

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The TURBO Charger

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To our clients and friends

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Fill 'er Up



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Saving face improves processes

When the chipper we rented from Reid Rental in Newberg stopped running, I knew it was out of gas. I quickly found a can of gas, took off the yellow cap on top of the engine and tried to pour in the gas. There seemed to be some resistance, but I was able to get it in and then to my horror, discovered I was putting the gas in where you're supposed to add oil! In other words, I had filled the engine block with gasoline. Words cannot express how embarrassed I was. As if things weren't bad enough, I was working with my young college student helper who has limited mechanical capability, and I had just demonstrated the most inept behavior imaginable. I had no choice but to return the chipper. When I walked into the door of Reid Rental's, Alan, the owner, greeted me with a big smile. I said, "You're smiling now, but when I tell you what I've done, you won't be." He said, "Maybe I better sit down." I said, "Yes, you better." I didn't know what to expect when I told him what I had done. I expected the worst, whatever that might be. I told him that I had not tried to start the engine. So worst case, we washed out the engine block with gas. He said, "No problem, no big deal. These kinds of things happen all the time. We can clean it up and replace the oil in a hurry. If you still need it, we will have it back up and running in less than an hour." I was so relieved that he helped me save face. Believe me, the embarrassment was all the punishment I needed. He didn't even charge me anything extra.

The lesson I learned from this experience is embarrassing actions need no extra punishment and that big people like Alan at Reid

Rental don't kick you when you're down. Instead, they help you save face, help you get back up and going again. What kind of leader are you? Someone who takes pleasure in kicking people when they're down, or a leader who finds meaning in helping people save face, helping people get back up when they are down? Empowering leaders help others learn and grow from all their experiences to ensure continuous improvement.

P.S. I rented the chipper the following day. It worked perfectly. One disappointment - the gas cap still wasn't labeled. From my perspective, it's a little hard to spot. Though my actions were dumb, inexcusable, labeling the gas cap is the part of the process that if changed could ensure this never happens again.

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