

# Turbo Leadership Systems™

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

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To our clients and friends

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## Piggy Back



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*Listening  
can  
lighten  
your load*

Tuesday night on my flight from Timmins to Toronto, I followed my standard routine. By the time we had climbed up, I was sound asleep – and probably snoring. When I woke up, it felt like someone had taken cotton balls and swabbed my mouth dry. What timing! Within seconds, I heard the flight attendant ask, “What can I get you?” After I gulped down a glass of water, I said something about my “routine” to the fellow next to me. He said, “I sleep on takeoffs, too, and always wake up when they come around to serve.” We both laughed.

I could tell he wasn’t Canadian, and not just because he didn’t punctuate the end of his sentences with “aye.” He had a very distinctive Southern accent. I pride myself on being able to match people’s accents and origins, yet I couldn’t place his.

I learned his name was Virgil, he had just delivered a truck outside Timmins, and was flying to Quebec to pick up another truck. This information didn’t solve the mystery of his accent. It sure wasn’t French. Finally, I asked. Virgil lives in Springfield, Ohio, and has been delivering trucks for over fifteen years.

Virgil told me that earlier in the week, when he arrived to pick up three piggy-backed trucks, the length of the load was 37’, one foot longer than the 36’ foot maximum allowed in parts of New York and Pennsylvania. Because the load exceeded the acceptable length, Virgil would have to drive 220 miles further, going around some cities.

Virgil knew how to shorten the load to 36’, and it wasn’t complicated. The two back trucks needed to be pulled forward six

inches, raising them a total of 1’ higher, complying with the 36’ loadlength maximum. The trucks would still conform to the height restriction.

Virgil asked the staging people who rigged the trucks to pull them forward so that the length was shortened by one foot. The dispatcher said, “What do you care? You’re getting paid to drive the extra 220 miles.” Frustrated, Virgil pulled away with the 37’ load-length knowing his employer was incurring an additional and unnecessary expense. Not an efficient way of doing business, especially when a company is on the verge of bankruptcy.

This is a fabulous example of stories I’ve heard over and over again. Employees on the front lines suggest cost-saving, quality-improving, customer service-enhancing ideas which are rejected by someone in the middle just because a minor change is required. They had never done it that way, or it might be a little more work for them, or just because they hadn’t thought about doing it that way themselves. The challenge for every leader is to create a culture where the ideas of employees on the front lines are respected, listened to, and acted upon. The front line knows how to improve things and strives to do things in the most efficient way.

My challenge to you is to make certain that when employees suggest ideas, even if they’re off-the-wall in your opinion, even if they’re inconvenient, and especially if they haven’t been done that way before, that you listen. By listening, you nurture a culture where communication and new ideas are encouraged. The result? Improved quality, lower costs, better customer service, and a safer operation. ###

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