

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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Issue 364



To our clients and friends

January 24, 2012

Nail It



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**Reliability
earns repeat
business**

A couple of weeks before Christmas I stopped by Fred Meyer's newest store in Wilsonville, Oregon to pick up a staple gun for putting up our Christmas lights. It is a beautiful store. Fred Meyer just keeps outdoing themselves. As I was walking in the direction of where I hoped to find a stapler, I saw a young man wearing a Fred Meyer shirt that said "Superior Customer Service." When I asked Joey (he was wearing a name badge) where the staple guns were, he pointed me in the right direction, told me where to turn and how to find them. I found every size staple gun anyone could possibly ask for, except the size and price I was looking for. There was one empty hook - you guessed it - the size and price, \$9.99, I was looking for. I found Joey and asked him if he could help me. He looked around and didn't see them either. He checked their Magic inventory system. It said they had a thousand in stock and 600 on the way. He called the department head and she said maybe there were some on end caps. He and I walked around the store for several minutes looking in every area we could think of and came up empty-handed.

I appreciated that Joey looked thoroughly, asked someone else, and happily wrote down the SKU number for me. He told me they had a pallet coming in that night, so I could call tomorrow to see if they were on that pallet.

This is a case where the "superior customer service" I received from Joey was helpful, friendly and courteous. I couldn't expect any more from him. Unfortunately the computer inventory control system was completely out of sync with reality. Superior customer service requires that you have what the customer wants and needs, in stock. Superior customer service is friendly service and far more. Selection means having what customers want when they want it. There are certain items that sell at certain times of the year. You want them in stock in season, not when no one wants them.

The day after I turned 16 I went to work at Congdon Hardware on Pearl Street in Ypsilanti, Michigan. I learned very soon how important it is to have what the customers need when the customer wants it. The winters that we had big

snows, if we hadn't anticipated demand, we soon sold out of sleds, snow shovels and rock salt. If we overbought, I would be moving those shovels and sleds around to make room for other things from March until October.

When our customers came in asking for something that we really should have had in stock, something you would expect to find in any good hardware store, I was the runner who ran to one of the other hardware stores in town to get what our customer wanted.

How do these ideas apply to you? I encourage you to be "adept at adapting" as you consider what you do to ensure that you are "in stock" with what your internal and external customers want when they want it. When you gain a reputation for having what people want when they want it, you will prove your reliability. This will secure your long-term relationship and guarantee your successful future.

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