

# Turbo Leadership Systems™

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

Phone: (503) 625-1867 • Fax: (503) 625-2699 • email: [admin@turbols.com](mailto:admin@turbols.com)

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To our clients and friends

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## Testy Tester



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

*Get in step.  
Don't step  
down from  
standards.*

**J**osée, Quality Assurance Supervisor for a paper mill in northern Ontario, Canada, told Session 7B of the Leadership Development Lab:

“This past Friday, our mill was in a low tensile strength situation. The paper tester’s job is to test the paper for a precise measurement so operations can make the necessary adjustments to maintain a quality sheet. I went to see the tester and asked if anyone had spoken to him about extra tensile strength testing. His answer was ‘no’ and then went on to say, ‘And I’m not going to do any additional testing either’. I stood there for a moment and came very close to just walking out. Instead, I screwed up my courage and asked him, ‘Why?’ He told me that in order to do extra testing, he would have to cut down on other tests that he felt were also important. He then went on to tell me that he didn’t believe any action would be taken as a result of his extra efforts anyway. I acknowledged his frustration, ‘I can see that you are frustrated’ and then went on to agree with him that all testing is important. I continued by explaining why the extra tests would be beneficial to the overall runability of the plant. He agreed with my explanation and decided he would do the extra test that really was very important. I thanked him and wished him a good weekend.

The lesson I learned from this expe-

rience is that I should make sure an explanation is given of the why behind the what with all special requests. By talking just a few minutes with this employee and letting him know I understand his frustrations from past experience, he was willing to re-engage and we were easily able to reach an agreement. I didn’t have to give up or resort to heavyhanded command and control orders and threats. These tactics seldom work, especially over the weekend.

The action I call you to take is talk to your employees, explain to them the importance of their work; how what they do fits in, where it goes, and why it is important. The benefit you will gain is you will have a more informed, more cooperative, empowered team. People will get on board. You will gain their discretionary effort and achieve your goals. You will create a learning organization that reaches your goals and sustains your gains.”

And what is the rest of the story? The #5 machine in this mill is running at an average production rate of almost 390 tons per day compared to 337 tons per day the previous twelve months. Soft skills, exercised with courage and confidence, something as simple as saying ‘I can see you are frustrated’, can help create amazing bottom line results.

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