

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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Down Under Peace of Mind



Larry W. Dennis, Sr.
President,
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Systems®

*Leader or
manager...
you decide.*

Dennis, vice president of the accounting products group for a software development company that specializes in programs for the construction industry, told Session 10 of the Leadership Development Lab (LDL):

“Six weeks ago, after several months of discussions, I made a decision to travel to Australia to set up our first international direct marketing sales force. A year ago, I would have hesitated making this trip half-way around the world. I would have been afraid that the “ship” would sink without me at the helm, in the radio room, in the engine room (get the picture. . . I felt that I had to do everything or the ship would sink). I would have spent night and day preparing for a trip like this. Tomorrow I am heading to Australia for two weeks. In preparation for the trip, I worked my now normal 8 to 9 hour days last week. I even spent the whole day Sunday at the annual Peter Jacobsen Fred Meyer Golf Challenge. I am now confident that I have provided the leadership my staff needs, and this allows me to leave for two weeks to do the things I need to do for the long term success of our firm.

A year ago, I was working 70 hours a week trying to map a product strategy for taking our product group into the 21st century. Unfortunately, I was performing many tasks that others had been hired to do. I was spending all my time on short term tasks, forgetting the long term planning, which was really what I should have been doing.

I had to do something, so in January I changed the structure of our department. The intention was for my staff to perform all the day-to-day activities while I concentrated on future product strategies. Then I found myself trying to micro manage the group. I spent more time trying to manage them, telling them step by step how to do their jobs. It would have been faster and less frustrat-

ing to have done it myself compared to the time I spent micro-managing. I thought my job was management, not leadership!

In my efforts to manage and control everything, I over-committed. I was not leading from high ideals. Micro-managing resulted in me making commitments I couldn't keep. I have since refocused my efforts and am not over-committing myself. Now my staff can trust my word. When I say I will get it done, they know they can trust me, that I will follow through, and my promises are kept!

In an effort to get things done quicker, I was not listening as we discussed problems. I started listening, and then found myself cutting the other person off and giving them the ten things that we needed to do to solve the issue. Since I wasn't listening, I ended up providing a lot more feedback than necessary on what needed to be done. If it was a ten step process, I would provide feedback on all ten steps, when all that was needed was guidance on the one element of the process. I now realize that this behavior was very disempowering.

The lesson I have learned from changing my approach is that there is a difference between managing and leading. I see managing as a method to control what the staff is doing, leading controls what I am doing, and letting the actions that I take provides feedback to my staff on how we can succeed.

The action I call you to take is when you interface with one of your staff, ask yourself, 'Does this require management or leadership?' Trying to manage everything is not always the best vehicle for success. There is no doubt in my mind that learning when to manage and when to lead will result in you having a richer professional career.”

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