

**INSPIRING**

**UNLOCK THE CONNECTION**

**IN THE**

**BUILD THE STRENGTHS**

**NEW ERA**

**TO MOTIVATE OTHERS**

**ZENGER FOLKMAN**

# CONTENTS

**1**  
INSPIRING IN THE NEW ERA

**2**  
WHAT INSPIRING LEADERS DO

**3**  
INSPIRATIONAL APPROACHES

**4**  
UNLOCKING EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

# 1 CHAPTER

## INSPIRING IN THE NEW ERA

ZENGER FOLKMAN

# 1

## UNLOCKING THE SECRETS BEHIND HOW **INSPIRING LEADERS** MOTIVATE

Inspiring leaders have been misunderstood and underrepresented in organizations for far too long.

The literal meaning of inspiration is “putting life into something that had been lifeless.” The sociologist Max Weber described it as “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men/women and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or exceptional powers or qualities.”

The skill of inspiring and motivating others is different from those leaders who drive and demand results. Instead of **pushing** people to achieve, inspirational leaders know how to **pull** them in the right direction.

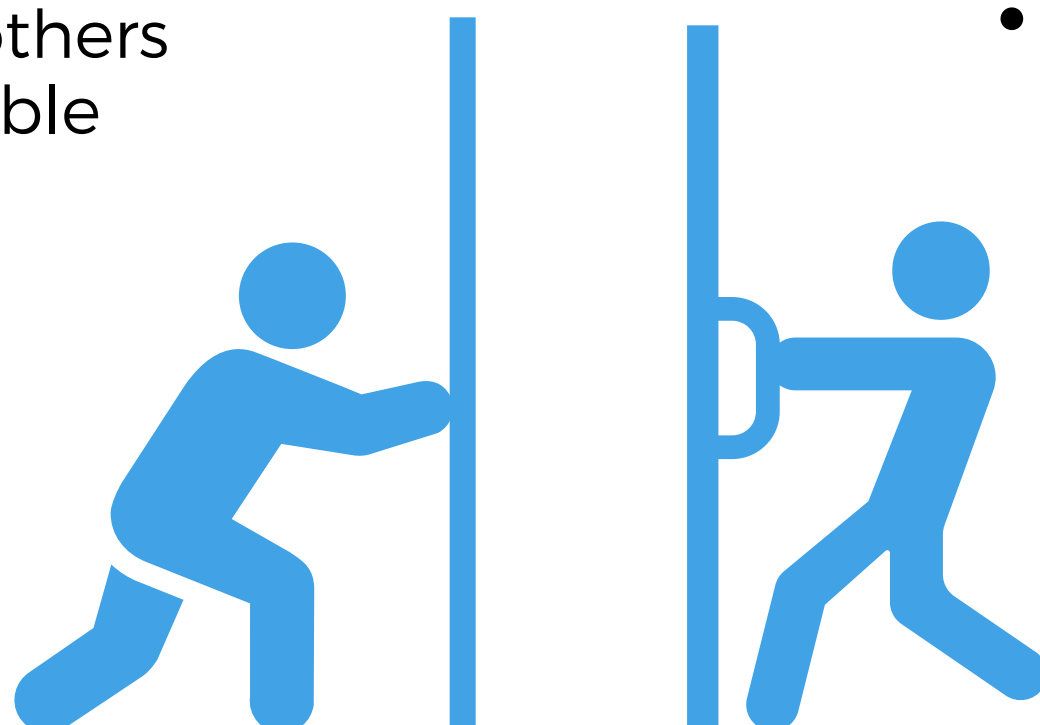
When a leader identifies a goal that they want to accomplish, there are two distinct paths to get there.

### 1. PUSHING

- giving detailed direction
- telling people what to do and how to do it
- establishing a deadline
- holding others accountable

### 2. PULLING

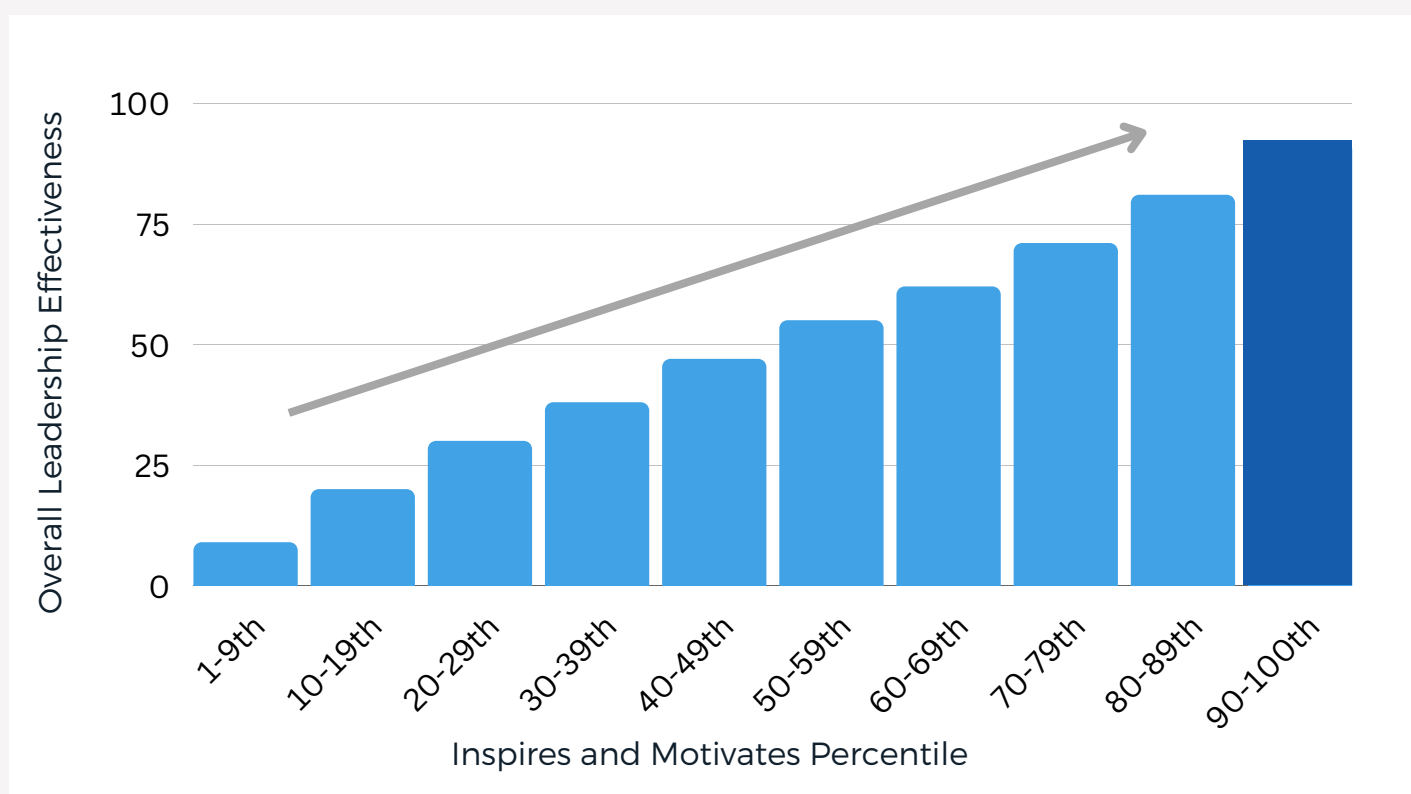
- describing needed tasks
- explaining reasons for it
- seeking ideas about how best to do it
- asking others if they are willing to take it on



# OUTCOMES OF INSPIRATION

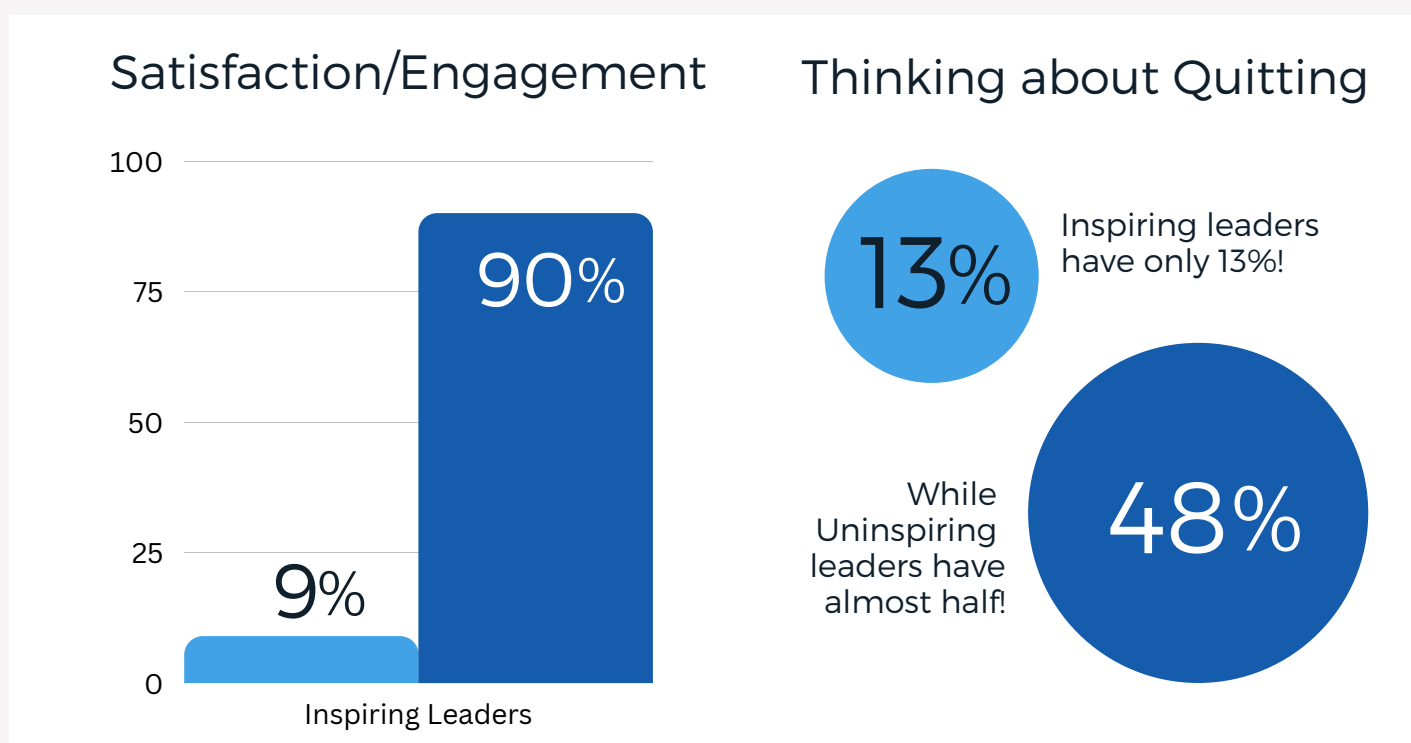
In a survey with over 1.6 million people, inspiring others was rated as the most important leadership skill.

1. Inspiration differentiates high performers from low performers.



*The more inspiring you are the more effective you are!*

2. Inspiration results in higher levels of employee satisfaction and commitment, much better retention, and a substantially larger percentage of highly committed employees.



3. Inspiration causes people to work more efficiently, expand output, and elevate quality.



## FACTS ABOUT PUSH & PULL

**76%**  
More Competent at **PUSHING**

**22%**  
More Competent at **PULLING**

**2%**  
Equal at **BOTH**



“A 10% increase in productivity would double the profits of most organizations.”

—Peter Drucker

# CONSIDER THIS...

## INSPIRING LEADERS ARE IN HIGH DEMAND

As many leaders across the globe grapple with retention, quiet quitting, hybrid work environments, and burnout, they're asking themselves hard questions.

- How do you motivate people to stay?
- How do you encourage them to increase their efforts?
- What is it they really want and need from their work environments?
- How do I form meaningful connections in separate work environments?

The answer lies in more leaders harnessing the power of inspiring leadership.

**Pushing less and pulling more.**

# CHAPTER

# 2

## WHAT INSPIRING LEADERS DO

ZENGER FOLKMAN

# THE RESEARCH BEHIND WHAT INSPIRING LEADERS DO DIFFERENTLY



Being inspiring is not a genetic gift. Instead, it is a learned behavior.

The problem is that when someone wants to become more inspiring, they have no clue where to start or what to do. They hear impassioned coaches delivering a half-time speech in a locker room but think, “That’s not me.”

If you want to know how these leaders inspire, **listen carefully to those who are led.**



"The ability to inspire and motivate to high performance is the most powerful predictor of someone being seen as an extraordinary leader."

—Joe Folkman

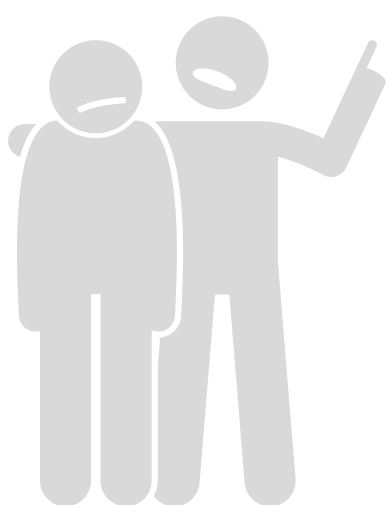
# THE INSPIRATION EFFECT



## INSPIRING LEADERS CREATE NEW ATTITUDES AND EMOTIONS IN OTHERS, SUCH AS:

-  **Confidence:** People's self-confidence is the bedrock of an organization's culture. Inspiring leaders build others' confidence by treating them with the utmost respect.
-  **Optimism/Hope:** Inspiring leaders radiate hope and optimism about the future. They focus on opportunity, not the barriers and challenges. Fortunately, optimism can be learned and magnified through practice.
-  **Initiative:** Inspiring leaders create a climate that allows people to experiment, feel ownership, and reward initiative in ways that allow this behavior to flourish.
-  **Responsibility:** Inspiring leaders convey the message that people come first. They drive business results. Leaders are there to do the blocking and tackling for the employees. When leaders own up to their mistakes, the pattern is established for others to do the same.
-  **Enthusiasm:** Imagine if 80% of employees expressed a high level of enthusiasm for their work and the organization. To change emotion, you must change behavior. Inspiring leaders spread their enthusiasm to those around them. Enthusiasm is highly contagious.
-  **Resilience:** Inspiring leaders instill an emotional "hardiness" within others. It begins with their willingness to accept reality, hurdle over barriers, and overcome anything standing in the way of the goal.

## Exercise: What do memorable leaders do?



- 1 What were the common behaviors?
- 2 What workplace climate was created by these leaders?
- 3 What impact did these memorable leaders have on you?

# HOW DO THEY GO ABOUT IT?

We went into our database and looked for those leaders who received the highest scores on the competency of “inspires and motivates to high performance.”

We found 1,000 such leaders and then analyzed **what they did that separated them from their less-inspiring counterparts.**

We found six strength-building behaviors that were statistically correlated with inspiring leaders. Some of what they did was specific and tangible, but other linked behaviors were more obscure.



Strategic  
Perspective



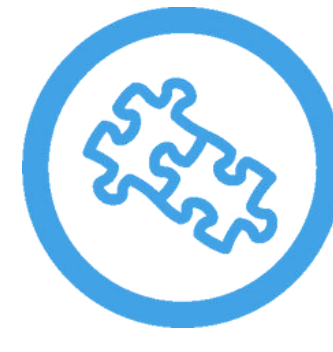
Establishes  
Stretch Goals



Develops  
Others



Communicates  
Powerfully



Collaboration  
Teamwork

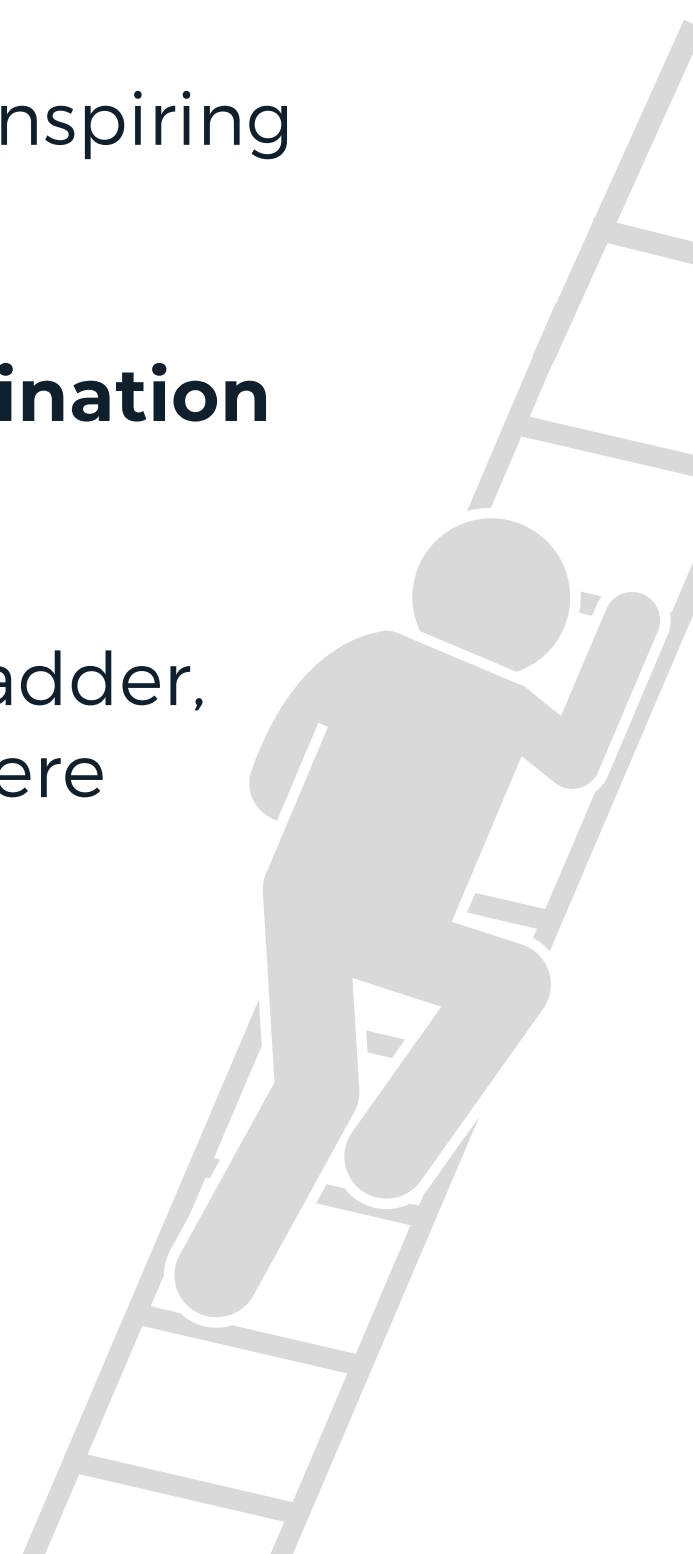


Fosters  
Innovation

Our data sends a clear message: In the case of inspiring leadership, more is more.

Inspiration is seldom “one thing.” It is the **combination of many behaviors** on the leader’s part.

You can picture these elements as rungs on a ladder, but without regard to order. The more rungs there are, the taller the ladder. Each, in turn, enables the leader to climb to higher and higher levels of influence.



# INSPIRING OTHERS

# STRENGTH BUILDERS



## ESTABLISHES STRETCH GOALS

There is a great deal of conserved energy in organizations. Setting stretch goals releases that energy, bringing increased productivity and success.

### **Suggested Practices:**

1. Display the willingness to take on the risk of a lofty goal.
2. Confidently get team members to embrace a new reality. Stick to the goals until they are realized.
3. Be involved and give others ownership in the process. Give praise often.
4. Benchmark your organization to other high-performing organizations.
5. Remove bureaucracy and encourage teams to streamline processes.



## DEVELOPS STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

This is not a solo flight. Inspiring leaders establish a clear line of sight between individual and organizational goals.

### **Suggested Practices:**

1. Make sure the vision captures important guiding principles and values. Make it concrete, succinct, and engaging.
2. Establish a clear line of sight.
  - Discuss how each individual's work connects to the vision.
  - Identify what is TRIVIAL and what is TITANIC.
3. Align processes and goals around the vision. Ensure the vision is sustainable.
4. Communicate, communicate, and communicate.

# INSPIRING OTHERS

# STRENGTH BUILDERS



## DEVELOPS OTHERS

People don't want to just do things; they want to become something. Delegate new projects, schedule coaching time and formal development.

### **Suggested Practices:**

1. Consider these questions:
  - Are you invested in the development of others and helping them succeed?
  - Are continual improvement and learning personally important to you?
2. Write down what you have done in the last month that signals your concern for team development.
3. Consider individual development when delegating your next project.
4. Create a plan for how you will develop each person on your team.
5. Schedule times for coaching conversations with the people on your team.



## COMMUNICATES POWERFULLY

Define your communication policies for meetings, one-on-one conversations, and presentations. Become the "antenna" for your workgroup. Help information flow freely.

### **Suggested Practices:**

1. Decide the general policy you will follow regarding communication. When? How? Who else must be involved?
2. Ask more questions. Remember to share the spotlight and make it a two-way transaction.
3. Tell relevant stories infused with your passion and enthusiasm. Listeners hear words but respond to passion and emotion.
4. Reflect on your participation in meetings. Do you contribute frequently, ask questions, or give opinions?

# INSPIRING OTHERS

# STRENGTH BUILDERS

## COLLABORATES/PROMOTES TEAMWORK

Inspiring leaders put the team before individuals. They recognize that success depends not on a single individual but on the team's work and efforts.

### **Suggested Practices:**

1. Create a team-based structure and reward effort and accomplishment.
2. Don't pit groups against each other. Remove barriers that separate them.
3. Mediate conflict between groups and encourage cooperation over competition.
4. Invent employee recognition systems and acknowledge people in ways that are meaningful to them.
5. Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## FOSTERS INNOVATION

New opportunities, challenges, or activities are exciting to individuals. Inspiring leaders create environments that support new ideas.

### **Suggested practices:**

1. Take a look at your culture and work environment. Is it fixed or flexible?
2. Identify and remove stumbling blocks and streamline approval processes.
3. Consider asking direct reports the following questions:
  - Do I say or do things that discourage people from proposing new ideas?
  - Do I react in ways that suggest I'm not eager to take a risk or try a new approach?
  - How can I encourage ideas from the group about new products or more effective ways to work?
4. Recognize those who share ideas regardless of whether they are implemented.

# 3 CHAPTER

## INSPIRATIONAL APPROACHES

ZENGER FOLKMAN

# DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO INSPIRATION



Let's turn our attention from what these inspiring leaders do to how they do it.

Many people equate being inspirational with being enthusiastic and outgoing. That can be so, but we also found that leaders could take other approaches that didn't require them to be extroverted.

## **Inspiration happens in a variety of different ways.**

Inspirational leaders might apply these different approaches to any of their leadership responsibilities.



**“The most promising approach to changing an emotion is to change behavior. When people learn to act in new ways, it alters their inner feelings.”**

—Jack Zenger

# DIFFERENT INSPIRATION

## PATHWAYS

For example, a leader can be inspirational in **setting a stretch goal** in a number of ways.

- They can do it by creating a compelling vision (the **“visionary”** approach).
- Alternatively, they can meet with team members and have them collectively set the goal (the **“enhancing”** approach).
- Other inspiring leaders might set stretch goals by tossing out a challenge to the group and setting a specific deadline (the **“driver”** approach).
- They may encourage the team to find a “higher purpose” goal that focuses on the organization’s mission (the **“principled”** approach).
- Yet other inspiring leaders might convene a meeting and deliver a classic half-time locker room speech to set a goal (the **“enthusiast”** approach).
- Finally, the leader might initiate a unique technical solution to a problem (the **“expert”** approach).



# EVERYDAY

# INSPIRATION

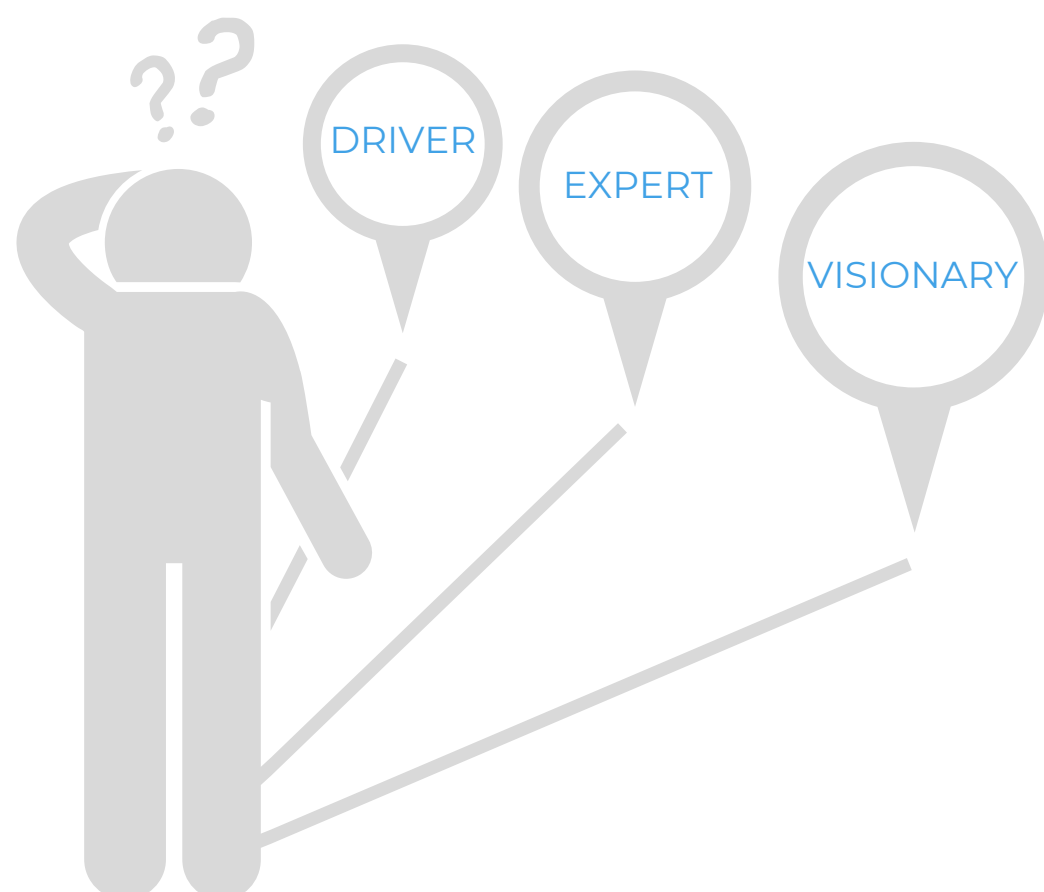
---

## EXAMPLES

- “She got every person excited about taking on a very difficult project that I thought was impossible, but somehow we did it, and I have never been prouder.”
- “He spoke with so much confidence and energy that everyone wanted to support the project.”
- “We talked about a new vision and direction for the organization that was so exciting—everyone signed up.”
- “I loved being part of this group. It was a joy to come to work. Every team member was all in.”
- “She took me under her wing and coached me about what to do next. She always was willing to listen to my frustrations.”
- “We came up with a new approach that made work faster and easier.”

## MANY PATHS TO INSPIRE

---



*Remember, you can take **different pathways and combine multiple approaches.** Our data indicates that each approach is equally effective, but leaders who master multiple approaches significantly increase their effectiveness.*

# CONSEQUENCES OF UNINSPIRING LEADERSHIP

No one wants to be a “bad boss,” but often, leaders fail to recognize the behaviors that breed dissatisfaction and a loss of trust.

By studying the uninspiring leaders in our database, we found several behaviors that zapped inspiration.

## UNINSPIRING BEHAVIORS

- A lack of energy and enthusiasm
- Rarely provides direction and purpose
- No plan for personal development
- No coaching or mentoring
- Withholds critical information
- Says one thing and does another
- Rarely provides helpful feedback on performance
- Encourages conflict and competition with other groups or individuals in the organization

### Take a moment for self-reflection.

Do you see yourself, even just a little, participating in these uninspiring behaviors?

What is the impact when a leader is uninspiring? This bar chart represents the data from the most uninspiring leaders in our database.



Be committed to taking the first steps toward inspiration and add this powerful component to your leadership repertoire.

## The Power of Persuasion

Persuasion is based on the leader's ability to relate to others and understand what fears or doubts people possess.

- Create a sense of urgency
- Provide clarity on the topics of
  - Why this change?
  - Why now?
  - Why in this manner?
- Show conviction for the needed change

# INSPIRING TIPS

## How Leaders Can Become Better Role Models

The highest levels of commitment go hand in hand with leaders who are extraordinary role models.

1. Lead through example
2. Maximize exposure
3. Make an effort to gather with remote workers
4. Recount success stories and give recognition
5. Model behaviors that need to be emphasized in the organization
6. Seek feedback regarding behavior that is inconsistent with the values of the organization



**C H A P T E R**

UNLOCKING  
EMOTIONAL  
CONNECTION

Z E N G E R F O L K M A N

# 4

## EMOTION IS THE DNA OF INSPIRATION

Have you ever considered how your mood affects others? A study by Fowler and Christakis looked at the impact of happiness or sadness on friends. They found that:

- If you have a friend that is happy, the probability that you will be happier goes up by 25%.
- Happy friends cluster together and sad friends cluster together.

The problem with a person who lacks energy and enthusiasm is that their mood impacts others.

### Moods are even more infectious than germs.

#### Rating Your Emotional Comfort Level

1 = Low      5 = High

	Low					High
1. Are you usually aware of when your colleagues are feeling down or happy? Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Do you acknowledge the emotions of others in your interactions? Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
3. If you are having a bad day, do you limit your interactions with others? Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Do you praise others? Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Do you show empathy for others? Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Do you find ways to focus on what's right instead of what's wrong? Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	

# A STUDY OF EMOTION

---

In 2002, Sigal Barsade of Yale University examined the effect of emotional contagion. A trained actor was placed in a group and enacted varying levels of pleasantness and energy.

The results of the study clearly suggested that the effect of **one group member's emotions had an unconscious effect on the mood of the other group members.** This held true both for “positive” and “negative” moods.



"Emotions are the 'switch' that connects the leader with the group."

—Jack Zenger

## Reflection

The entire topic of a leader's ability to inspire [direct reports] comes down to the leader's willingness and ability to both be aware of and comfortably use emotion.

Anyone who has taken a class in chemistry has heard about catalysts. This term describes how an agent in a chemical reaction accelerates the speed or magnitude of the reaction.

**Emotions are the catalytic agent in relationships.**

Emotions focus people's attention on a topic. They move the person to act and overcome the inertia that often holds them back.

# HOW TO "SWITCH" ON EMOTIONS



- 1 Tune in to your own emotions.** We all have good days and bad days. So, when it is a good day, expand your interactions.
- 2 Be attuned to the emotions of those about you.** This requires a higher level of listening to find out what others are feeling. You must be effective on both the sending and receiving sides of emotion.
- 3 Become more extroverted.** Extroverts have more influence and provide more inspiration. You need to be the one to say “hello,” invite them in, offer to help, rally the group, and speak loud enough to be heard.
- 4 Display your emotions with amplitude and frequency.** No poker faces with your positive emotions and signs of approval. Connection requires more transparency.
- 5 Help the people who work with you to be happy.** Happiness causes more productivity. Use your emotions to arouse the same positive emotions in others.



"We need to get comfortable doing the things inspiring leaders know and do so well. This may push some people outside their comfort zone but performing them becomes its own reward."

—Joe Folkman

# CONCLUSION

**The data is in. Organizations will experience a significant increase in productivity, satisfaction, and performance as they focus on the ability to inspire.**

Some believe that inspiration is just something that leaders do on big occasions.

They see it as a yearly speech where leaders get up in front of all the employees to energize them. However, inspiration is much more. It is small actions every day that make the difference. Everything a leader does has an impact on the employees. When a leader comes to work in the morning and is in a bad mood, that counts. When a leader shares their optimism, excitement, and passion for their work, that counts. When a leader comes in, ducks into their office, and hides all day, that counts.

Leaders need to be aware that every interaction can make a difference.

Inspiration works best when it has a purpose. Remember what your commitment to being an inspiring leader does for others. It generates higher levels of enthusiasm, enhances optimism, and empowers people to be more resilient in the face of adversity. Inspiring leaders are what our workforce needs to adapt to and navigate this new era successfully.

Excerpts from: *The Inspiring Leader*, by Jack Zenger, Joe Folkman, and Scott Edinger, McGraw Hill, 2009.

"What Inspiring Leaders Do" by Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, Harvard Business Review, 2016.

"Unlocking the Secrets Behind How Extraordinary Leaders Motivate" by Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, Zenger Folkman, 2019.

"How to Choose a Leadership Pattern," by A.S. Tannenbaum and W.H. Schmidt, Harvard Business Review, 1958

# INSPIRING NEXT STEPS

**1** LEARN MORE ABOUT ZENGER FOLKMAN'S INSPIRING LEADER OFFERINGS.

**2** DISCOVER MORE RESEARCH IN OUR WEBINAR ON UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF INSPIRING LEADERSHIP.

**3** SCHEDULE A CALL TO SEE HOW WE CAN BRING INSPIRING LEADERSHIP TO YOUR ORGANIZATION.

ZENGER FOLKMAN