



Issue 140 - November 2014

The Leader Letter

Since The CLEMMER Group's founding in 1994, business, organizational life -- our world -- has been dramatically changing. Our first programs and services were built around my just published, third book *Pathways to Performance: A Guide to Transforming Yourself, Your Team, and Your Organization*. Over the next 15 years I wrote four more books that both grew from, and helped shape, our evolving programs and services.



Our biggest change came in 2012 as we formed a strategic partnership with my old colleague, Jack Zenger, and the ground breaking (and award winning) work his firm Zenger Folkman have pioneered during the past decade. In the past two years we've integrated ZF's new science of strengths-based leadership and coaching development with our culture and leadership development. In January we hired Brad Smith as Director of Client Development to lead us to our next level of growth.

As outlined in this issue's first item, our Marketing Director, Julie Gil, has done an outstanding job of updating, simplifying, and streamlining our web site. It's structured around what have now become the three main pillars of our business. Click on any of the bullet points to explore these areas:

Customized Keynotes, Workshops, and Retreats

- **Custom Leadership Development**
- **Keynotes & Speaking Engagements**
- **Custom Workshop & Retreats**
- **Leadership Books**

In this Issue:

Rebuilt Website for Better Access to Our Large Resource Library

Facing a Talent Gap? Archived Webcast Now Available

Perceptions Are a Leader's Reality

Interview Questions That Made Me Go Hmmm....

Webinar on the 10 Distinctive Behaviors of Innovative Leaders

Human Resources Leaders Need to Create More Strategic Value

Strong Leaders Serve and Support

Book Review of *Joseph Campbell: A Fire in the Mind*

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm from *Joseph Campbell*

Tweet Reading: Recommended Online Articles

Development & Consulting

- **Culture & Organization Development**
- **Consulting & Training**
- **Team Building & Development**
- **Strategic Process Management**

Zenger Folkman

- **Strengths-Based Leadership Development**
- **Programs and Services (Curriculum)**
- **360-Degree Assessments**
- **Press Room**

Drop on by, do a little site seeing, and explore the topics that will help you, your team, and organization continue your growth and development.

Rebuilt Website for Better Access to Our Large Resource Library

Since putting our website online in 1996 it's grown to 1,900 pages of book excerpts, columns, blogs, articles, videos, webinars, and information about The CLEMMER Group's programs and services. All of these resources became increasingly difficult to navigate. This was further complicated by a clunky old website platform that allowed few options to make navigation easier.



After over a year of planning and months of hard work with web site developers and administrative support from Betty Kaita, our Director of Marketing, Julie Gil, has just put our completely rebuilt and upgraded site online. Here are a few key features:

- Modernized and updated look and branding. This is now reflected in our monthly newsletter ***The Leader Letter***.
- It's now mobile-responsive and is much easier to browse and read on a phone, pad, or mobile device.
- **Zenger Folkman** research, resources, and materials are fully integrated throughout the site.
- Social media and sharing has been improved and now available on all

Read *The Leader Letter* in Twice Weekly Installments

Feedback and Follow-Up

View PDF Version

Past Issues

Practical Leadership Blog

Visit Our Site!

Let's Connect



Share this!

Please forward this newsletter to colleagues, Clients, or associates you think might be interested -- or on a 'need-to-grow' basis.

Was this forwarded to you? **Subscribe** to receive *The Leader Letter* monthly!

pages.

- Visitors no longer need to register separately each time to view webinars, white papers, and case studies. One **registration** provides free access to all these resources.

A major new feature is the integration and indexing of all our resources. You can overview this on our **Resources main page**. These include whitepapers, case studies, webcasts/webinars, blog posts, excerpts/articles library, video clips, books/workbooks/CDs, and *The Leader Letter*. On the right column of that page -- and all resource pages -- is our master index of topics. It shows 12 topics under Zenger Folkman and over 30 topics under the headings of General Management & Leadership, Organization Improvement, Self-Leadership, and Leading Others.

When you click on any topic you're first shown a list of all resources related to that topic. At the top of the page you can "Click to view:" just our blogs, articles, whitepapers, case studies, videos, webinars, or books/CDs on that topic.

You can also enter any topic into our onsite search engine at the top right corner. Again you're shown all resources and can filter those further by hitting the "Click to view" button for what you'd like to see.

We hope you find our new web site a highly valuable development resource that you'll use regularly and refer to others. Please provide feedback to Julie and me at julie.gil@clemmergroup.com and jim.clemmer@clemmergroup.com.

Facing a Talent Gap? Archived Webcast Now Available

Last month I delivered a fast-paced webcast addressing the serious talent gap impeding many organizations. As I outlined at the beginning of the webcast, research shows:

- 70% of executives think their organization lacks adequate bench strength.
- 97% of organizations report serious leadership gaps -- 40% say these are severe.



Permission to Reprint

You may reprint any items from *The Leader Letter* in your own printed publication or e-newsletter as long as you include this paragraph:

"Reprinted with permission from *The Leader Letter*, Jim Clemmer's free e-newsletter. For almost thirty years, Jim's 2,000 + practical leadership presentations and workshops/retreats, seven bestselling books, columns, and newsletters have been helping hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. His web site is www.clemmergroup.com."

- 65 to 75% of current senior management will be eligible to retire by 2020.
- 40% of leaders hired from outside are pushed out or leave 18 months after joining an organization.
- 60% of companies face leadership shortages that impede their performance.
- 31% say developing leaders is their largest talent issue.

Clearly there aren't any quick and easy answers to the big talent crunch. Through our strategic partnership with Zenger Folkman and their deep talent management research we're pioneering and delivering powerful new approaches to engagement, leadership development, succession/career planning, and coaching effectiveness.

I packed a lot of information into a very quick moving 60 minute webcast that covered:

- The dangers of the growing talent gap and how to avoid them.
- Why current development approaches aren't filling the leadership pipeline.
- Key leadership and performer competencies that have the greatest impact on productivity, engagement, turnover, sales, customer service, safety, and profitability.
- How to outperform by building on strengths rather than focusing on weakness.
- How to make 360 assessments 2-3 times more effective and a positive experience.
- How cross-training moves leaders and performers from good to great.
- Six steps to developing extraordinary coaching skills.

Click **Facing a Talent Gap?** to view the webcast.

I am also delivering public workshops on ***The Extraordinary Leader***, ***The Extraordinary Coach***, and ***The Extraordinary Performer*** in Vancouver, Edmonton, and Toronto in December. These powerful new approaches build on the research and concepts covered in the webcast. See our **Upcoming Events** section for details.

Perceptions Are a Leader's Reality

Have you ever caught yourself saying, "that's not reality, that's just their perception"? This is a common trap leaders often fall into when receiving personal feedback or reviewing organizational survey data.

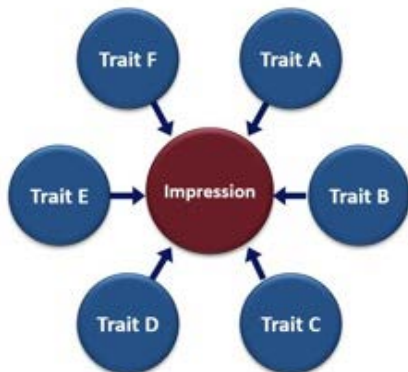


We judge ourselves by our intentions. Everyone else assesses our leadership effectiveness by our behavior. That's a highly subjective evaluation based on what others see us doing. No one can see into a leader's heart or hear his or her thoughts (which for some is a very good thing). So the perceptions of a leader's direct reports, peers, manager, and others is all there is.

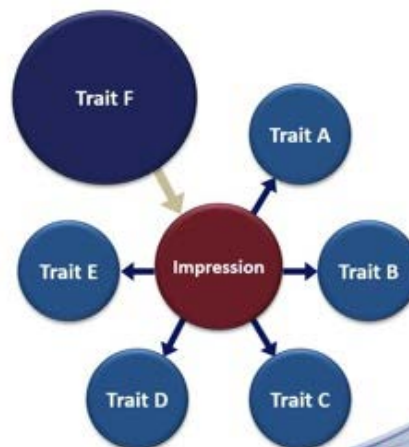
In our *Extraordinary Leader* development system we use this slide to emphasize this critical concept:

The Reality of Leadership Perceptions

How people would objectively evaluate us



How people really evaluate us



a strategic partner of

ZF ZENGER | FOLKMAN



clemmergroup.com

In a purely rational and logical world everyone would empirically weigh out a leader's key traits and behaviors to arrive at a fair and balanced overall assessment of effectiveness. But in our emotional and subjective world one

or two traits stand out. If they're highly positive they will inflate perceptions of all the other traits and the leader's overall effectiveness is rated much higher. If a very negative trait or two stand out the other traits shrink and the leader's overall effectiveness is diminished.

The first key question for every leader is what's your Trait F? The second critical question is how do you **know** how others perceive you?

Related Blog Posts:

- **Feedback Power and Problems**
- **360 Assessments**
- **Focusing on Strengths**

Interview Questions That Made Me Go Hmmm....

At this fall's Canadian Society for Training and Development conference I am delivering a 90 minute workshop on November 13, ***Revolutionary Leadership Development that Doubles Learner Motivation***. In their eNewsletter CSTD shone "the Speaker Spotlight" on me with a series of questions. Answering these questions was thought provoking:



How did you end up working in this field? In other words, did you choose this career or did it choose you?

Back in the day, as a sales manager with Culligan, I took a few Dale Carnegie training courses and got turned on to personal development. I then studied and started using coaching and development approaches with my direct reports and later as a sales trainer. Given the powerful results I experienced from these approaches I moved into the industry through co-founding The Achieve Group (now AchieveGlobal) in the early eighties.

What key strength do you think you bring to the industry?

Blending the catalytic power of the "soft skills" of leadership with management processes and systems that build stronger people and stronger organizations.

Who was your favorite teacher growing up and why?

Mrs. Westman, my grade six teacher, was highly encouraging and nurturing. One day, after handing in a short written story or assignment, she said "I won't be surprised to see your name on a book someday." When I published my first leadership book in 1988 I went to her home and presented her with a copy inscribed with a personal thank you note. The local paper caught wind of the story and published a feature article giving her the recognition she deserved.

What do you think symbolizes true leadership?

Authenticity. Highly effective leaders leverage their strengths and look for feedback to become even better at doing what they do well -- and what they love to do. They don't try to "change their spots" by focusing on weaker areas and trying to change themselves into someone they're not.

If you had to sum up your leadership and training philosophy with one tip, what would that be?

Get feedback on your strengths and build those (unless there's a critical weakness that people can't see past). Become an effective coach at bringing out and building the strengths of those you lead.

If you could change it all today, what alternate career would you choose?

I'd get into psychology or neurosciences research.

Which celebrity would you choose to play you in the movie of your life?

My wife, Heather, probably wishes I'd look like George Clooney but that would be a gross misrepresentation -- and the poor guy has way too much hair! Harrison Ford might be better with his combination of street savvy and humor that I've always enjoyed. My life hasn't been nearly as adventurous as the parts he's played.

Name one book or film from the past decade that has had a big impact on you. Why?

The pioneering work of Martin Seligman in founding positive psychology (*Learned Optimism*, *Authentic Happiness*, and *Flourish*) and Zenger Folkman's ground breaking research advancing strengths-based philosophies with practical methodologies (*The Extraordinary Leader* and *How to Be Exceptional*) are highly complementary combinations that have sharpened my own personal growth and dramatically shifted our approaches to leadership development.

What are you reading now?

I am rereading *The Power of Myth* by Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell (working to get my head around Campbell's huge and deep legacy of research on mythology and religion) and *Lincoln* by Gore Vidal (I love historical fiction).

What is your ideal travel destination? Why?

Heather and I love long ocean cruises. After taking a four week Hawaii and South Pacific cruise we confirmed that doing a world cruise is on our bucket list. I love visiting a variety of cultures and countries to learn of their history and customs before and during our stops there.

Webinar on the 10 Distinctive Behaviors of Innovative Leaders

George Bernard Shaw, the highly creative Irish playwright (he wrote more than 60 plays and won a Nobel Prize in Literature), and founder of the London School of Economics, George Bernard Shaw once declared, "Some people see things as they are and say 'why?' I dream things that never were, and say 'Why not?'"



Seeing things as they could be is more critical than ever to leading at the speed of change in today's world. Every industry and sector of our economy is experiencing seismic shifts in products, services, and processes. Businesses are being destroyed and created at an unprecedented pace.

At the center of this whirlwind of change are innovative leaders creatively seeing -- and bringing into being -- things that never were. Innovation sets organizations apart from their competitors. But how do you cultivate innovation in leaders and teams?

To find out, Zenger Folkman conducted their own study. ZF began by collaborating with a highly respected organization in the telecommunications industry whose leaders scored well above average on most managerial competencies. ZF interviewed each one, together with their boss, and a number of their direct reports and peers. ZF then combined the results of these group interviews with 360-degree feedback they had about these individuals. The results were fascinating and produced a list of behaviors

that set this group apart as innovation leaders.

Last month Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman delivered a webinar with their insights on what drives innovative behavior. The results of their research provided their outline for 10 distinctive behaviors that emerge for the most innovative leaders. Click on [What Makes Leaders Innovative? Learn the 10 Distinctive Behaviors](#) to access this archived webinar.

Human Resources Leaders Need to Create More Strategic Value

International consultant and management author, Ram Charan, wrote a provocative article in the July-August issue of *Harvard Business Review*. In "**It's Time to Split HR**" he declares "I talk with CEOs across the globe who are disappointed in their HR people." He goes on to explain that CEOs would like to get the same sort of strategic advice from their CHRO (chief human resources officer) as from their CFO and use them as sounding boards and trusted partners in key people and organizational issues.



Ram recommends breaking the profession into an administrative department for compensation and benefits reporting to the CFO and a higher level group for improving leadership and organization capabilities reporting to the CEO.

In response to Ram's article, business professor, author, consultant, and HR researcher, Dave Ulrich, argues that instead of rearranging organization charts we should "**Focus on Creating Value Not Splitting HR**". The most insightful section of Dave's response is the unique value that highly effective HR leaders add. He breaks these into three interconnected and strategic areas:

Talent: *Delivering competence (right people, right place, right time, right skills), commitment (engagement), contribution (growth mindset, meaning, and well-being) of employees throughout the organization.*

Leadership: *Ensuring leaders at all levels who think, feel, and act in ways that deliver sustainable market value to employees, customers, investors, and communities.*

Capability: Identify the organization capabilities (called culture, system, process, resources, etc.) that enable organizations to win over time.

These three areas align well with what we see distinguishes the best from the worst HR leaders in our work with a wide variety of organizations. When HR leaders elevate their departments beyond transactional or administrative tasks to a strategic focus around these three key areas they add exponential value.

This requires HR leaders who think strategically, are system-oriented, deeply understand and serve operations, personally model strong leadership behaviors, and have built their credibility, relationships and courage to push back when executives or the team is veering off track.

Strong Leaders Serve and Support

After reading my post "**Recognition Pitfalls and Traps**" a reader sent me an e-mail highlighting two points that resonated most with her:

- "Employees are like partners, to be listened to and involved in running the organization"; and
- "Sincere and honest recognition is one of the lowest cost and highly effective ways a leader can inspire and energize people."

**...treat staff like
valuable partners
and remove all
obstacles**

She went on to explain that she has three new supervisors who "are ripe for this kind of messaging. What they lack in experience they multiply in enthusiasm and energy. I keep sharing with them in different ways that our role as leaders is to clear the field to enable our staff to make the play." She went on to outline a recent example of serving and supporting staff:

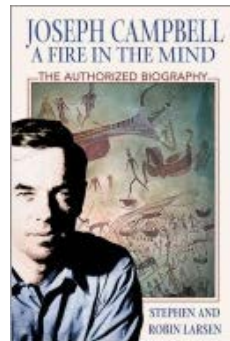
"One of the supervisors overheard one of his staff commenting on her keyboard scratching her wrist. We know that a facilities request to fix this would take weeks (no criticism, just the reality). He asked if he could take a keyboard from a vacant office and replace it. We only needed a screwdriver. You can imagine the staff's delight. My delight was knowing that a new supervisor was getting and demonstrating how important it is for us to treat staff like valuable partners and remove all obstacles. People are our number one asset and we need to demonstrate that every day. I think you said in another one of your articles that staff are like expensive automobiles, look after them and

show them off. I try to do this every day."

This is a great example of "servant leadership" or the core value of stewardship that is the hallmark of many highly effective leaders. See my post "[Are You a Servant Leader? Whom Do You Serve?](#)" for the origin of this term and links to other discussions of the topic.

Book Review of *Joseph Campbell: A Fire in the Mind*

As I posted a few years ago in "[At What Stage Are You in Your Hero's Journey?](#)" I drew from Joseph Campbell's pioneering work on mythology in writing my only work of fiction, *Moose on the Table: A Novel Approach to Communications @ Work*. Campbell's life work focused on exploring how religions, philosophies, arts and "the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic ring of myth."



Campbell wrote and edited dozens of books on comparative mythology and religion. His books and thousands of lectures focused on finding the "monomyth" and core spiritual and psychological themes that all societies for thousands of years have used to deal with the challenges of life and find successful passage through life's stages. George Lucas was highly influenced by Campbell's classic 1949 book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* when he wrote and produced his blockbuster *Star Wars* movie.

Campbell often summarized his core philosophy with advice to "follow your bliss." He doesn't mean living a hedonistic life of pleasure seeking. Following our bliss is answering the call to adventure by embarking on our "hero's journey" searching for our "holy grail" -- finding our deep personal meaning and living an authentic life true to our values and reason for being. The great trap is following someone else's path or what parents, friends, spouses, institutions, or society calls success.

Joseph Campbell: A Fire in the Mind by Stephen and Robin Larsen is an authorized biography of his remarkable life. It's an inspiring and deep look at a highly authentic and original trail blazer. Reading his personal journal entries and his prolific and insightful letters as he struggled to discover and follow his bliss provides a rich context and understanding for his huge body of work. Campbell's love of research, learning, and extensive study is

mindboggling. He learned new languages and dived deep into local cultures and traditions as he lived, traveled, and studied in Europe, India, Japan, and other countries in the early to mid-20th century.

I highly recommend *A Fire in the Mind* for anyone familiar with and interested in Campbell's work. Readers don't need to be familiar with his work to enjoy and gain insights and guidance from this engaging and well written story of an authentic life very well lived.

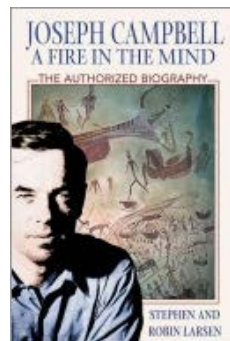
Related Blog Posts:

- **"Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm...on Stories, Mythology, and Metaphors"**
- **"Answering Our Call to Adventure in Searching for Purpose and Meaning"**
- **"Why Do You Want to Lead?"**

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm from Joseph Campbell

If you want to ask me how you should live your life, I ask you what is the most meaningful thing to you, your raison d'être (reason for existence), and suggest you ally yourself with that (your bliss)

- *Joseph Campbell: A Fire in the Mind: The Authorized Biography*, Stephen Larsen and Robin Larsen



...what is the nature of the wasteland? It is a land where everybody is living an inauthentic life, doing as other people do, doing as you're told, with no courage for your own life.

- *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers

A person is a hero or heroine when he or she is functioning in the interests of values that are not local to the person but are of some greater force of which that person is a vehicle.

- *Thou Art That: Transforming Religious Metaphor*, Joseph Campbell

Life is without meaning. You bring the meaning to it. The meaning of life is whatever you ascribe it to be. Being alive is the meaning.

- *A Joseph Campbell Companion: Reflections on the Art of Living*, Diane Osbon

Work begins when you don't like what you're doing.

- *A Joseph Campbell Companion: Reflections on the Art of Living*, Diane Osbon

Star Wars has a valid mythological perspective. It shows the state as a machine and asks, "Is the machine going to crush humanity or serve humanity?" Humanity comes not from the machine but from the heart... when Luke Skywalker unmasks his father, he is taking off the machine role that the father has played... he's a bureaucrat, living not in terms of himself but in terms of an imposed system.

- *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers

No matter what the system of thought you may have, it can't possibly include boundless life. When you think everything is just that way, the trickster arrives, and it all blows, and you get change and becoming again.

- *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers

The person who thinks he has found the ultimate truth is wrong. There is an often-quoted verse in Sanskrit, which appears in the Chinese Tao-te Ching as well: "He who thinks he knows, doesn't know. He who knows that he doesn't know, knows."

- *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers

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:

Getting unfiltered feedback from our manager, direct reports, peers, and others is like views from a few GPS satellites pinpointing our location.

"When It Comes To Assessing You, Who Knows You Best?" -- Jack Zenger www.forbes.com

The temptation to mix personal intentions and actual behavior is one major downfall of any individual's ability to accurately know themselves.

An interesting look at gratitude practices by type of organization, position, and age from a positive/strengths-focused research organization.

"What Does a Grateful Organization Look Like?" -- Emily Nauman
www.greatergood.berkeley.edu

"Our analysis of Greater Good quiz results reveals how readers see and experience gratitude in their organizations."

An inspiring reminder of all that we can do to lead change from the inside out -- to be the change we want to see around us.

"Gandhi's 10 Rules for Changing the World" -- Henrik Edberg
www.dailygood.org

"The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems."

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!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Clemmer". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jim Clemmer

President

Phone: (519) 748-5968 Fax: (519) 748-2171

Email: jim.clemmer@clemmergroup.com

Website: www.clemmergroup.com



Please forward this newsletter to colleagues, Clients, or associates you think might be interested -- or on a 'need-to-grow' basis.

Did you receive this newsletter from someone else?

Subscribe to ensure you don't miss the next issue!

The CLEMMER Group

10 Pioneer Drive, Suite 105, Kitchener ON N2P 2A4

Phone: (519) 748-1044 ~ Fax: (519) 748-5813

service@clemmer.net

www.clemmergroup.com

©2014 Jim Clemmer and The CLEMMER Group