Strengths-Based Leadership Development

A Strengths-Based Leadership Development Approach That's 2 – 3 Times More Effective

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*"You **cannot build performance on weaknesses**. You can **build only on strengths**.*

*To focus on weakness is not only **foolish**; it is **irresponsible**.*

*It is a **misuse of a human resource**,*

what a person cannot do is a limitation and nothing else."

Peter Drucker (1909 – 2005), author of 39 books and hundreds of articles on leadership, management, and organization effectiveness. Widely considered to be the father of "modern management."
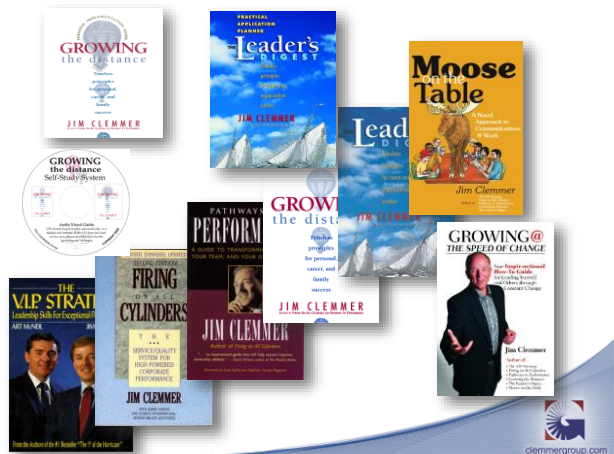
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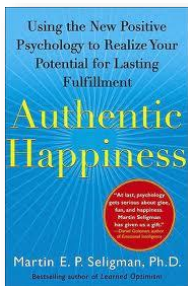
"I do not believe that you should devote overly much effort to correcting your weaknesses.

*Rather; … **the highest success in living and the deepest emotional satisfaction comes from building and using your strengths**."*

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Strengths-Based Leadership Development

ZF Founders: Leading with Strength

John "Jack" Zenger, D.B.A. Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer
- Renowned expert in the field of leadership development
- CEO of **Zenger-Miller**, President of Provant
- Human Resources Development Hall of Fame
- ASTD Lifetime Achievement Award, 2011

Joseph Folkman, Ph.D. Co-founder and President
- Renowned psychometrician and authority on assessment and change
- Founding partner of Novations Group, Inc.
- Author/co-Author of 7 books and dozens of publications

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Sample Organizations Using ZF's Approach

- Wilfrid Laurier and Queen's Universities
- Canadian Tire
- Niagara Region
- Fanshawe College
- Toyota Motor Manf. Canada
- Candu Owners Group
- EllisDon
- Dillon (engineering) Consulting
- Air Transat
- Seneca College
- Rogers
- Elsevier
- General Mills
- Coca Cola
- Deloitte
- Fidelity Investments
- ConocoPhillips
- Adidas
- Marriott
- Lockheed Martin
- Safeway
- Zain
- Allianz
- AT&T
- Wells Fargo Bank
- US Navy
- Symantec

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Transforming Good Managers into Great Leaders

Good Manager	Great Leader
Pushes for results	Inspires outstanding performance
Directs and controls	Coaches and influences
Solves problems	Guides problem solving and owning solutions
Gives feedback	Gives and asks for feedback
Set high goals/standards	Energizes with vision/strategy
Build strong teamwork	Fosters culture of extra effort
Uses technical expertise	Develops strong expertise
Reduces turnover and increases engagement	Attracts and retains the very best people (magnetic organization)
Fixes weaknesses	Builds and leverages strengths

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Strengths-Based Leadership Development

- **Evidence-Based Leadership Development**
- **The Good, the Bad, and the Extraordinary**
- **Perceptions are a Leader's Reality**
- **Building Leadership Strengths**
- **Cross-Training to Leverage Leadership Strengths**

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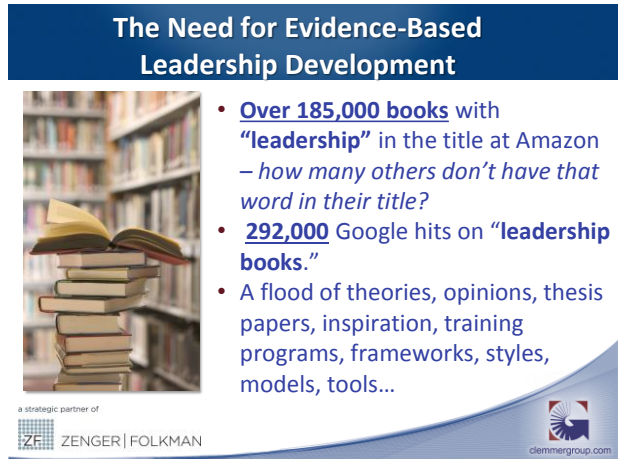
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Strengths-Based Leadership Development

Evidence-Based Leadership Development

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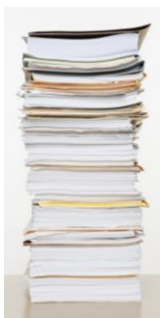ZF ZENGER | FOLKMAN

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The Need for Evidence-Based Leadership Development

- **Over 185,000 books** with **"leadership"** in the title at Amazon – *how many others don't have that word in their title?*
- **292,000** Google hits on "**leadership books**."
- A flood of theories, opinions, thesis papers, inspiration, training programs, frameworks, styles, models, tools…

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The Original Research Base

- Two years researching the **impact of leadership performance** and the **key behaviors** great leaders demonstrate.
- Data set of **200,000 evaluations on 20,000 people**.
- Contrasted **the highest-performing 10% to the lowest-performing 10%.**
- **The data conclusively demonstrates:**
  - **leadership effectiveness can be measured** and is strongly **correlated to performance outcomes**
  - 16 competencies **most differentiate the extraordinary leaders** from everyone else
  - **building on existing strengths** is the most effective approach to development

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Differentiating Competencies

Focus on Results	Leading Change	Character	Interpersonal Skills	Personal Capability
•Drives for Results	•Develops Strategic Perspective	•Displays High Integrity and Honesty	•Communicates Powerfully and Prolifically	•Technical/ Professional Expertise
•Establishes Stretch Goals	•Champions Change		•Inspires and Motivates Others to High Performance	•Solves Problems and Analyzes Issues
•Takes Initiative	•Connects the Group to the Outside World		•Builds Relationships	•Innovates
			•Develops Others	•Practices Self-Development
			•Collaboration and Teamwork	

Strengths-Based Leadership Development

In Addition to Our Standard 16 Competencies, We Have Researched Over 50 Additional Competencies

Follows Through on Commitments
Ensure Alignment with Core Values
Personal Accountability
Humility
Business Acumen
Intellectual Power
Decision Making
Decisiveness
Sound Decisions
Dealing with Ambiguity
Self-Awareness
Ability to Change
Accepts Feedback
Control Emotions
Command Skills
Managing and Executing Projects
Clear – Effective Processes
Simplicity - Efficiency
Operational Excellence
High Standards

Getting Others to Step Up
Be Courageous
Encourages Speaking Up
Asks Powerful Questions
Listening
Written Communication
Demonstrates the Ability to Influence
Project Optimism
Is Trusted
Values Diversity
Gives Recognition
Recruits and Retains
Conducts Reviews and Takes Action
Delegation
Personally Supports Others Development
Helps Set Goals/Performance Expectation
Provides Feedback
Managing Across Boundaries
Addresses Conflicts and Disagreements

Consensus Building
Balance Long Term with Day to Day
Managing Vision & Purpose
Organizational Savvy
Planning & Organization
Goal Alignment
Managing Across Boundaries
Addresses Conflicts and Disagreements
Consensus Building
Intelligent Risk Taking
Thinking Like a Customer
Business Development
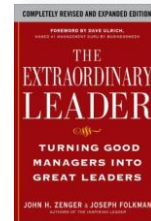Global Mindset
Market Insight
Safety Leadership

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For a Full Report on the Research. . .

COMPLETELY REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION

FOREWORD BY DAVE ULRICH

THE EXTRAORDINARY LEADER
TURNING GOOD MANAGERS INTO GREAT LEADERS
JOHN H. ZENGER & JOSEPH FOLKMAN

Harvard Business Review

HOW TO BE EXCEPTIONAL
DRIVE LEADERSHIP SUCCESS BY MAGNIFYING YOUR STRENGTHS
JOHN H. ZENGER, JOSEPH R. FOLKMAN,
ROBERT H. SHERWIN, JR., BARBARA A. STEEL

SPOTLIGHT ON TALENT
Making Yourself Indispensable
If you want to get to the top, develop skills that complement what you already do best.
by John H. Zenger, Joseph R. Folkman, and Scott K. Edinger

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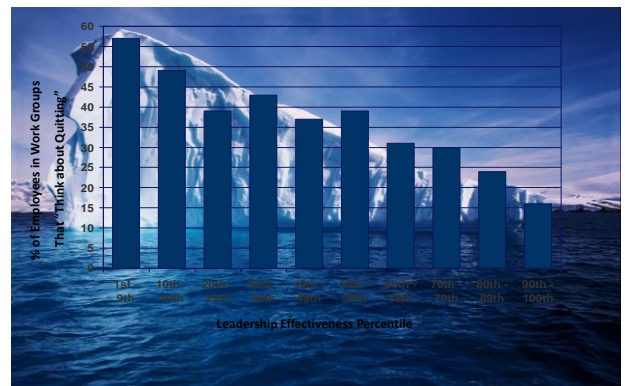
The Good, the Bad, and the Extraordinary
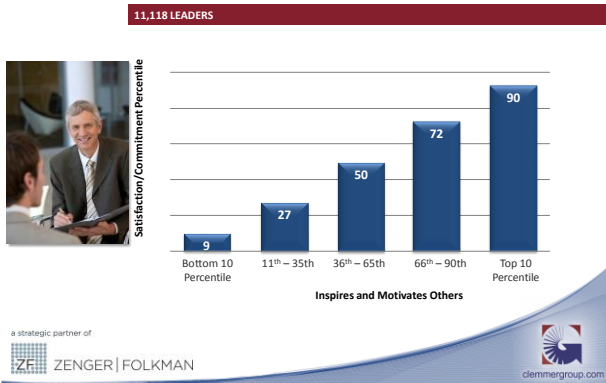
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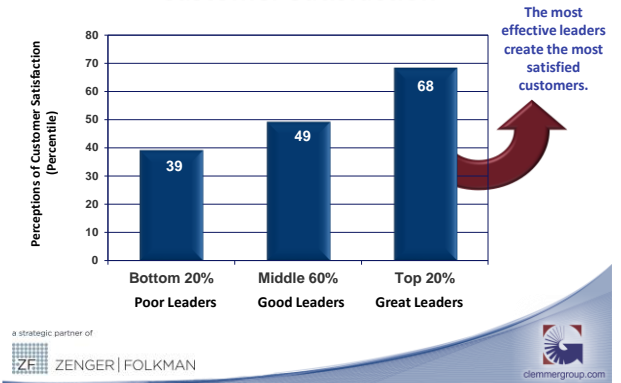
Percent of Employees that "Think about Quitting"

% of Employees in Work Groups That "Think about Quitting"

Leadership Effectiveness Percentile

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Leadership Effectiveness and Employee Engagement

11,118 LEADERS

Satisfaction/Commitment Percentile

Bottom 10 Percentile	11th – 35th	36th – 65th	66th – 90th	Top 10 Percentile
9	27	50	72	90

Inspires and Motivates Others

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Leadership Effectiveness versus Customer Satisfaction

Perceptions of Customer Satisfaction (Percentile)

The most effective leaders create the most satisfied customers.

Bottom 20% Poor Leaders	Middle 60% Good Leaders	Top 20% Great Leaders
39	49	68

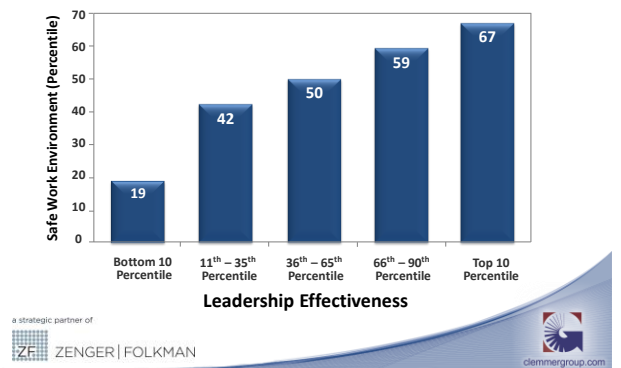a strategic partner of
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Leadership Effectiveness on Extra Effort

Employees who strongly agreed that their
*"work environment is a place where people want to go the extra mile."*

% of Highly Committed Employees

1st - 9th	10th - 19th	20th - 29th	30th - 39th	40th - 49th	50th - 59th	60th - 69th	70th - 79th	80th - 89th	90th - 100th

Leadership Effectiveness Percentile

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Impact of Leadership Effectiveness on a Safe Work Environment

Safe Work Environment (Percentile)

Bottom 10 Percentile	11th – 35th Percentile	36th – 65th Percentile	66th – 90th Percentile	Top 10 Percentile
19	42	50	59	67

Leadership Effectiveness

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Leadership Effectiveness vs. Satisfaction with Pay and Job Security

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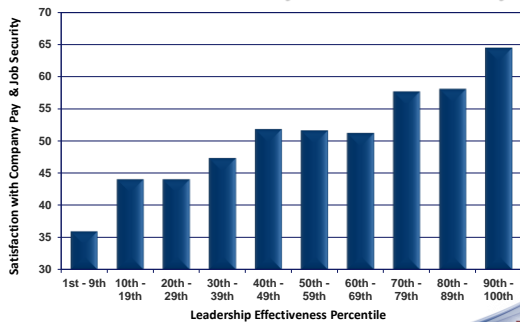
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Perceptions are a Leader's Reality

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*"a marked tendency to **think of the person in general** as rather good or rather inferior and **color the judgments of the qualities** by this general feeling."*
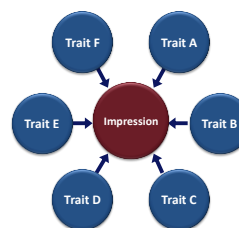
Edward Thorndike, pioneering researcher and president of the American Psychological Association in 1912
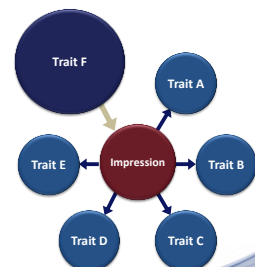
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The Reality of Leadership Perceptions

How people would _objectively_ evaluate us

How people _really_ evaluate us

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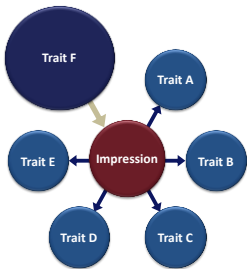

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How Are You Perceived?
What is Your "Trait F"?
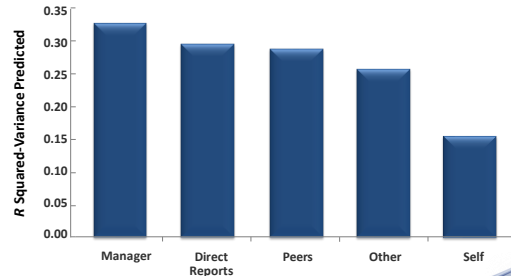*A profound strength?   A Fatal Flaw?*

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Accuracy in Predicting Leadership Effectiveness
Ability of Individuals in Each Rater Group to Predict Overall Leadership Effectiveness

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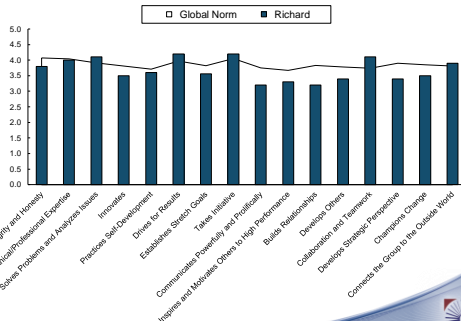## Building Leadership Strengths

Case Study: Richard's Dilemma

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What's the message from this assessment?
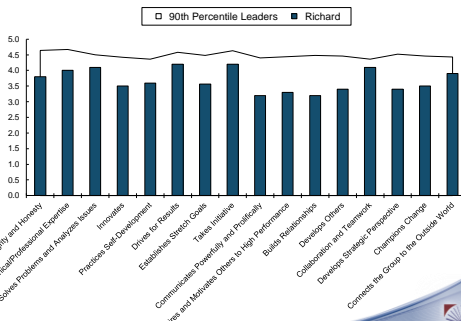## What's your advice to Richard?

Aiming for Extraordinary

*"Our greatest tragedy is **not that our aim is too high** and we miss it,*

*but that **it is too low** and we reach it."*

Michelangelo

How's Richard doing now?
Now what's your advice to him?

What Does Performance Improvement Mean to Most People?

Fixing Weaknesses!

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*"While some need to concentrate on fatal flaws, most of our leaders would be **wasting their time making small, incremental improvements** on a few, below-average scores that **may not matter in the long run**.*
*…if we concentrate all our efforts **getting everyone to average**, that is what we will achieve — **a company of average leaders**.*
*….we needed **exceptional leaders with profound strengths that matter**."*

Kevin D. Wilde, VP, Organization Effectiveness and Chief Learning Officer in the Foreword to *How to Be Exceptional*

GENERAL MILLS

*"…the **path to greatness** is really about **building profound strengths**, rather than through relentlessly focusing on one's weaknesses."*

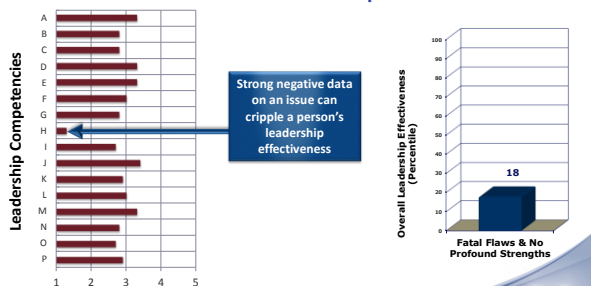**Michael A. Peel, Vice President, Human Resources and Administration**

Yale University

Focusing Development on Weaknesses Works Well When. . .

. . . People Have *Fatal Flaws*

Strong negative data on an issue can cripple a person's leadership effectiveness

Leadership Competencies

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P
1 2 3 4 5

Overall Leadership Effectiveness (Percentile)

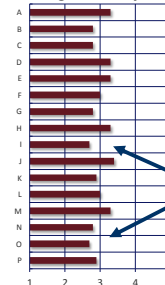18

Fatal Flaws & No Profound Strengths

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If Someone is Average at Everything, What is the Effect of Focusing on Lower Scores?

Average at Everything

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P
1 2 3 4 5

Will fixing one or two less-positive issues have a dramatic impact on leadership effectiveness?

Typical Approach to Development

1. **Evaluate** current level of effectiveness
2. **Identify** areas of strength and weakness
3. **Create** an action plan to **improve** areas of weakness

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You **don't have to be a superhero** to be an extraordinary leader.

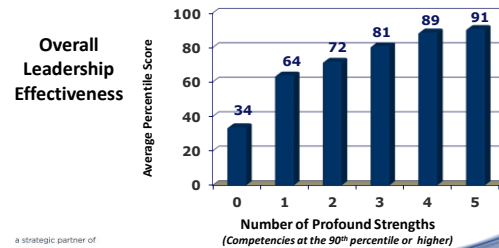a strategic partner

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## Our Research Shows Strengths-Based Development is Most Effective

Extraordinary leaders are distinguished by existence of a few profound strengths, not the absence of weaknesses

Overall Leadership Effectiveness

Average Percentile Score

Number of Profound Strengths	Score
0	34
1	64
2	72
3	81
4	89
5	91

Number of Profound Strengths
(Competencies at the 90th percentile or higher)

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A Strengths Focus *Doubles* Improvement Rates

Pre-test ■ Post Test

Percentile

*Fixed Weaknesses: 54 → 66 (+12)
Built Strengths: 56 → 82 (+26)
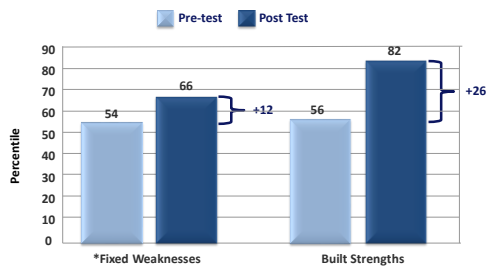
* Fixing weaknesses excludes those fixing fatal flaws

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The Powerful Impact of Building Strengths

Executives Responded to These Statements:	Build Strength	Fix Weakness
I have created **an excellent development plan** that will guide my efforts to improve.	63%	13%
As a result of my use of the 360 feedback process, report, and tools, I feel that I have **improved in my overall leadership effectiveness**.	72%	38%
I feel that I have **moved forward on improving the specific issues** on my development plan.	68%	43%
I have **taken the time and made a real effort** to work on my development plan.	60%	38%

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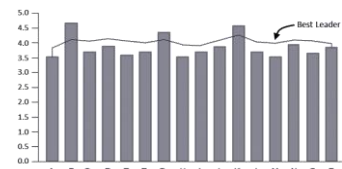Strengths-Based Leadership Development

Cross Training to Leverage Leadership Strengths

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The Leader's Situation Determines Which Strengths are Key

- Development efforts focus on **building profound strengths**
- Specific strengths to be built **vary by leader**
- Goal is **3-5 strengths at 90th percentile**
- Offers **a positive approach to development** for individual leader and the organization

Leadership Sweet Spot

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*"The strengths-based approach to leadership development is **very different and contrary** to our long conditioning on gap-based learning and development. Once participants **let go of irrelevant weaknesses** and focus on what matters most, **strengthening strengths**, the impact is significant. The biggest difference I have noticed with this program is **participants' energy to focus on development planning**. When **strengths align with passion and organizational need**, people are motivated to implement."*

LAURIER
Inspiring Lives.

Melanie Will, Manager, Learning and Organizational Development

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Good to Great: Non-Linear Cross Training

Weightlifting · Stretching · Sleeping Habits · Nutrition · Equipment · Yoga · Interval Training · Mental Imagery Techniques · Long Distance Running

Strengths-Based Leadership Development

Each Competency Has Many Companion Competencies

- Always be honest
- Never lie
- ?
- Be really really Honest
- ?
- ?
- ?
- ?

Displays High Integrity and Honesty

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Competency Companions:
Cross-Training Ideas for Leaders

- Assertiveness
- Drives for Results
- Decisiveness
- Concern for Others
- Trust
- Inspires and Motivates Others
- Deals Well with Ambiguity
- Positive Optimism

Displays High Integrity and Honesty
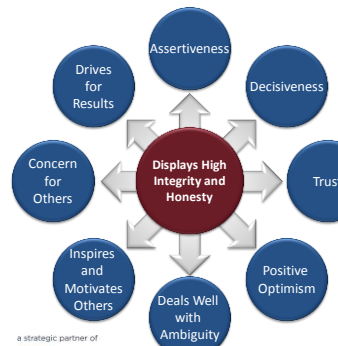
- Research identified **statistically correlated companion behaviors** for each competency.
- Each companion behavior represents a **leadership cross-training idea** for development.
- Each provides a **potential path for building on an existing strength.**

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"I found The Extraordinary Leader 360 assessment and personal development process very effective.

Its competency companion development guide provides a clear road map for building on one's leadership strengths. It is measurably superior to any 360 methodology I have previously seen. My only regret is that The Extraordinary Leader wasn't available years ago."

Queen's UNIVERSITY

Alan Harrison, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic), Queen's University

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