



## Practical Leadership:

Inspiring *Action*, Achieving Results

### Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

January 2005, Issue 22

Page 1 of 1

#### In this issue...

- **More on...Pensions, Money, and Retaining Top People**
- **Municipal Leadership: Bridging the Council-Staff Trust Gap**
- **More on...Losing Customer Focus**
- **Resources for Leading Through Communication**
- **Leading Spirited Teams**
- **Top Improvement Points**
- **Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm...**
- **Rare Public Upcoming Workshops in Ontario**
- **Feedback and Follow-Up**

**Happy New Year!** It's hard to believe we're at the halfway point through this decade already! Wasn't it just yesterday that we worried about the Y2K problem?

For the last 20 years, my wife, Heather, and I have used the start of a new year as a time to spend an evening together reviewing the past few years and looking at our vision for the next five. We feel this has made a huge difference in keeping us focused – and together. Each year we focus on each of the key dimensions of our lives: family, social, community, spiritual, business, home, and health.

I have long believed that vision, values, and purpose (what I call "Focus and Context") are at the core of leading ourselves and others. That's why Focus and Context is the hub of our "leadership wheel" that both *[Growing the Distance: Timeless Principles for Personal and Career Success](#)* and *[The Leader's Digest: Timeless Principles for Team and Organization Success](#)* are built around. This is the perfect time of year to look ahead and envision our ideal future.

There is a large selection of columns, articles, and book excerpts on Focus and Context freely available on our web site. Go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/values.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/values.shtml) to browse through them.

#### **More on...Pensions, Money, and Retaining Top People**

We received the following e-mails in response to "John's" comments and question in last month's Leader Letter (click here to review that section):

*Dear Jim,*

*One of your services is to keep the fundamentals of management before your audience. I find I get impatient with managers who don't do their homework on existing management doctrine which has survived 50 years of testing.*

*I think that's about the time span for Herzberg's work on motivation, and I think he might say to your reader, "maybe it's true in your Company, but if so, you had better see what else you're NOT offering people to get them to stay." I think I recall that money (including benefits) is not a motivator. Job challenge, enjoyment in doing the work, and recognition are the key motivators.*

**Practical Leadership:***Inspiring Action, Achieving Results***Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter**

January 2005, Issue 22

Page 2 of 2

*In my strategic planning workshops, I find these basics are received as though they were new breakthroughs. I personally feel it is never right to spend Client money on "discovering" what has already been proved by those more qualified than I, and I do welcome your service in enforcing such basic doctrines to your audience.*

**John Heggie, John F. Heggie & Partners Inc.  
Newmarket, Ontario Canada**

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*I wholeheartedly agree with John, and disagree with both his senior managers.*

*Our company employs journeymen welders and machinists in Edmonton. The economy is so strong in our city that we have had situations where we are constantly looking for new people, and are not able to find them.*

*We have, however, been very successful in retaining our employees by paying a competitive wage, and offering a supportive environment, and challenging work. We recently had a long term employee resign for reasons of increased pay, only to return to our company about 6 weeks later, as he missed the supportive environment in our shop.*

*My point is that there are many ways to incent people, of which money is only one. I think an employer is much better served to offer a supportive environment, and a challenging workplace, at a competitive wage. Making the mistake that the only incentive people respond to is money, is to ensure a very short term focus on the relationship with your employees, and almost guarantee that in the long run, your business will have more employee turnover than it should have.*

**Richard Hewson, CMA, Comptroller, IMAC Design Group  
Edmonton, Alberta Canada**

**Municipal Leadership: Bridging the Council-Staff Trust Gap**

I continue to work with federal, provincial, and municipal levels of the public sector. This work has ranged from Leadership @ the Speed of Change workshops and presentations (see [www.clemmer.net/speaking/lsc.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/speaking/lsc.shtml) for more on my most popular topic area) to facilitating highly customized team development and planning retreats.

Based on some of my recent engagements with municipalities, the editors at *Public Sector Digest* worked with me to produce an article on "Bridging the Council-Staff Gap." Building a strong partnership between staff and council is essential to effective municipal management.

**Practical Leadership:***Inspiring Action, Achieving Results***Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter**

January 2005, Issue 22

Page 3 of 3

In many instances this lack of harmonization is caused by lack of agreement on the defined roles for both staff and council members. [Click here to read the article](#) outlining this common problem and a strategy for dealing with it.

If you're in the public sector, check out *The Public Sector Digest* at [www.publicsectordigest.com](http://www.publicsectordigest.com). Click on their "Tour" button (on the right) to get a deeper look at this learning and development service.

**More on...Losing Customer Focus**

A woman walked up to the manager of a department store. "Are you hiring any help?" she asked.

"No," he said. "We already have all the staff we need."

"Then would you mind getting someone to wait on me?" she asked.

*I read this last month & laughed - even shared it with the rest of our organization to drive home the point of customer value.*

*But I saw it from a whole new perspective this morning as I read it again.  
Why hadn't the 'manager' picked up on this customer's dilemma before she had to seek help? Was he/she another victim of the age old lie ... "it wasn't 'his/her' job?"  
People follow our example ... that's leadership in its simplest form.*

**Doug Hyde, Human Resource Manager, Can-Oat Milling  
Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada**

**Your Recommended Resources for Leading Through Communication**

*Hi Jim,*

*I recently received your December newsletter and I wanted to say that I enjoy receiving them every month... they keeping me actively thinking about leadership! Thank you for your work and continuous contact.*

*I have some exciting news... in the next few months I will be developing some leadership workshops for students at (Wilfrid) Laurier (University) in a seven seminar workshop series called "Leading Through Communication".*

**Practical Leadership:***Inspiring Action, Achieving Results***Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter**

January 2005, Issue 22

Page 4 of 4

*I am developing the content and presenting for three seminars. The topics of these seminars are:*

- 1) Communication Basics*
- 2) How to be an Assertive Communicator*
- 3) Converting Your Communication into Action*

*I am wondering if you could recommend any materials, books (even some of the content in your latest two books), etc. that could be helpful in my process of developing the content and presentation for the three seminars listed above.*

*Hope business is going well and wishing you and your family all the best during the holiday season!*

*Eric Mallia*

I have a series of excerpts and articles on communications at [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/communication.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/communication.shtml). However, many of these are about organizational communication. I don't have much material on the skills of personal communication.

Can you recommend resources for Eric? Please e-mail me at [Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net](mailto:Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net) with your suggestions.

**Leading Spirited Teams**

Over the past 12 years, I have had a few dozen articles published in Canada's national newspaper, *The Globe & Mail*. My most recent article on what kills team spirit and how to build spirit has produced one of the strongest responses ever. It seems to have touched a nerve with many people in many organizations. [Click here to read the article](#), "Team Spirit Built From the Top."

**Top Improvement Points from December**

Of the short quotes with links to full articles that were e-mailed out as complimentary **Improvement Points** last month, the most popular with subscribers were:

**"A University of Michigan study of 70 work teams found that within two hours people in meetings ended up sharing good or bad moods."**

- from *Leaders Inspire Their Teams With Optimism*

[www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders\\_inspire.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders_inspire.shtml)



## **Practical Leadership:**

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January 2005, Issue 22

Page 5 of 5

**"It takes real courage to accept full responsibility for our choices – especially for our attitude and outlook. This is the beginning and ultimately most difficult act of leadership."**

- from *Accept What Can't Be Changed and Change What Can Be*  
[www.clemmer.net/excerpts/accept.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/accept.shtml)

**"A company's external customer service is only as strong as the company's internal leadership, and the culture of commitment that this leadership creates. To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, our service or brand promise can't fool all of our customers all of the time. If the service messages are out of step with what's ultimately experienced by customers, marketing dollars are wasted."**

- from *Customer Satisfaction is a Reflection of Employee Satisfaction*  
[www.clemmer.net/excerpts/cust\\_satisfaction.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/cust_satisfaction.shtml)

Subscribe or view the archives by topic area here: [www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml)

#### **Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm.....on Focus and Context**

**"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover. "**

- Mark Twain, American humorist

**"In the last three decades findings in experimental psychology have suggested that one's belief about the world may actually change it. This idea is very disturbing to the usual conceptions of the mind, suggesting that mind can actually influence events at a distance -- that it can 'move matter' and thereby shape the world around us."**

- Larry Dossey, *Recovering the Soul: A Scientific and Spiritual Search*

**"I've learned that only through focus can you do world-class things, no matter how capable you are. "**

- Bill Gates, Founder and Chair, Microsoft

**"What this power is, I cannot say. All I know is that it exists...and it becomes available only when you are in that state of mind in which you know exactly what you want...and are fully determined not to quit until you get it."**

- Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone

**Practical Leadership:***Inspiring Action, Achieving Results***Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter**

January 2005, Issue 22

Page 6 of 6

**"We must look for ways to be an active force in our own lives. We must take charge of our own destinies, design a life of substance and truly begin to live our dreams."**

- Les(ter Louis) Brown, Indian writer, author

**"Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so you shall become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil."**

- James Lane Allen, American novelist

**Rare Public Upcoming Workshops in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia**

"If your organization has been striving to improve customer service levels but not quite pulling it together, you may want to attend my Two-Day **Leading a Customer-Centered Organization** workshop in Mississauga. I have distilled 20 years of research, experiences, best practices, and leadership/personal development into this intensive session. Check it out at [www.clemmer.net/events/lcco/lcco.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/events/lcco/lcco.shtml). **Mississauga, ON - February 7-8, 2005**

Leadership is clearly THE key to success. That's why it's such a popular topic. But despite all the talk about leadership and change, many "change fatigued" people are still struggling with how to strengthen their leadership and how to help their team/organization successfully navigate change. Join me in Kitchener for two intensive days at my **Leading @ the Speed of Change** workshop. Check it out at [www.clemmer.net/events/lsc/lsc.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/events/lsc/lsc.shtml). **Kitchener, ON - May 31 - June 1, 2005**

**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. 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@Clemmer.net](mailto:Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net).

I hope to connect with you again next month!

Jim

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