reasons frontline staff can't live the brand is because operational, service, order fulfillment, and other processes aren't aligned.

When I suggested to one group during a **leadership team retreat** that they need to map out their badly flawed

order fulfillment process, they told me that had already been done. I asked who facilitated the project. We all managed to keep a straight face when they replied that the software vendor had helped them. And -- coincidentally -- the vendor had just the technical solution to "help" them! It was a disaster and brought the company to its financial knees.

Here are some keys to **strategic** process improvement:

- Operate in a data-rich environment with lots of visible data, such as; diagrams, charts, and graphs for everyone to quickly identify issues, opportunities, and progress.
- Use outside experts to teach and guide internally owned and operated strategic process management. Don't let specialists, consultants, or software vendors do theoretical process re-engineering or improvement in isolation and then slam-dunk it into the organization.
- Look for chronic problems that you're continually "fixing." These generally indicate that you haven't drilled down deep enough to the root causes and/or they are symptoms of broader process problems.
- Make process management part of a broader improvement planning infrastructure and process.
- Does your internal environment have high enough levels of trust and teamwork to support involved process management?

Further Resources:

- **Leading a Peak Performance Culture** webinar
- **"Leadership and Culture Development is Critical to Lean/Six Sigma Success**"
- "**Lean Leadership: Boosting or Blocking Lean/Six Sigma Tools and Techniques**"
- **"Bolt-on Programs versus Built-In Culture Change"**

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 short video showing surprisingly that people prefer to get corrective feedback much more than positive -- if managers do this one thing.

"Give Your Team More Negative Feedback" -- video at *Harvard Business Review* Blog
https://hbr.org
They actually want it. Based on the article, "The Assumptions That Make Giving Tough Feedback Even Tougher."

This research shows powerful correlations between recognition and employee engagement and how to increase it.

"How Much Thanks Are You Giving? 6 Ways to Recognize Others More Often", -- Joe Folkman,

Forbes
www.forbes.com
"Leaders who were worst at recognizing others have direct reports with engagement at the 31st percentile. But the best leaders at showing appreciation were rewarded with engagement levels of 77th percent."

A few practical suggestions on inspiring, growing team members, and providing direction and purpose. "Here Are 3 Ways to Help Employees Love Their Jobs", Joe Folkman, Forbes

"Here Are 3 Ways to Help Employees Love Their Jobs", --Joe Folkman, *Forbes*
www.forbes.com
"I've reviewed data from more than 300,000 team members and found the key behaviors of leaders that lead others to higher engagement and satisfaction."

Peter Drucker once said Frances was the most effective executive with whom he had ever worked.

"The Five Most Important Questions: Enduring Wisdom for Today's Leaders", -- podcast with Jack Zenger
www.zengerfolkman.com
"Frances Hesselbein, founding President of the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute, formerly known as the Peter Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, joins Jack Zenger in this podcast."

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** or connect with me on **LinkedIn**, **Twitter**, **FaceBook**, or my **blog**!

May the Force (of strengths) be with you!

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