



Issue 148 - July 2015

The Leader Letter

How many of these points apply to your organization?

- High "snicker factor" on your vision, values, or mission statements
- Declining or stagnant employee engagement levels
- Absenteeism and "mental health days"
- Difficulty attracting or hanging on to top talent
- Waning or plateaued Client/Customer satisfaction
- Resistance to change
- Weak trust and teamwork
- Less than stellar service/quality levels
- Good but not great health and safety



These are attributes of a mediocre or even cynical organization culture. Unfortunately, they're increasingly common as organizations struggle with financial pressures, rapidly changing market conditions, globalization, shifting workforce demographics and attitudes, new technologies, and ever more demanding customers.

To counterbalance these negative trends would you like to:

- Intertwine strong leadership skills and a powerful culture?
- Improve leadership/culture development for higher change and transformation?
- Align team/organization culture change and development programs to boost performance outcomes?
- Learn key implementation steps to move you much closer to your desired culture?

These were a few of the key points I addressed in last month's **Leading a Peak Performance Culture webcast**. In this issue you'll find different elements of the leadership and culture development topics touched on in that webcast. And since "Thoughts That Make You Go hmmm..." is always popular and there are so many insightful perspectives from our research on organizational culture, we've given you a double helping.

Every team and organization has a culture. The key questions are: what's your current culture, how do you know, and is it by design?

May you find ideas here to sharpen your leadership and shape your culture.

Five Critical Steps in Developing a Peak Performance Culture



Southwest Airlines has not only been the most financially successful airline in history it has also produced the #1 return to investors of all S&P 500 publicly traded companies for a 30 year period. Herb Kelleher, co-founder, Chairman Emeritus, and former CEO declares, "it's the intangibles that are the hardest things for competitors to imitate. You can get an airplane. You can get ticket-counter space, you can get baggage conveyors. But it is our esprit de corps -- the culture, the spirit -- that is truly our most valuable competitive asset."

Bruce Huber, Barrick Gold's former director of Safety & Health, also pointed to culture when he reflected on the main reason the company saw a remarkable 65% reduction in total recordable safety incidents over three years, "Continuing to focus on the 'technical side of safety' would take 40 years or more to approach zero injuries ... we had to shift our focus to achieve a better balance between technical safety (policies, procedures, training and auditing) and the people side of safety (leading, motivating, coaching, and inspiring). ... to encourage people to speak up we need to create an open atmosphere and show them we'll respect their opinions, listen to their ideas, and enlist their support in finding solutions."

Whether its customer service, safety, or implementing key organizational changes, culture is the critical factor that boosts or blocks peak performance. Our research and experience guiding dozens of Clients in culture development efforts has shown these five key steps need to be followed:

1. Defining or revitalizing vision, core values, and purpose/mission to make emotional connections.
2. Identifying supervisor, manager, and executive behaviors that move beyond lip service to visible and active leadership.
3. Aligning management systems and processes that often contradict values like safety, customer focus, or trust.
4. Developing frontline staff's motivation, skills, and behaviors to bring the desired culture to life in their thousands of daily decisions and interactions.
5. Continually improving and further developing local and organizational processes, systems, attitudes, and skill sets.

In last month's **Leading a Peak Performance Culture** webcast I outlined these and related implementation steps. [Click here](#) to access the archived webinar.

Leading a Peak Performance Culture Webcast Links



With over 500 sites from many countries tuned to our one hour webcast last week it's clear that **Leading a Peak Performance Culture** is a topic with lots of interest. You can now view the full archived webcast by [clicking here](#).

During this fast-paced session I gave a high altitude, jet speed overview of a large amount of leadership and organization development territory. Here are links to more information within the five topic areas I covered:

1. How Culture Boosts or Blocks Peak Performance

- **"Is Your Culture by Default or Design?"**
- **"Health and Safety Lessons Learned from Barrick Gold"**

2. Soft Skills, Hard Results

- **"Leadership and Management: The High-Wire Balancing Act"**
- **"The High Performance Balance"**
- **"Management versus Leadership"**
- **"The Three Rings of Perceived Value"** (look further at this approach in a series of Three Rings blogs at **Customer Service**)

3. Beyond Partial and Piecemeal Programs

- **"Bolt-On Programs versus Built-In Culture Change"**
- **"Piecemeal Programs or Culture Change: Which Road Are you on?"**
- **"Why Most Change Programs and Improvement Initiatives Fail"**
- **"Transformation Pathways"** (Compass Model)

4. Steps to Desired Culture

- **"Steps to Culture Change"**
- **"Culture Change Commitment Continuum"**

5. Typical Implementation Steps

- **"Leading a Customer-Centered Organization"**
- **"Harnessing the Power of an Offsite Retreat"**
- **"Using Strategic Imperatives to Drive Team/Organization Development"**

Some of the research on culture I cited in this webcast came from McKinsey & Company's ten year global study and major literature review. A key conclusion was "What we might think of as the usual suspects -- inadequate resources, poor planning, bad ideas, unpredictable external events -- turn out to account for less than a third of change program failures ... more than 70 percent of failures are driven by what we would categorize as poor organizational health, as manifested in such symptoms as negative employee attitudes and unproductive management behavior ... taking deliberate steps to move the needle on the soft stuff is a vital element in organizational transformations, though it's often overlooked."

Making People Stronger for Organizations and Organizations Stronger for People

Decades of research shows that many leadership development programs have little impact on creating lasting behavior change. Sometimes called "spray and pray" or "sheep dipping," many efforts provide one-off learning or development events in the hope that something will stick. With weak follow through and little connection to daily work life it rarely does.

...key to lasting leadership and organization development:

$$B = P \times C$$

Decades of research also shows that 70% of organizational change efforts fail. And the "snicker factor" soars as leaders rollout another branding exercise or change mantra. Too often culture or organization change isn't connected to the behaviors needed at all levels to lead and sustain the change.

We've found this simple formula is key to lasting and effective leadership and organization development; **B = P x C**. That is, **Behavior** is a factor of **Personal development** multiplied by the organization's **Culture**. Anchored around 3 or 4 core values, behaviors must be clearly defined and described. These are usually driven throughout the entire organization in a series of hands-on exercises with middle and senior leaders actively involved. Everyone is given extensive skill development. The most effective approaches are built around leadership competencies and strengths-based feedback assessments supported by strong coaching.

The development of "soft skills" won't last unless they're intertwined with "hard" processes and systems. So Key Performance Indicators, performance management systems, production or customer services processes, financial, HR, IT, and other systems must support the organization/culture change. Too often, for example, values like trust, communication, teamwork, or customer focus are loudly proclaimed. But processes are too local and disconnected leading to departmental silos or walls between groups. Or critical HR systems look for gaps/weaknesses to fix, financial systems or policies are designed for "snoopervision," and IT systems force procedures or provide tools that don't fit internal and external customer needs.

In last week's **Leading a Peak Performance Culture** webcast I explained The CLEMMER Group's "reason for being" in our logo: *Strong People. Stronger Organizations*. This comes from a deep-seated experience and long-held belief that this is an interdependent cycle that creates a flywheel effect. Stronger people create stronger organizations and stronger organizations create stronger people. We need to do both together for sustained and extraordinary performance.

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm on...Organizational Culture (Part One)

"It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue... but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look..."

- Henry David Thoreau, American author, poet, and philosopher

"Before we can learn to lead, we must learn about the context that limits the full expression of leadership. Indeed, anyone who does not master the context will be mastered by it."

- Warren Bennis and Joan Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader*

"In many organizations, culture is the most potent and hard-to-replicate source of competitive advantage -- far more important, for example, than technological innovation. By the time the superior performance it produces comes to the attention of competitors and the public, an organization's culture is well established and doing its job... one responsibility that can't be delegated completely is reshaping and maintaining an effective culture."

- James Heskett, *The Culture Cycle: How to Shape the Unseen Force that Transforms Performance*



"Habit becomes a sort of second nature, which supplies a motive for many actions."

- Cicero, Roman philosopher and politician

"Leaders own the job of creating the company culture. You've got to actually model and encourage the behavior you talk up."

- Patty McCord, "How Netflix Reinvented HR," *Harvard Business Review*

"Change begins when emotionally intelligent leaders actively question the emotional reality and the cultural norms underlying the group's daily activities and behavior. To create resonance -- and results -- the leader has to pay attention to the hidden dimensions: people's emotions, the undercurrents of the emotional reality in the organization, and the culture that holds it all together."

- Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis & Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*

"All the 10X companies cultivated cult-like cultures wherein the right people would flourish and equally, where the wrong people would quickly self-eject."

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

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm on ... Organizational Culture (Part Two)

"A good custom is surer than law"

- Euripides, Ancient Greek writer

"The essence of a visionary company comes in the translation of its core ideology and its own unique drive for progress into the very fabric of the organization -- into goals, strategies, tactics, policies, processes, cultural practices, management behaviors, building layouts, pay systems, accounting systems, job design -- into everything that the company does."

- James C. Collins and Jerry Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*



"Instead of concentrating merely on strengthening the skills of individuals, these companies focus on building a broad organizational leadership capability... Organizations with leadership brands take an "outside-in" approach to executive development. They begin with a clear statement of what they want to be known for by customers and then link it with a required set of management skills.

- Dave Ulrich and Norm Smallwood, "Building a Leadership Brand," *Harvard Business Review*

"Brand is what people say about you when you leave the room."

- Jeff Bezo, founder, Amazon.com

"Since finding meaning in one's environment is such an important aspect of resilience, it should come as no surprise that the most successful organizations and people possess strong value systems. Strong values infuse an environment with meaning because they offer ways to interpret and shape events."

- Diane L. Coutu, "How Resilience Works," *Harvard Business Review*

"Unsuccessful transitions almost always founder during at least one of the following phases: generating a sense of urgency, establishing a powerful guiding coalition, developing a vision,

communicating the vision clearly and often, removing obstacles, planning for and creating short-term wins, avoiding premature declarations of victory, and embedding changes in the corporate culture."

- John P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review*

"The role of a leader is not to come up with all the great ideas. The role of a leader is to create an environment in which great ideas can happen. It is the people inside the company, those on the front lines, who are best qualified to find new ways of doing things."

- Simon Sinek, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*

Webinar on BOLD Leadership



"Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now."

These words are often attributed to the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe but seems to be a compilation from various sources.

Regardless of the author, this powerful advice identifies a timeless leadership truth as declared by Winston Churchill, "the leader's task is to boldly confront the currents of change and harness its power for good."

Does your organization need leaders who:

- Challenge standard approaches
- Create an atmosphere of continual improvement
- Do everything possible to achieve goals
- Get others to go beyond what they originally thought possible
- Are energized to take on challenging goals
- Quickly recognize situations where change is needed
- Have courage to make needed changes

Most organizations find themselves either in competitive battles or with mandates to reduce costs and increase productivity. Those mild mannered, "Steady Eddie," timid leaders of the past need to step-up and become BOLD.

Zenger Folkman discovered that bold leaders exist in every company and every culture, but some cultures generate more bold leaders than others. Interestingly, there is a higher percentage of females that are bold leaders than males.

ZF has found that the most effective bold leaders combine their bold approach with other skills such as good judgment and relationship building. Alternatively, leaders who are bold with poor judgment possess a very dangerous combination.

Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman addressed this fascinating leadership topic in a webinar last month. Jack and Joe also welcomed Kevin Wilde as a guest presenter for the webinar. Kevin is the VP of Organization Effectiveness & Chief Learning Officer at General Mills, an Award-Winning Development Leader, and Columnist for *Talent Management Magazine*.

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

Kevin Wilde, General Foods, Chief Learning Officer Returns to Leadership/Coaching Summit



This month's **Extraordinary Leadership Summit and Coaching Symposium** will be the fourth one I've participated in since forming our partnership with Zenger Folkman. Three intense and powerful days of workshops, Client presentations, panels, and discussion groups provides a rare chance to hear about the latest leadership, coaching, and organization development research and practices.

We're especially pleased that Kevin Wilde is back again. Kevin is VP Organization Effectiveness and Chief Learning Officer at General Mills. *Fortune* magazine holds up the company as a shining example of leadership development; "consider General Mills, prospering in the fiercely competitive food industry. Its famously demanding leadership culture hasn't wavered, and the company ranks No. 21 on Glassdoor.com's new list of the 25 companies where it's hardest to get hired." -- a company recognized as one of the top 25 in leadership development in the U.S. and one of ZF's longest term Clients.

At a Summit two years ago Kevin and I had a long drive to the airport together and chatted at length about his pioneering work with Zenger Folkman's *Extraordinary Leader* process when it was just coming into use. In the **Foreword to *How to Be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success by Magnifying Your Strengths***, Kevin wrote of the meeting he had with his skeptical CEO when they were considering Zenger Folkman's strengths-based leadership development approach. Kevin replied, "While some need to concentrate on fatal flaws, most of our leaders would be wasting their time making small, incremental improvements on a few, below-average scores that may not matter in the long run ... if we concentrate all our efforts getting everyone to average, that is what we will achieve -- a company of average leaders ... we needed exceptional leaders with profound strengths that matter."

If you attend this year's Summit you will also 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).

And you can participate in our 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).

Brad Smith, our Director of Client Development, and I would also welcome a chance to chat with you about what you're learning and how you can apply the powerful leadership development and coaching approaches from this Summit.

Go to **Extraordinary Leadership Summit and Coaching Symposium** for more information.

Coaching Video Clip: Creating Empowerment and Growth

"Management Time: Who's Got the Monkey?" is a 1974 *Harvard Business Review* article that's become widely cited and reprinted. The authors, William Oncken, Jr. and Donald L. Wass use the metaphor of a problem or issue being like a monkey on someone's back. This excerpt outlines a leadership trap that's still ensnaring many managers over 40 years later:



"Subordinate-imposed time begins the moment a monkey successfully leaps from the back of a subordinate to the back of his or her superior and does not end until the monkey is returned to its proper owner for care and feeding. In accepting the monkey, the manager has voluntarily assumed a position subordinate to his subordinate. That is, he has allowed Jones to make him her subordinate by doing two things a subordinate is generally expected to do for a boss -- the manager has accepted a responsibility from his subordinate, and the manager has promised her a progress report.

The subordinate, to make sure the manager does not miss this point, will later stick her head in the manager's office and cheerily query, "How's it coming?" (This is called supervision.)"

In a coaching presentation I addressed this common leadership problem with a look at how to reverse this "upward delegation" cycle. Click on **Creating Empowerment and Growth** to view a 3 minute video excerpt addressing this issue. I also use the Leadership Continuum to distinguish between Laissez-faire, Collaborative, and Autocratic leadership styles and when each one is appropriate.

Strengthen coaching skills so you can stop monkeying around!

Further Reading:

- **"Monkey Management: Creating Empowerment and Growth"**
- **"How Many Monkeys Are On Your Back?"**
- **"Breaking the Manager-Employee Dependence Spin Cycle"**
- **Coaching blogs, videos, articles, and other resources**

How to Conquer Digital Overload



A *New Yorker* cartoon shows two people standing at a bar having a glass of wine. One is peering over the top of a tall dog cone around his neck and explains to the other "It keeps me from checking my phone every two seconds."

The Information Overload Research Group reports that "knowledge workers in the United States waste 25% of their time dealing with their huge and growing data streams, costing the economy \$997 billion annually." In way too many cases, "smart phones" are turning us into dumb digital slaves.

The June issue of *Harvard Business Review* features an article on "Conquering Digital Distraction" which begins by stating, "digital overload may be the defining problem of today's workplace...we waste

time, attention, and energy on relatively unimportant information and interactions, staying busy but producing little of value."

The authors, Larry Rosen, a psychologist, and Alexandra Samuel, a technologist provide different but balancing advice on how to deal with this huge and growing problem:

- Wean yourself gradually from constantly checking e-communication until you can increase your offline time to an hour or more.
- Take a recharging walk, listening to music, meditation, or exercise break every 90 minutes if you're multitasking with technology.
- Keep technology out of your bedroom and abstain or dramatically dim your screen an hour before bed time.
- Forget about "keeping up." Sort and limit the information you receive and streamline your reading, responding, and sharing.
- Use newsreader apps to sort and filter the information you're most interested in.
- Use tools like Hootsuite, Buffer, or Social Inbox to stay connected with multiple social networks.

Technology can provide liberating and higher leverage tools. Or technology can enervate and enslave us. It all boils down to how we use or are used by our tools.

Further Reading:

- **"Email tips for Effective Leaders"**
- **"Research Shows Strong Leaders Aren't Controlled by Technology and Workloads"**
- **"Are You in Control of or Controlled by Technology?"**
- **"Tame Your Technology and Get More Sleep"**

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:

Join Jack and Joe and Kevin Wilde from General Mills on Wed (24th) for a complimentary webcast on this research.

"Bold Leadership: The 4 Steps That Take Leaders To Another Level" -- Joe Folkman
www.Forbes.com

"By examining 360 degree reports on more than 50,000 leaders in all industries and from around the world I have identified leaders who exhibit bold behaviors and have researched their effect."

Interesting research with some predictable and surprising findings -- especially comparing countries and functions.

Age, Gender And Ability To Listen: Who Listens Best?-- Jack Zenger
www.Forbes.com

"So Who Really Is A Better Listener? To collect objective data on these questions, my colleague Joe Folkman and I created an effective listening scale with eight items"

Also take our Coaching Attributes and Perspectives Assessment and compare your scores with outstanding coaches.

Podcast: Do you Have What It Takes to Be a Good Coach?

www.zengerfolkman.com/podcast

"The empirical evidence is clear. Effective coaching makes a difference in employee commitment and engagement, productivity, retention, customer relationships, and how the upper levels of leadership are perceived."

Surprising and counter intuitive findings from a global assessment of people feeling overwhelmed by too much to do.

"Can Working Faster Reduce Stress?"-- Jack Zenger

www.Forbes.com

"When individuals deliberately turn up their clock speed and focus effort on the right activities, they can increase their pace and by doing so actually feel far less overwhelmed."

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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