



Issue 188 - November 2018

Declining or stagnant engagement is an all too common organizational problem. Many people quit their jobs – but still come to work every day. Quit-and-stay and on-the-job-retirement are symptoms of weak leadership.

Countless studies over decades show a big gap between what managers and front-line staff feel energizes and engages people. In one such study, computer programmers ranked the 10 factors providing them with the highest degree of motivation for their jobs. The programmers' top three were: full appreciation for work done; feeling that they were in on things; and, sympathetic help with their problems. The managers felt the top three factors that most engaged the programmers were firstly wages, followed by working conditions, and fair discipline.



Stanford Professor of Organization Behavior, Jeffrey Pfeffer, in his *Harvard Business Review* article, "Six Dangerous Myths about Pay," writes "people do work for money -- but they work even more for meaning in their lives. In fact, they work to have fun. Companies that ignore this fact are essentially bribing their employees, and will pay the price in a lack of loyalty and commitment."

We've known for decades that lack of money can quickly turn people off. But financial incentives aren't very effective at turning them on. Many managers see "their people" as coin-operated human resources (assets with skin) to be manipulated with money. In his seminal 1959 book, *The Motivation to Work*, Psychologist, Frederick Herzberg outlined his Motivator Hygiene Theory. He showed that if we feel we're not compensated, lack of money can demotivate. But once we feel we're treated fairly; the promise of more money doesn't sustain higher energy and mobilize inspired performance. His 1968 *Harvard Business Review* article, "One More Time, How Do You Motivate Employees?" sold over one million copies, and was the most requested *HBR* article of all time.

People's real needs are much less mercenary than most managers believe. People want to take pride in their work, belong to a winning team, and be part of an organization they can believe in. Low engagement levels reflect how those needs aren't met.

Ultimately, the problem is a failure of leadership. When yet another internal survey highlights an organizational energy crisis, managers often blame a changing millennial work ethic and ask, "Why don't people want to work anymore?" But that's the wrong question, based on the wrong assumptions. The question to ask – with a long gaze in the leadership mirror is, "Why don't people want to work here?"

Managers try to motivate. Strong leaders inspire. Managers try to understand how to motivate people. Strong leaders seek to understand and address why people aren't feeling motivated. Managers try to add more drivers to increase mobilization and energy. Strong leaders identify, prioritize, and remove the biggest resistors. For

example, one strong leader held a series of small group meetings around his organization on "what's the dumbest thing we do around here."

Recognition, celebration, and appreciation is a powerful energy source used by many highly effective leaders. This issue provides dozens of ways you can recognize teams and individuals.

You'll also find some ideas from my video interview on navigating workplace change. So, if you're still shuddering from Halloween fright, you can at least make chilling change less scary.

Hope you're inspired to read, lead, and succeed!

Giving Thanks through Recognition, Appreciation, and Celebration

In Canada, the US, and some other countries, fall is a time for thanksgiving. Celebrating and appreciating a bountiful harvest is a powerful tradition from our past. Present research reinforces the **power of gratitude** in evaluating and extending happiness and satisfaction. Cicero proclaimed, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others." Studies of **positivity ratios** show how vital this practice is to effective relationships, teams, and organizations.



One of the top reasons people leave their jobs is not feeling appreciated or recognized for their contributions. Stanford Professor of Organizational Behavior, Charles O'Reilly finds, "There is an implicit, and I think wrong, assumption coming out of economics that you have to pay people a lot to get them to work. I think people have to feel that they are rewarded, recognized, and appreciated in a broadly defined way. Simply relying on money to do that is nonsense."

Top performing organizations often have cultures of celebration, recognition, and appreciation. "Thanks pay" is higher than in most other organizations. In his book, *The Culture Cycle: How to Shape the Unseen Force that Transforms Performance*, James Heskett highlights Southwest Airlines and Walmart: "Celebration, to the extent that it contributes to the quality of work life, may help explain why both of these companies achieve extraordinary productivity when compared with their peers."

Here are a few recognition traps to avoid:

1. Obvious flattery or exaggerated praise
2. A prelude or "cushion" to criticism
3. Paternalistic tone
4. Not timely
5. Focus primarily on top performers, excluding others
6. Impersonal, phrased in generalities and platitudes

Team recognition can be especially powerful to reinforce collaboration and teamwork. Here are a few ways you can recognize team effort:

- Managers cook/serve a special meal to express thanks or congratulations.

- Spontaneous treats (e.g. doughnuts, cake, ice cream, pizza) for passing a milestone or celebrating a win along the way.
- Charts or posters showing team progress.
- Posting team pictures and their stories/achievements.
- Have teams present their accomplishments/projects/progress to executives, visitors, organization meetings, etc.
- Have teams featured or make presentations at industry or technical conferences.
- Add to the team's Laughter Index with humorous or fun activities, events, or holiday celebrations.
- Make up team plaques, pins, trophies, certificates, hats, mugs, t-shirts, etc.
- Have a senior manager drop by a team meeting or work area with special thanks, celebration, or presentation.
- Hold special days on which teams can set up a "trade show booth" in lobbies, exhibit halls, hotel ballrooms, to show what they've been doing and connect others to their work.

Recognition, celebration, and appreciation are extremely powerful motivators. But many managers under-use these powerful energy sources. We're wired to look for what's wrong, and focus on that. However, many highly inspiring leaders build personal habits and cultures looking for what's right, and reinforce those behaviors. What gets rewarded, gets repeated.

Manipulating Isn't Motivating: Use These Powerful Approaches to Engage and Energize

Jake, a busker, walked into a bar and saw a crowd gathered around a table. On the table was an overturned pot with a duck doing a lively dance on top. Jake immediately saw the huge potential of this act. He negotiated with the bar owner and, agreed to buy the duck and pot for a hefty fee.

Three days later, Jake stormed furiously back into the bar with the duck and pot. "I demand my money back! I gathered a large crowd to watch my street performance, built up their anticipation, placed the pot in front of them, and put the duck on it. It just sat there and wouldn't dance a single step!"

The bar owner asked, "Did you light the candle under the pot?"



Many managers try to "motivate" or push people by lighting a fire under them. This is at the heart of the **Motivation Myth**. We really can't motivate anyone. Motivation is an inside job. Effective leaders stoke the fire within by pulling and inspiring people through engagement and ownership.

Building a culture of recognition, celebration, and appreciation is a vastly under-used and extremely powerful source of energy and inspiration. Here some ways to recognize individual effort:

- Give personal hand-written notes of thanks or congratulations (possibly mailed to his or her home).
- Pass along positive comments from others.
- Develop "walls of fame," "alcoves of excellence," or web sites/blogs filled with pictures, awards, performance/achievement charts, appreciative letters, and success stories.
- Reward with greater responsibility, autonomy, or leading an important project.

- Further align/assign work, and/or remove barriers to allow the person to do more of what they do best, playing to his or her strengths.
- Provide more work that he or she finds especially meaningful or fulfilling.
- Invite him/her to a meeting in which they wouldn't normally be included.
- Provide opportunities for training and development.
- Sponsor his or her special cause or charity.
- Send birthday, Christmas, anniversary, and special occasion cards to their home.
- Respect his or her sensitivities and preferences for public or private recognition.
- Accommodate personal needs (time off, flex time, special needs, etc.).
- A small personal gift, uniquely appealing to their hobby or interest.
- Gift certificates or tickets (include spouse/family, if appropriate).
- Praise him or her to their peers, spouse, or friends (if they like public recognition).
- Send him or her on special field/site visits.
- Ask him or her to develop, train, or support others.
- Get a very senior manager to give him or her personal thanks/recognition and/or send a personal note.
- Send a complimentary e-mail or thank you message to his or her key senior manager, and copy him or her.
- Get someone (such as a customer) to whom they really made a difference to make a special presentation or award.
- Highlight a report or e-mail with complimentary margin notes or messages on the quality of their work or importance of their contribution.
- Ask for their help/input with a management problem/issue.
- Have him or her run the meeting.

Here are key steps when giving recognition:

1. Recognize their results as specifically and immediately as possible.
2. State how their positive actions or results are especially significant to you, the team, or the organization (try to link to your vision, values, and purpose).
3. Ask if there's anything you can do to provide further support or enhance their performance.
4. Reaffirm your appreciation and ongoing support.

Too often attempts to "motivate" are clumsy attempts at manipulation with thinly disguised contempt showing through. This was well illustrated by a Farcus cartoon. A team leader is at the head of a conference table addressing her team; "We need to improve morale. Any of you boneheads have a good idea?" The root cause of the motivation problem is obvious. She just needs to look in the mirror. Her approach is like an auto mechanic reporting, "I couldn't repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder."

More Recognition Resources:

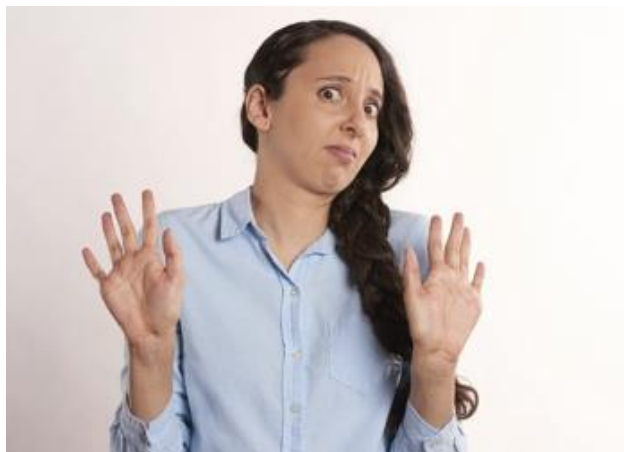
- **The Absolutely Vital Practice of Managers Giving Positive Feedback** (webinar)
- **Weak Leaders Try to Use Money as a Motivator**
- **Recognition Do's and Don'ts to Inspire and Energize**
- **Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm on... Recognition, Appreciation, and Celebration**
- **Avoid Motivation Madness: Little Rewards and Small Recognition Can Produce Big Pay Offs**

Don't be Spooked: How to Make Chilling Changes Less Scary

Last month was Hallows' Evening or Halloween. Many believe Halloween traditions come from ancient Celtic harvest festivals. Today little ghosts and goblins harvest treats at neighborhood doorsteps.

Halloween is frightening images, bloodcurdling sounds, and creepy creatures. This can be positive fun and enjoyable, when not taken too seriously. Or it can be darkly negative and terrifying.

Workplace and other changes can also be fun or terrifying. It depends on our perspective.



Psychologist, McGill professor, and corporate coach, Zina Suissa, interviewed me on **Navigating Change in the Workplace**. Her research and thoughtful questions made our conversation fly by faster than a speeding spook. Unfortunately, gremlins crept into my computer and played a few tricks to reduce audio/video quality.

Here are some of the points we covered, with links if you'd like to explore further:

What creates resistance to change?

- It's often how we're wired or how we've acquired our **framework for looking at the world**. It's too easy to envision negative consequences of change and see it as a loss. That can create resistance. Learning how to dispute and challenge negative beliefs point us toward what's positive and possible.

How can we help people make change?

- **Envisioning** possibilities is a good beginning point to overshadow pessimistic views of the future. Research on positivity shows the importance of focusing on the strengths we can use, and taking a more optimistic approach to the change.

You've written about modes and patterns of thinking in the face of change and adversity -- victim, survivor, and navigator.

- I've evolved those further to **leading, following, and wallowing**. A navigator on the high seas can't control the wind or waves. When we're navigating, we're leading, initiating, making things happen, and looking at possibilities. The middle mode is where we're waiting, hanging in there, following, and waiting for direction. The third mode is the most dangerous. Here, we're **wallowing**. This is where we feel victimized, don't have control, think, or believe "they" are out to get us. We wallow in all that's wrong, and ride the bitter bus down Helpless Highway right into Pity City.

Can we move people from Pity City to survivor or leader/navigator mode?

- There's lots of evidence we can with **reframing**. Step one is thinking about our thinking, and being aware of the mode we're in. Step two is focusing on what we need to do in order to shift that thinking. For some, it's visioning, looking at possibilities, or leveraging strengths. For others it

might be inspirational quotes, biographies, stories, etc. We need to find the approaches that will shift our thinking.

What's in store for you in your future?

- Despite hundreds of thousands of books on leadership, I feel like I can contribute something more. Rather than my previous approach of bringing models and approaches to my readers in my books, I am "**readersourcing**" in order to get input from a wide number of readers and researchers on the key topics today. We're using an iterative process with a Book Advisory Panel helping to guide what approaches are most useful and relevant today in a mutual learning process.

Click here to watch the 11-minute interview.

So, what's your hocus focus? Which way are you looking at menacing change? Are you creating a horror movie or making change boo-tiful?

Tweet Reading: Recommended Online Articles



This section summarizes last month's LinkedIn Updates and Twitter Tweets about online articles or blog posts that I've flagged as worth reading. These are usually posted on weekends when I am doing much of my reading for research, learning, or leisure. You can follow me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JimClemmer>

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

A good checklist of time-tested approaches to growing and developing others.

10 Powerful Ways to Develop Your Employees -- Dan McCarthy, *The Balance Careers*

Counterintuitive research from Zenger Folkman on the value of warmth versus competence.

Stop Being So Cold! How Being Considered A Warm Person Can Boost Your Career -- Forbes

Knowing how you are perceived is critically important if you want to increase your influence as a leader.

Asking For Feedback Giving You Nightmares? -- Complimentary webinar
Forbes.com

Good suggestions to free people up to lead, develop leadership communities, and make leadership personal.

The art of great leadership -- Gianpiero Petriglieri, *HR Magazine*
"The leadership shortages that CEOs bemoan boil down to an excess of middle managers with skill imbalances."

Read *The Leader Letter* in Weekly Installments



The items in each month's issue of *The Leader Letter* are first published in my weekly blog during the previous month.

If you read each blog post (or issue of *The Leader Letter*) as it's published over twelve months, you'll have read the equivalent of a leadership book. And you'll pick up a few practical leadership tips that help you use time more strategically and tame your E-Beast!

Feedback and Follow-Up

I am always delighted to hear from readers of *The Leader Letter* with feedback, reflections, suggestions, or differing points of view. Nobody is ever identified in *The Leader Letter* without their permission. I am also happy to explore customized, in-house adaptations of any of my material for your team or organization. Drop me an e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@ClemmerGroup.com or connect with me on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#), or my [blog](#)!

May the Force (of strengths) be with you!



Jim Clemmer
President

Phone: (519) 748-5968

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

476 Mill Park Drive, Kitchener ON N2P 1Y9

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

service@clemmergroup.com

www.clemmergroup.com

©2018 Jim Clemmer and The CLEMMER Group