

# Turbo Leadership Systems™

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

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To our clients and friends

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## How to Handle Difficult Clients



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**Y**ou can win over the most difficult clients and make them your biggest fan!

Jerome, Superintendent, for a general contractor in Battle Ground, WA., told Session 4 of Turbo's Leadership Development Lab (LDL):

"In the winter of 2007 we were working with the Washington State Parks Dept. to replace the water system at a park north of Castle Rock. Rick was the engineer we were working for and Julie was the lead park ranger in the region.

"We had been to the pre-con and met all of the people involved and went over our plans to do the job. Julie made it clear that this park was one of her favorites and that she thought of it as her 'baby'.

"We started the job and proceeded to tear her 'baby' apart. There is no real clean, quick way to replace underground pipe. A few weeks into the job we got a call from Rick saying that we had real issues and needed to sit down and figure out how we were going to proceed. As it turns out Julie had a long list of complaints. Too much mess, too much notice, not enough notice, going too quickly and not going quickly enough. This was all quite a surprise to us since we had not heard anything before this. So we all sat down and carefully went over our plan going forward.

"We walked the area that was ahead of us and went over the plan and what we were doing to minimize the mess and get done quickly, so they could get back to normal. I made a commitment to myself to communicate with Julie and the other park rangers more often.

"The job proceeded at the same pace with few changes to the process but now the parks staff was aware of what we were doing to minimize our impact on the park. The park staff was happy and we were able to move at a good pace. At the end of the job we received a letter of recommendation. Rick complimented us on the "the highest standard of professionalism" singling out a list of things that were well done and ended with "dealing with the complaints from the State Parks staff". More importantly at the final walkthrough with the Parks Team, Julie actually went into the park store and bought t-shirts for all of the guys on my crew. As it turned out she was very happy with our crew and the job.

"The lesson I learned from this experience is when I increase my communication to match the pace of fast track jobs with tough clients, jobs go much easier.

"The action I call you to take when you have a customer conflict, is to stop and think of things from the client's point of view and tailor your communication frequency to satisfy their needs.

"The benefit you will gain is your toughest costumers will turn into your best clients."



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