Keynote Speaker Workshop/Retreat Leader Management Team Developer

Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

August 2003, Issue 5 ~ View on-line at www.clemmer.net

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Doing the Execution Stomp

Enjoying Regent Park (I'm such a font of wisdom, it's just gushing out of my head!)

Heather and I spent six days vacationing in London, England in early July. It was the first time we had been there as tourists. We enjoyed ourselves immensely, and are eager to return and see so much more that we didn't have time for during this trip. We also need to replenish our bank account for the next visit!

I have long been a history buff and especially enjoy reading historical fiction. I have read a number of historical novels set in England. One of my favorites is Edward Rutherford's sweeping epic, *London*.

During our trip it was fascinating to tour the Museum of London and follow the growth of the city that has played such a vital role in world history (Heather had to come back and warn me that she might be flying home before I was even out of the 16th century section). The site looks out over the remains of a fortress wall built by the Romans in founding Londinium 2,000 years ago.

Whether learning some of the stories in the Museum, visiting the 1,000 year old Tower of London, or standing amidst the centuries of history at Westminster Abbey, I was again struck by the recurring leadership themes and human issues each generation must face.

We did manage to experience some of London's famous theatre. Our favorite show was *Stomp*. This is a fascinating musical production with very talented players making a surprising variety of musical sounds and rhythms using a huge array of common items. These include brooms, match boxes, garbage can lids, sticks, barrels, oil drums, water cooler bottles, newspapers, and even kitchen sinks!

Without singing or speaking a word, the cast of *Stomp* used ordinary items in extraordinary ways to convey joy, humor, and lots of energy. Sitting there fascinated by their teamwork and collaboration, reminded me of the importance of execution. So often we believe that having big ideas, brilliant strategies, or great concepts is the key to success. But the world is full of very gifted people with bright new ideas that go nowhere because they aren't effectively implemented. The research on emotional intelligence reinforces this point. The most successful people are those with the discipline, follow through, and ability to mobilize others to execute.

The American and British forces now occupying Iraq provide another good example of this timeless leadership principle. With superior strength, change can be forced on others – often very quickly. But it takes a much different type of leadership to engage the hearts of a critical mass of people in an organization or country. The devil is often in the details because that's where the execution of the

envisioned changes, that seem so simple in concept, ultimately fails or succeeds. Brilliant strategists, deal makers, conceptualizers, or inventors often succeed in their first bold steps and then fritter away that initial success through failing to execute on the mundane details. So, they head off in search of the next big idea.

Here are three articles on our web site that provide more perspectives on implementation:

Improvement Planning for Taking Charge of Change
Continually improving our capabilities calls for coordination and planning. The goal of planning isn't plans, however, but action. www.clemmer.net/excerpts/ip_chargechange.shtml

Keep it Simple
Focus on three or four defined strategic imperatives then execute and measure results. www.clemmer.net/excerpts/simple.shtml

Successful Change and Improvement Needs Balanced Improvement Planning
Many managers confuse making changes within their organization with making changes to their organization. Both are needed. But they have to be balanced. www.clemmer.net/excerpts/successful_change.shtml

Key Notes from my Keynotes:
Health and Safety Bolt-on Programs or Built-in Processes

The CLEMMER Group has been working very closely with the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) in Ontario for the past few years. This member-driven, not-for-profit organization has become a recognized world leader in building healthier and safer workplaces. IAPA's vision is **"A world where risks are controlled because everyone believes suffering and loss are morally, socially, and economically unacceptable."**

Few managers deliberately set out to hurt, sicken, or kill people in their organization. Yet many managers (often unconsciously) accept that there will always be some injuries and, regrettably, maybe even a death. Many times these incidents are called "accidents." Too often, they are the predictable outcome of a culture, process, and system that is an accident or sickness waiting to happen. Organizations like IAPA are helping managers understand that the huge gap between very healthy and safe organizations and their much more dangerous and deadly counterparts in the same industry or location is no accident. Organizations with exemplary safety records and very healthy people (much lower rates of sickness and disease, less absenteeism, reduced stress, etc.) achieve their high performance through strong leadership.

I have been speaking at a growing number of health and safety conferences for associations and companies. In June I delivered a keynote presentation entitled "Courageous Leadership for Performance Excellence" at Syncrude Canada's Safety Symposium in Fort McMurray, Alberta. Syncrude operates a massive oil sands plant in Fort McMurray (it was fascinating to tour this sprawling facility by helicopter while I was there). During the last few years Syncrude has been investing billions of dollars in expanding their operations while still running the gigantic plant. The hundreds of contractors building new facilities

and upgrading existing ones have brought thousands more people to the thousands of Syncrude people already working there. Despite a sharp increase in total hours worked on their enormous site, accidents and injuries have remained very low. Their record is among the best in the world.

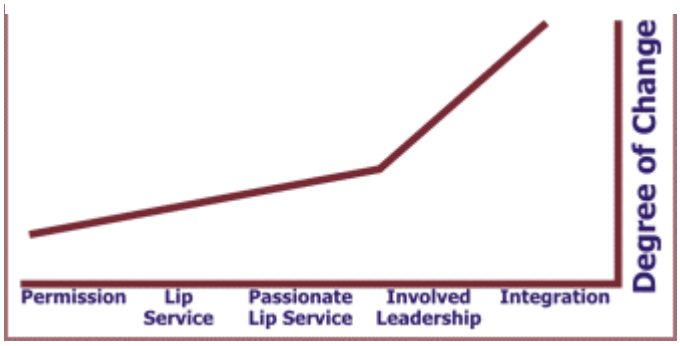
Syncrude's Safety Symposium and follow-up town hall meetings involved all the senior executives and a few board members. Their absolute determination to reach zero injuries was impressive. It is a key part of the culture there. Everyone from frontline worker to all levels of management is deeply involved in various health and safety initiatives that also incorporate quality and productivity improvement. Of course, they all go together. Processes that produce lower quality products are generally inefficient and more prone to costly errors that reduce productivity. And, predictably, poorly managed processes or systems produce "accidents."

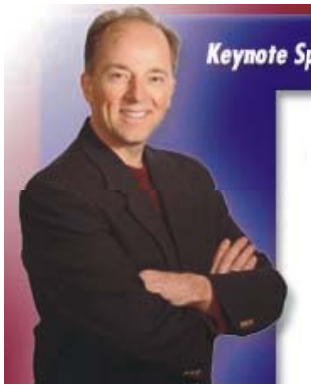
Today health and safety is at the point that quality was in the mid-eighties. Back then, "acceptable quality levels" assumed that defects are inevitable and managers planned for some level of them. Meanwhile, Japanese manufacturers like Sony and Toyota were producing unimaginably low levels of errors in their products that hit or came incredibly close to their targets of zero defects. A popular story was the Japanese electronics component manufacturer that shipped their first order of parts to an American manufacturer with a small package and note that read, "Please forgive us for not fully understanding how you do business in America. Enclosed are the 3 defective parts per thousand that your specifications asked for." A growing number of North American companies are using Six Sigma principles and approaches to reach quality levels of 3.4 defects per million (99.99999% perfect). A few have actually reached zero defects in some processes.

Whether the focus is quality improvement, stellar customer service, or world-class health and safety outcomes, the major ingredient to success is leadership. It's the type of leadership that moves the effort from a program to blame and exhort others to improve, to a process that truly leads by example through management's up close and personal involvement. The chart below is one I use to illustrate this difference.

The bottom axis is what I call the "Commitment Continuum." There is a world of difference from one end of the chart to the other. But many managers think that they are showing commitment by just giving people permission to implement a program or by providing some money for the effort. In other cases, managers get quite passionate and crank up the rhetoric around the importance of quality, customer service, or health and safety. But only when managers reach the point of Involved Leadership does the effort become part of the culture (the way we really do things around here) and really take off to make a lasting change.

***From* Bolt-on Programs *to* Built-in Processes**





Click here to view a letter from Syncrude President and COO, Jim Carter on the impact of my keynote presentation at their Safety Symposium.

Stellar Response to Our Customer Service Briefing!

Last month I reported that I have reconnected with some old friends and previous colleagues at AchieveGlobal Canada to bring together our respective strengths in the training and strategic organization change fields. If you're not familiar with my background, click here to see my biography and previous experience as co-founder of The Achieve Group (www.clemmer.net/bio/jimgen.shtml).

AchieveGlobal has a large selection of very powerful training modules and programs in customer service and leadership. I have worked with hundreds of management teams over the last few decades to assess, plan, and implement customer service, culture change, and other organization change effects.

Response to our invitation for a complimentary Executive Briefing on September 3 in Vancouver and September 4 in Calgary was immediate and very strong. I will endeavor to deliver a fast-paced, information packed morning on **Achieving Stellar Service: Leading in Turbulent Times**.

We now have hundreds of people signed up to attend. There are still a few seats available. If you or your colleagues are interested in attending, you need to hustle on over to our registration page and grab a spot, ASAP. Go to www.clemmer.net/events/stellar.shtml for more details on the session and to register.

The briefing is intended for senior managers, human resource directors, improvement coordinators, change agents, customer service managers, and internal organization development professionals. It's an especially powerful opportunity for a team of key senior managers and professionals to attend together and review current service improvement and leadership development activities.

If you are located in Canada and can't attend either briefing, but would like to explore the joint work AchieveGlobal Canada and The CLEMMER Group are doing around customer service and/or leadership development for potential application in your organization, contact me directly at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net or (519) 748-5968.

Reading the *Leader Letter* Better

A reader of the *Leader Letter* sent me an e-mail last month about frustrations she was experiencing reading the e-newsletter. I have reprinted part of her message and my response below in case you are having some of the technical frustrations she mentions or you're not clear about my objectives with the *Leader Letter*:

> *"I am not a techie. I do use the internet a great deal however. The format of your letter is a bit difficult for me to follow. I am annoyed in the beginning when I have to wait for a download every time that I click on to your mailing. If I happen to scroll through your e-mail on my way down my list, I am stopped as your letter downloads. We aren't all on high speed you know!! I find the letter difficult to follow. Where is the 'meat and potatoes' section? Haven't I read a great deal of this before?*

Why do I have to keep 'clicking here'? Which is the best path to follow? I read a great number of journals. I am accustomed to 'skimming' over the sections that I don't need to read. I haven't learned the best way to 'skim' your letter yet!

"I guess that I am a bit grumpy, as I am heading out on my holidays and have worked twice as hard these past weeks in order to get away. I look forward to your next installment, and perhaps I will be in better humor as I read it! I LOVED your newest book, by the way, and gave away 4 copies."

Here's my response:

"You might find it easier to read the *Leader Letter* on our web site instead of waiting to download each section. You can do that by going to the very bottom of the letter and clicking on "View the full newsletter on-line here." Another option is to "View the PDF version" by clicking on that text at the top of the newsletter. Using either of these options would allow you to skim over the entire newsletter and read only those sections that you're interested in.

"I am not sure what you mean by the "meat and potatoes" section. The *Leader Letter* is meant to be a potpourri of newsy items, chats with readers, book reviews, and ruminations/observations. The meaty sections tend to be the links to articles or other sections of our huge web site (another objective of the newsletter is to help people get around the more than 1,000 pages of information on our site). It's a bit like the "browser's digest" format of *Growing the Distance* and *The Leader's Digest*.

"The fast growth in readers of each issue and the number of people signing up for the *Leader Letter* and passing it around indicate to us that this format and content is working. I hope the options outlined above for reading the entire letter at once will allow you to navigate the *Leader Letter* more efficiently and keep your good humor as you read it! Of course, any and all improvement suggestions are always most welcome!

"I am delighted to hear that you enjoyed *The Leader's Digest* and gave away copies of it. I hope you have a great holiday that drives those grumpies away and make the extra hard work worthwhile."

Sour Whine

"July's newsletter highlights three of your most memorable articles. The "whining" one resonated most with me (www.clemmer.net/excerpts/stop_whining.shtml). I like asking a colleague 'what's the difference between a problem and a complaint' (the whining). The answer is easy: a problem is knowing the difference between what you have and what you want; a complaint is not knowing that difference. I then ask the "colleague" to come back to me when he/she knows what it is that they want. I can help with the problem... not a complaint (go to your mother with complaints)."

- **Ken Anderson, Ottawa, ON**

Update on The Leader's Digest

New Excerpt Available:

Canada's national newspaper, *The Globe & Mail*, compiled and ran an excerpt from my new book, *The Leader's Digest: Timeless Principles for Team and Organization Success* in July. The title, "Stop Managing and Start Leading," sounds like I am advocating leadership as the one and only key to success. If you are familiar with my work, you know that's not my view. We need a balance of both. However, most teams and organizations are over-managed and under-led. This excerpt presents a case for stronger leadership and offers a series of suggestions for strengthening it. Read the excerpt at www.clemmer.net/excerpts/start_leading.shtml.

Sizzling Introductory Deal Ending When Summer's Over!

The end of August marks the end of our "2 books for the price of 1" introductory offer of *The Leader's Digest* and its older leadership sibling, *Growing the Distance*. We've had thousands of people take advantage of this offer.

Time is running out! Get 'em while they're hot! Click here for more details www.clemmer.net/books/tld_241.shtml.

Keeping Newsletter, Magazine, E-zine Editors, or Webmasters Content

A major challenge for editors of various periodicals is finding fresh, relevant content for their newsletters, magazines, e-zines, or web site. We are seeing a steady increase in editors who are finding their way to our web site to select from the nearly 300 articles and columns freely available there. The main index of this rich source of content is at www.clemmer.net/articles.shtml. Clicking on any one of the twenty-six topic areas (which follows the outline of our major models and approaches) takes you to a list of articles with a short description for each one. Click on any that look interesting to read the entire article.

If you know any editors, you could help make their continual search for content easier by recommending this section of our web site to them.

We're also hearing of many managers who print or e-mail their team a copy of a particularly relevant article. They then have a discussion around the concept or approach outlined in the article. Feel free to use this "ten minute tune-up" with your team!

> *"I am currently working toward my BA with University of Phoenix Online and my instructor is a huge fan of Jim Clemmer. She has frequently shared with the class some articles and quotes, and I can see why."*
> **- Nancy Lundy, Fond du Lac, WI**

Improvement Points Subscribers' Top Picks for July

Improvement Points are short quotes from one of the hundreds of free articles on our web site that are sent by e-mail three times per week. Each quote comes with a heading that corresponds with my core models and frameworks (click here to view those). Subscribers have the opportunity to click on the title of the article that the quote was taken from and go read the entire piece. Of the quotes/articles sent out in July, the three most popular were (you can click on the article title to read it):

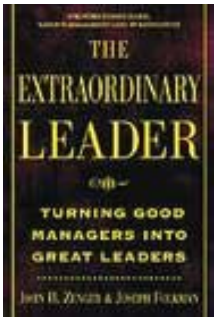
- **The Dynamic Power of Hope** at http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/dynamic.shtml
- **The Choice is Ours** at http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/choiceisours.shtml
- **Feedback to See How Others See Me** at http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/feedback.shtml

Here's another comment from an enthusiastic Improvement Points subscriber that keeps us energized us to continue sending out these tips!

> *"I have been a constant reader of your management articles and am also sharing these with my colleagues in this part of the world. (Philippines). Hope there will be no let-up in your efforts...and more power."*
> **- Jonathan Bernardo, URC-Rosario Chocolate Plant, Philippines**

To sign up for this complimentary service, go to www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml.

Book Review: The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers into Great Leaders



I first began to work with Jack Zenger in 1981 when our company, The Achieve Group, became the Canadian partner for California-based Zenger-Miller's training programs. I have long appreciated his insights and leadership in the field of organization and leadership development. In the early nineties, Jack and I spent a few months researching and writing the first draft of a book on strategic organization change. For a variety of reasons, it was never completed and published. He and I still stay in touch. He is currently Vice Chair of Provant, a large performance skills improvement company.

The two things I appreciate most about *The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers into Great Leaders* are the book's central model or framework, and that it's based on solid research. Co-author, Joseph Folkman, Managing Director of Novations (a Provant company), and Jack exhaustively analyzed 200,000 questionnaires completed by subordinates, peers, and bosses, which collectively described more than 20,000 leaders. From this they identified the top and bottom 10 percent of managers and asked, "what were the competencies or attributes that separated these groups?"

This question led to the development of their conceptual framework with five major clusters. They use the metaphor of tent poles to show the connection between these clusters. The center pole is the leader's "Character" which deals with ethical standards, integrity, and authenticity. "With a strong personal character the leader is never afraid to be open and transparent." One of the four corner tent poles they label, "Personal Capability," "to describe the intellectual, emotional, and skill make up of the individual. It includes the analytical and problem-solving capabilities, along with the technical competence the person possesses."

The next tent pole, "Focusing on Results," "describes the ability to have an impact on the organization." This picks up the key theme of Jack's previous book, *Results-Based Leadership*, that "leaders may be

wonderful human beings, but if they don't produce sustained, balanced results, they simply are not good leaders." Another corner of the tent is supported by "Interpersonal Skills." Jack and Joseph posit, "There is an enormous body of evidence that says leadership is expressed through the communication process and is the impact one person (the leader) has on a group of other people." Their last tent pole, labeled "Leading Organizational Change," is "the ability to produce change within an organization. The highest expression of leadership involves change."

The Extraordinary Leader builds upon the research and tent model to provide 20 insights throughout the book. A few that really stand out for me are:

- Great leaders make a huge difference, when compared to merely good leaders.
- One organization can have many great leaders.
- We are aiming too low in our leadership development activities.
- Leadership culminates in championing change.
- Leadership competencies are linked closely together.
- Effective leaders have widely differing personal styles. There is no one right way to lead.
- The key to developing great leadership is to build strengths.
- Greatness is not caused by the absence of weakness.
- Leaders are made, not born.
- Leaders can improve their leadership effectiveness through self-development.

This a well written book, based on solid research providing plenty of how-to points and examples for moving from a good manager to a great leader.

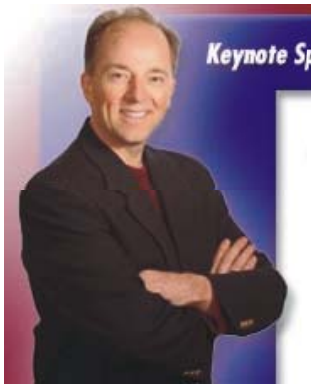
Site Seeing: Web Site Recommendation

HR.com (www.hr.com) is a huge resource site full of thousands of pages of interviews, articles, HR products, conferences, and other information. While it is aimed at HR professionals, there is plenty of great information for anyone interested in organization development, leadership, and training. That should include every executive, manager, or supervisor aspiring to be more effective!

I have been working with the good people at HR.com for a few years now as a regular contributor to their newsletter and web site. They are great people to work with and they're making a real contribution to anyone concerned with improving people leadership practices.

Knowledge Manager, David Creelman, is an insightful and hard hitting writer with his regular opinion pieces. He's also conducted dozens of really useful interviews with many leading writers and researchers. And he's a nice guy, too!

In July, David interviewed Jack Zenger around his latest book, *The Extraordinary Leader*. You can read this interview on HR.com's site here: www.hr.com/hrcom/index.cfm/WeeklyMag/C6A15F22-19AD-4370-9E1B4074E2B9C7A0



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Thoughts that Make You Go Hmmm...

"Few people are lacking in capacity, but they fail because they are lacking in application."
- Calvin Coolidge

"The world cares very little about what a man or woman knows; it is what a man or woman is able to do that counts."
- Booker T. Washington

"It wasn't what these stars had in their heads that made them standouts from the pack, it was how they used what they had."
- Robert E. Kelley, *How to be a Star at Work: 9 Breakthrough Strategies You Need to Succeed*

"Vision without action is hallucination."
- Unknown

"Unless a decision has "degenerated into work," it is not a decision; it is at best a good intention. This means that, while the effective decision itself is based on the highest level of conceptual understanding, the action to carry it out should be as close as possible to the working level and as simple as possible."
- Peter Drucker

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do."
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Coming Events (A Few Public or Open Sessions)

Over 95% of my presentations, workshops, or retreats are tailored, in-house sessions. Below are a few rare opportunities to attend a public or open session.

Leadership @ the Speed of Change

August 19, 2003 - Waterloo, Ontario

I am presenting a one-day, condensed version of our very popular ***Leadership @ the Speed of Change*** in Waterloo, Ontario on August 19. During this intense, fast paced day we'll look at the integrated approach to sustained personal, team, and organization effectiveness that I have developed over the last few decades. The session is sponsored by the Communitech Technology Association. The unusually low fee they are offering for this session is a perfect chance for a personal and/or team "summer tune-up." Copies of both *The Leader's Digest* and *Growing the Distance* along with an extensive application workbook are included. Click here for the full agenda, registration, and other details: www.clemmer.net/events/lsc/lsc_ctagenda.html.

Leading in Turbulent Times Breakfast Briefing

August 20, 2003 – Toronto, Ontario

On August 20, I am delivering a breakfast briefing on **Leading in Turbulent Times** at the Canadian Management Centre in downtown Toronto. If your times aren't turbulent enough, you can skip this one! The registration fee of $49.95 includes a continental breakfast and a copy of my new book, *The Leader's Digest: Timeless Principles for Team and Organization Success*. I'll even sign it for no extra charge. The book retails for $25 and the breakfast must be worth at least $20, so you get my presentation for about five bucks! Click here for more details and registration: www.cmctraining.org/breakfast_briefing.asp?sid=0.

Leadership @ the Speed of Change

September 23, 2003 – Winnipeg, Manitoba

I am presenting the same *Leadership @ the Speed of Change* workshop as described above in Winnipeg, sponsored by AdvantEDGE. Details and registration is available at www.hradvantedge.com/jim_clemmer.html.

Achieving Stellar Service: Leading in Turbulent Times

Vancouver – September 3, 2003
Calgary – September 4, 2003

As described above in this newsletter, I'll be presenting a complimentary morning session on *Achieving Stellar Service: Leading in Turbulent Times*. Go to www.clemmer.net/events/stellar.shtml for more details and to register.

I would love to hear from you on any of the discussions raised in this issue of the *Leader Letter*...or any other matters concerning my work. Of course, I especially welcome conversations exploring how I might help you or your team/organization with a keynote presentation, management team retreat, or workshop.

Send me an e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net or call me directly at (519) 748-5968.

I hope to connect with you again next month!

All the best,

Jim

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