

The **TURBO** Charger

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To our clients and friends

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Get the Big Picture or Problems Will Develop



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If you save the cost of miscommunication, you could more than double your profit.

Rob, a yard foreman with a large construction company told Session 2B of the Leadership Development Lab™:

“It was early in my career as a yard foreman, and we had just successfully bid on a bridge rebuild in Olympia, Washington. This was a good-sized project and a lot of materials would be required. Our 10-acre yard in Springfield, Oregon contains everything from 3/4” nuts and bolts to a 100-ton Manitowoc Crane. Everything needed for bridge building. Meeting the supply needs of the jobs, shipping and receiving is a big part of the yard’s daily function. We use our semi-trucks and go outside the company for trucking needs. We load and unload trucks each day with the five forklifts that are available to us with a lifting capacity from 5,000 to 30,000 pounds.

Being fairly new in the company, I took the Olympia job as a golden opportunity to show my talents. While talking to the pile buck foreman, Brian, on one of our many phone conversations, he mentioned the need for a large number of 8” x 12” x 24’ work bridge timbers. I told him I would check this out and get back to him. We had a mountain of timbers out next to the blue shed that had recently been returned from a project in Harrisburg. I double checked the quantity and called the field office back with a report.

I got the Project Engineer Bob on the phone and told him my findings. The yard is set up on a first come, first serve basis, and with eight other jobs in full swing sometimes orders come in, and inventory changes on a moments notice, so getting an upfront commitment is essential. When Bob heard the good news on the quantity of timbers we had, he replied that he would take all we could supply. That was good enough for me. I went into action.

Figuring there was about 700 pieces of 8” x 12” x 24’ bridge deck timbers and 500 pieces of 8” x 12” x 20’. I estimated that it would require about twelve semi-trucks to do

the job, so I called on two or three vendors for prices and availability. I chose a truck broker out of Sutherlin, Oregon to do the job because of his price and the fact that he had maxi trucks 53’ long on the trailers with a 64,000 lbs capacity on the trailer deck. I had the firepower to do the job with speed and maximum loading capacity. I made the call and trucks were on their way. In the meantime, Gary our forklift driver had dug out the timbers and started loading trucks. The first day went well. We loaded about eight trucks all for delivery the next day and on the second day had the final trucks loaded and heading north.

Then the phone started ringing. First Bob, the Project Manager, called saying he didn’t want timbers up there now because they had no room to store them. Then the walking foreman called and said, ‘Who’s shipping these timbers to us? Those trucks are too long to turn around in the storage yard and it’s causing a major traffic jam in downtown Olympia.’ All I could say was I thought you wanted those timbers, so I shipped them to you.

The excitement of the start-up of a new big job can result in some communication problems. The lesson I learned from this experience is that when I communicate to the field, I have to follow-up and make sure that everybody has been contacted and is in the loop so that all the bases are covered and everybody is involved. Even if this takes several attempts, I must be willing to go to extra mile to make it work.

The action I call you to take is to put more heart into your work with greater enthusiasm, be willing to go the extra mile to ensure that you have communicated to everyone who needs to be in the loop. The benefit you will gain will be an open door to greater understanding of the needs of your fellow employees, increased production, and more time to accomplish your daily tasks, which will lead to success in the high powered, high demand work of heavy construction.” ###

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