

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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Forklift Leadership



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Follow the leader




Earlier this summer, Don stopped by our office. The last time I saw Don was in 2001. He was a very engaged participant in one of our Klamath Falls Leadership Development Labs (LDL). When he retired, he went to New Orleans and worked on the construction of Habitat homes to help with the recovery after Katrina. He met, fell in love with and married his wife. They live in Metairie, Louisiana, where she grew up. Don was back in Oregon to see his family and stopped by our place after taking his Dad out to McMinnville to see the Spruce Goose.

When Don became eligible for retirement, the Vice President of Human Resources made a special trip all the way from Portland down to southern Oregon to see him. She wanted him to know that he was more than welcome to stay on, he really didn't have to retire until he was 72.

Early in Don's career he was a "log peeler." He became an expert in the art of peeling logs for the veneers used in plywood manufacturing. Don went to work in his company's neighboring particleboard plant when the plywood mill closed. When Don joined the LDL, he was working on the night shift crew. They were producing about 2500 pieces of particleboard per shift. Over time, with innovation and motivation, the night shift got their production up to 8000 pieces per shift! This is over three times more output, a huge improvement of almost 300%. Even with these increases in production, the company faced extreme competitive pressures. It became more and more apparent that

they had to further reduce their labor costs if they were going to keep running. Over 25% of the particleboard mills in America were closed and permanently shuttered in the 90's due to recessions and people substituting new products for particleboard. To further reduce the plants' operating costs, they eliminated the cleanup positions. The cleanup's job was to sweep out underneath the particleboard production line where the chips and sawdust fall. Don operated a forklift, transferring loads from the press to the sander. He took the initiative to get down off his forklift several times during his shift to sweep things up and clean things out so quality wouldn't suffer and productivity wouldn't slow down. Don was on the receiving end of a lot of chiding from some of the crew about doing more than his "job description" called for. This didn't stop him; he kept right on doing the "extra work." He took great pride in his contribution to his shift's extraordinary production. After a while, others on his shift began to join in the cleanup effort. They began to follow Don's example. They joined in instead of bitching about the company laying off the clean-up guys. Don didn't let the crew intimidate him into doing as little as he could get away with. Instead he led them to take pride in going the extra mile. His team brought discretionary effort to the job, continued to set production records, and the mill continues to run successfully.

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