

# INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND IT CORPORATION BUILDS LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

Zenger Folkman's Extraordinary Leader™ helps corporation develop strong pipeline of mid-level managers poised to handle changing government acquisition.

## THE CHALLENGE

This international communications and information technology company serving government and commercial markets in more than 125 countries has approximately \$5.5 billion in annual revenue and about 15,000 employees—including 6,000 engineers and scientists. They are dedicated to developing best-in-class assured communications.

They're also dedicated to developing strong leaders for years to come and providing all employees with opportunities for growth. "Failure to do either truly limits attracting and retaining talent," said the Vice President of Human Resources in the Government Communication Systems (GCS) segment of the corporation.

"One of my priorities was to figure out how to instill the right behaviors and capabilities to grow leadership in our employees and to ensure they continue to have jobs here as long as they want them."

First, with the senior workforce heading towards retirement, the organization needed to develop a strong pipeline of mid-level leaders to replace them. Second, with 75 percent of the segment's revenues coming from the U.S. government, it was critical they prepared all leaders to handle the changing government acquisition process. Third, they needed to be prepared to deal with the potential for government sequestration, which might require strategic cuts as well. These changes necessitated they equip their leaders with the skills to use better judgment in bidding and be more agile in how they executed their responsibilities.

The organization needed a focused leadership development program, but the executive team needed to be convinced that it would benefit the company.

## THE SOLUTION

While participating in an event at the University of Southern California, the VP of HR attended a presentation from guest speaker Joe Folkman, one of two authors of the best-selling book, *The Extraordinary Leader*.

"What was most intriguing to me is that Joe works in algorithms and statistics, just like our segment president," he said. "I thought he might have some quantitative measurements that would help companies understand how strengthening leadership adds value to the bottom line. I was right."

## AT A GLANCE

### The Challenge

- With the senior workforce heading towards retirement, the company needed to develop a strong pipeline of mid-level leaders to replace them—and to better address the challenges set forth by the U.S. government's changing acquisition process.

### The Solution

- Implemented Zenger Folkman's *Extraordinary Leader* 360 feedback and development experience to ensure leaders know how they are perceived, how they can leverage their strengths, and create an action plan for their ongoing development.

### The Results

- Employees recognize the value of developing their individual strengths and feel better equipped to interact with business leaders and drive the positive change the company needs as the industry evolves.

Drawing on data from more than 200,000 individuals who rated more than 25,000 leaders in a wide range of companies and industries, Dr. Folkman and Dr. John "Jack" Zenger proved in *The Extraordinary Leader* that the effectiveness of an organization's leaders has a direct impact on employee commitment, customer satisfaction, innovation, and ultimately, profitability.

Zenger Folkman worked with the technology company to fully identify the organization's needs and overall objectives. Zenger Folkman then illustrated how the research and strengths-based methodology of *The Extraordinary Leader* could develop leaders that would take them into the future. The next step was to introduce the concepts to the group Vice President, gain his buy-in, and ensure alignment with his vision of beneficial development. He agreed with the concepts and wanted his entire executive team of over 15 leaders to experience an abbreviated version of *The Extraordinary Leader* development

experience and complete the 360-degree assessment associated with the program.

“Our group Vice President is a true leader who was very candid about the feedback in his initial assessment. He challenged himself and all of us by saying, ‘Hey, look team, here are my deficiencies, let me see your deficiencies, and let’s figure out how we can overcome them as a team.’”

As a result, *The Extraordinary Leader* development experience became the kickoff component of a year-long leadership development program, which targets 25 mid-level managers per year.

The positioning of the workshop is key. The participants start their year-long developmental journey understanding how they are perceived as leaders, learning how to leverage their strengths, and developing an action plan that will serve as the road map for their development over the next 12 months.

## THE RESULTS

“After participating in *The Extraordinary Leader* development experience, our people recognize the value of developing individual competencies and feel better equipped to interact with business leaders and drive the positive change we need from a leadership development perspective,” the VP of HR said. “They learned how truly simple it is to become a great leader by applying Zenger Folkman’s unique model and methodology.”

The strong partnership the two companies have created stems in large part from Zenger Folkman’s responsiveness, its willingness to accommodate specific requests, its competitive price point, and the overall collaboration and teamwork. All of these benefits came together to form an incredibly beneficial relationship with Zenger Folkman generating tremendous reviews throughout the organization.

The technology company is preparing for another group of segment leaders to participate in the leadership development program. Most of the leaders are “chomping at the bit” to start because of the excellent feedback and visible results emerging from the first two groups of participants.

After only two years, they already see real leaders being created from these programs. They’re confident they’re developing a strong leadership pipeline ready to meet the challenging changes within the industry. This will make them an even stronger company able to retain and attract the highest caliber employees.

## GROUNDING IN RESEARCH. BUILT ON STRENGTHS.

Zenger Folkman’s approach makes more of people development, transforming the process into a new, strengths-focused lifestyle that brings science to the art of leadership.