



Practical Leadership:

Inspiring *Action*, Achieving Results

Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

May 2004, Issue 14

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The Leader's Digest: Practical Application Planner

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 management teams are struggling with just **how** to strengthen their leadership. Many overwhelmed and overworked management teams are running harder than ever just to stay in place. Leadership concepts and organization development approaches sound great in theory. But few teams have the time or process to use them. They need practical and concrete leadership actions that can be easily applied on the fly.

This month I am delighted to announce the publication of my new *Leader's Digest: Practical Application Planner*. The *Practical Application Planner* builds upon *The Leader's Digest* to move management teams from inspiration to application. This can dramatically accelerate the management team's effectiveness and their leadership of their division, department, region, or entire organization.

In this hands-on implementation guide, I have condensed over twenty-five years of my experiences helping hundreds of management teams apply timeless leadership principles and practices, catapulting them to higher performance.

In conjunction with *The Leader's Digest: Practical Application Planner*, we have also just developed an internet-based tool that offers the option of team members completing each assessment on our web site. This allows each participant to confidentially log on to the surveys and complete them in private. Each participant can anonymously add relevant comments, observations, and suggestions. Survey results are tabulated and comments compiled and then sent to the team leader or facilitator.

Both the *Practical Application Planner* and the *On-Line Assessment Option* are designed for management teams to administer themselves, have delivered by an experienced facilitator not part of the team (such as an internal professional or external consultant), or work with me or someone from The CLEMMER Group.

I will be giving a **complimentary teleconference** introducing the new *Practical Application Planner* and *On-Line Assessment Option* on May 19, between 1:00 – 2:00 (EDT). For details and registration, go to www.clemmer.net/events/tooltc.shtml.

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The Fish Tank Factor

On pages 152 and 153 of [*The Leader's Digest*](#), I wrote the following about the kind of culture or environment created by management teams:

If you buy a little goldfish and keep it in a small bowl, it will remain no bigger than a few inches long. Move that same fish to a large aquarium and it will double or triple in size. Put the goldfish in a large pond and it can grow up to a foot long! The biggest factor that determines the size of the fish is the size of its environment. And so it is with people.

Managers see people as they are and treat them according to what they see. A manager would take a small goldfish and keep it in the little bowl because it would be inefficient and wasteful to put it in a larger environment. Leaders, on the other hand, see people as they could be. A leader takes a small goldfish and puts it in a larger tank because it would be ineffective and wasteful of the fish's potential to keep it in a confined environment.

Leaders provide a bigger environment by delegating autonomy. Strong leaders are strong coaches. They clarify performance targets, develop skills and abilities, reinforce progress, and build on strengths. Leaders consult, facilitate, counsel, and guide. They also confront when they feel someone is not living up to his or her potential.

In my new [*Leader's Digest: Practical Application Planner*](#), I built upon this concept with the following assessment exercise for management teams to examine the kind of culture or environment they have created for people in their organization. It is also available as an [On-Line Assessment](#) for management team members to complete privately and have their scores combined for the overall picture as seen by the team.



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The Fish Tank Factor

Rate how true the following statements are for our team:

Rate how true the following statements are for our team:

1	2	3	4	5
Very True		Somewhat True		Not at All True

a) We use dehumanizing language like "head count," "human capital," "my people," etc.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

b) We try to "mass grow" people with the same development approach for everyone.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

c) People in our organization have little autonomy and feel micromanaged.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

d) We spend most of our time in operational problem-solving.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

e) We constantly go for quick fixes rather than involving staff in finding root causes.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

f) We rely heavily on top-down command and control to get things done.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

g) We're more a group of 'lone rangers' than facilitators and coaches.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

h) We tend to have negative expectations and beliefs about most people in our organization.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Practical Leadership:

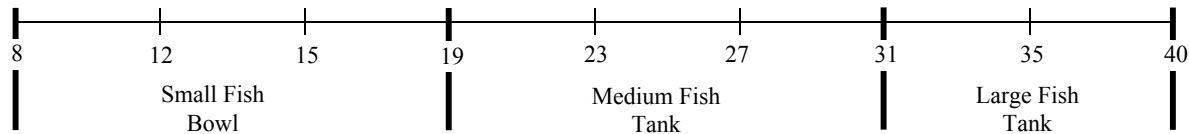
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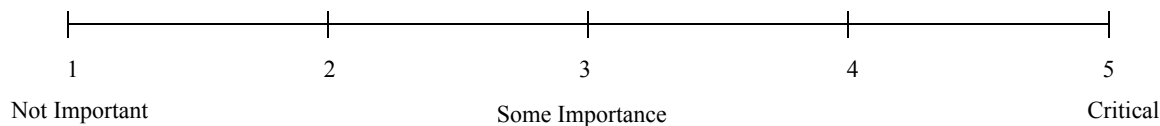
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1. Add up your scores and plot on the scale:



2. How important is it for our team to build bigger fish tanks?



Leading a High Performance Culture: Balancing Processes and People

Over the past two years The CLEMMER Group has been working closely with **Supply Chain Management (SCM)** to help their president, Don Borsk, and his management team take their already high-performing company even higher.

SCM provides third party retail logistics for Wal-Mart Canada. Their network includes over 3.5 million square feet of distribution space and 2,300 team members across Canada. The company handles millions of cases of products per year within extremely tight tolerances of quality, cost, and service levels that meet and exceed Wal-Mart's very high standards. Business is growing by double digits each year. Operations are highly mechanized and use the latest in technology and process management.

SCM's improvement process is sharply focused on taking the company to extraordinary performance levels, fulfilling their mission, "To be simply the very best logistics provider for Wal-Mart worldwide." When SCM was formed to serve Wal-Mart's entry into the Canadian market in 1994, "The SCM Way" defined their culture with a heavy emphasis on teamwork and participative management.

On June 3, Don Borsk and I will present a workshop in the Toronto airport area that will report on the successful updating and revitalizing of "The SCM Way" around the redefined core values of Valuing People, Customer Focus, and Health and Safety. SCM simultaneously balances ever deeper technical expertise with tightly disciplined management systems and processes.

For more information go to <http://www.sclcanada.org/JimClemmerWorkshop.html>



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When we sent out e-mail invitations for the workshop, I received the following inquiry:

Hi Jim.

Can you please help me?

Your workshop, "Leading a High Performance Culture" on June 3 sounds intriguing! A few questions please...

- 1. How practical would this day be for me, an independent practitioner who partners with senior management and workplace educators to provide strategic program planning and who coaches workplace educators on how to teach adults?*
- 2. How much of the day and content will focus on a supply chain context only?*
- 3. I am particularly interested in the cultural and leadership development aspects. Can I assume content, exercises, resources, and facilitation methods will be applicable within other environments as well?*

Thanks a lot Jim. Look forward to your comments.

Here's my reply:

I'll start with questions 2 and 3. There will be little to no focus on a "supply chain" context. Don Borsk will showcase what they are doing at SCM, but he will be talking almost exclusively about the cultural renewal and leadership development work we're doing with his company. The exercises, resources, and my facilitation are highly applicable within other environments. I will be drawing from and showcasing my new 100 page Practical Application Planner that is a companion to my latest book, The Leader's Digest: Timeless Principles for Team and Organization Success.

It's hard for me to answer question #1 for you since it's a value equation. Obviously, I think it's worthwhile, but I am not exactly unbiased! You will see examples of management team development work and hear about processes that I have used with various management teams.

Hope that helps make your decision!

Jim

Here's her response:

Thanks Jim for your quick reply and your candor! Count me in please and I'll sign up tonight :)

Looking forward to meeting you there.

For more information on the workshop and registration go to
<http://www.sclcanada.org/JimClemmerWorkshop.html>



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Thoughts that Make You Go Hmm...on Practical Leadership

"Ninety-five percent of American managers today say the right thing. Five percent actually do it."

- James O'Toole, quoted in "The New Post-Heroic Leadership," *Fortune*

"Baldwin occasionally stumbles over the truth, but he always hastily picks himself up and hurries on as if nothing had happened."

- Winston Churchill

"There is a crucial difference between declarative knowledge, knowing a concept and its technical details, and procedural knowledge, being able to put those concepts and details into action. Knowing does not equal doing, whether in playing the piano, managing a team, or acting on essential advice at the right moments."

- Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do."

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

"Action may not always bring happiness; but there is no happiness without action."

- Benjamin Disraeli

Improvement Points Subscribers' Top Picks for April

Of all 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:

"There's no accounting for taste. Everyone forms his or her own opinion no matter how wrong we may think it is. If we're going to improve the service or quality delivered, we need to first understand how those we're serving, or producing for, perceive service or quality."

- from *Feedback to See How Others See Me*

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/feedback.shtml

"Effective leaders rally people throughout their organizations or teams, customers, suppliers, strategic partners, shareholders, and anyone else that can help around a cause. They transform jobs into crusades, exciting adventures, or deeper missions."

- from *Passionate Leaders Rally People to the Cause*

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/passionate_leaders.shtml



JIM CLEMMER

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"Make the final step of every major improvement or change project a half to one-day assessment of what went well, what would be done differently if the project were starting over, and the major lessons learned. This should be documented, video or audio taped, written up, presented in meetings, or in some way shared with the rest of the organization."

- from *Review, Assess, Celebrate, and Refocus: Organizational Pathways and Pitfalls*
www.clemmer.net/excerpts/review_pp.shtml

Subscribe or view the archives by topic area here: www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml.

Practical Leadership Strategies for Peak Performance

We have a diverse group of participants from across North America registered for my rare (I only do a few per year) public workshop scheduled for June 1 and 2 here in the centre of the universe (Kitchener, Ontario, Canada). ***There are still a few seats left.*** This intensive two-day workshop is built around my very latest practical leadership resources: *The Leader's Digest: Practical Application Planner* and *Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide* (to be published and released later in May).

[Click here for registration and an overview](#) (text and/or audio) of what we'll cover in **Practical Leadership Strategies for Peak Performance**.

If you would like to explore customized, in-house adaptations of this material for your team or organization, drop me an e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net and we can arrange a phone conversation.

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!

Jim

Please post or forward this newsletter to colleagues, clients, or associates you think might be interested.

If you received this newsletter from someone else, and would like to subscribe, click here:

www.clemmer.net/subscribe.shtml

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