

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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A Stitch in Time Makes Tons



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*Courage and
determination
make you a
winner.*

Dave, a machine tender for a paper mill in northern Ontario, Canada, told Session 7 of the Leadership Development Lab:

“Last week, while conducting a paper machine maintenance day, I was informed that there was a hole in the fourdrinear fabric on a sister machine. This is frustrating because so much work is scheduled on a maintenance day for my crew of four. There isn’t enough time, enough crew to do one more thing. We had two fabrics to change, plus cleaning up the dry and oily paper and anything else that may pop up. Needless to say, I was not happy with this intrusion into our day.

We have been patching the fourdrinear fabric by darning the hole like a sock. The difference is we use a microscope to be able to pass the needle in between the existing threads. Paper machines are hot and humid places to work. It is tedious work and requires a patient, steady hand to darn a hole three quarters of an inch in diameter.

I got my supplies ready and set up on the fourdrinear when I discovered that the microscope would not adjust properly and kept sliding down. I discovered it was loose and there were ball bearings exposed. Now I was extremely ticked off, but I had to complete the job and get the paper machine up and running. I am very aware of the economic climate the company is in, and not making any production at all is not an option.

I tilted the microscope and managed to

keep it in place. The patching went very well, and I completed it in a few hours.

With the paper machine running again, I returned to the scheduled maintenance work.

The lesson I learned from this experience was to forget about who should have fixed the microscope (not blaming) and that by taking a different approach, being a thermostat, not a thermometer (not easy in the humid 100°+ temperatures lying on my back), and controlling my temper, I can get out of a tight spot and prevail.

The action I call you to take when your world seems to spin out of control is to draw on your knowledge and skills. Don’t act like a victim, don’t let your temper blind you to the job at hand, and you will overcome any obstacle. The benefit you will gain is pride of workmanship, a job well done, praise from your boss, and respect for your knowledge and skill.”

There is more to this story than Dave’s modesty allows him to tell. Under almost any condition, this kind of damage to a fabric results in immediately changing the fabric. Changing the fabric could take a day or two, meaning that the entire mill would be idle — no production. Patching this size hole is considered almost impossible. When you do, you get low quality paper and the patch only lasts for a few hours. Dave’s patch was so precise that you couldn’t tell on the newsprint where the cloth had been patched and it ran for a full week until the machine’s scheduled shutdown day. ###

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