

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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Helpless



Larry W. Dennis, Sr.
President,
Turbo Leadership
Systems®

*Open your
ears and
stay open*

Dan, a store manager for a regional auto and sporting goods retailer, told Session 8B of the Leadership Development Lab:

“On March 7th, I opened our doors at 9:00 AM. When I turned around, I realized I didn’t have any cashiers to start the day. At first I became very upset and ran back to my office to get my cashier supervisors phone number. I pulled out her file and was going to call her. Then I looked up and saw my Leadership Development Lab award mug. I stopped, took care of the situation, and a few minutes later when my cashier supervisor came in, I took her to the backroom to talk with her. I explained the situation and after I was done, I let her talk. It was amazing to find out the things she didn’t know. As I listened, she began to explain other concerns and I learned that she was thrown into this position with little or no training. She was afraid to say anything because she didn’t want to look dumb, so she didn’t ask anyone for help.

“The lesson I learned from this experience is not to assume my employees know what is expected of their position. I must gain assurance that they have been fully trained in everything that they are required to do. The action I call you to take is sit down and talk with your employees, let them talk, draw them out. You may be amazed what they don’t know or are afraid to ask. Genuinely listen to what they have to say. The benefit you will gain is you will have stronger relationships with your employees and if you act on what you learn, a more highly qualified team.”

What a great example of how important it is for empowering leaders to exercise the courage to communicate in a level-headed, professional manner. This is especially important when performance falls

below standards. In all interactions, allow for give and take, allow space for the employee to share their concerns.

When we are willing to listen, we may have the same kind of learning experience Dan had. Certainly employees who fall below standard must be corrected. Dan would have missed a tremendous learning opportunity had he not given his head cashier a chance to talk. Perhaps Dan was even more at fault than she had been by not finding out earlier that she had not felt fully trained to execute her new responsibilities. I urge you never to let performance which falls below standards go by without appropriate, professional correction. In your conversation, build in an opportunity for your employee to talk, and when they’re talking, make sure you are really listening, listening nondefensively to both the intellectual and emotional content of their message. Listening is at the heart of empowering leadership.

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