

# Turbo Leadership Systems™

## The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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### *Values – Spell Them Out Or Else*



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A few weeks ago I arrived early for a meeting with the Board of Directors of a community bank. The doors to the bank were still locked. I unloaded all of my meeting materials by the front door. It was a cool morning, no rain, perfect for a quick walk around the bank. As I walked around by the drive-up window, the curtains were not down like they often are. I saw a chartreuse statue of what looked like a cross between a duck and a man about ten inches high. It had hair flying straight up out of its head and ears. It was holding a 4X6 sign that said, "I'm just not a people person." I thought, "That is a curious thing to have at the drive-up window." It was sitting up on a box that it may have come in. I know banks sell a lot of things these days to generate non-interest income. I didn't think too much more about it.

Later in the morning, I conducted an executive team kickoff meeting for the bank Board in preparation for an off site I was scheduled to conduct for them in a few more weeks. My next meeting was with the executive management team of the bank. As we were discussing opportunities to improve customer service and teamwork, something was said that made me remember the little chartreuse man in the window. I asked the bank president if he wouldn't mind going out to the drive-up window to see if he could find this character. A few minutes later, he was back with it and two decorated rocks. Every member of the executive team said, "I've never seen this thing before." No one was pleased to find that it was in their drive-up window. The executive vice president said, "If my wife saw that sign, she would never come back."

The person who put it in the window probably thought it was cute. This could be an empowered team member who's trying to

find a way to personalize their client's banking experience, keep things light so their customers have fun. Whether the little gnome and his sign are in good taste is a subjective question. If this chartreuse man with his funny little sign could be objectionable to any reasonable person, it needs to go.

Quite a spirited discussion followed.

What are we going to do? Are we going to put it back in the window, are we going to call the person in? Someone suggested I put it in the middle of the table because employee group meetings were scheduled in that room for the balance of the day. As I was conducting the meetings, I could ask them what they thought about it. There were a lot of ideas. The decision was finally made to put it back in the window and have the drive-up window tellers' supervisor talk with her privately about the appropriateness of the statue later.

The vice president of marketing commented, "Boy, you're sure observant."

There are many things we can learn from this incident. One of the things I learned was the importance of keeping my eyes open and being willing to question things. The deeper lesson is that in our world today where we cannot supervise everyone directly, where we must create an empowered work force which has the freedom to make decisions, there must be clearly articulated values and guidelines so team members can know what is and isn't appropriate behavior.

Have you developed a clearly articulated, published list of values? How often do you talk about them? Don't wait any longer. Your values will serve as a guide and will empower your team to peak performance.

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