

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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Issue 661

To our clients and friends

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Cat or Pillar?

Avoid misunderstood instructions

Ned, Operations Manager for a heavy equipment auction in Portland, OR told session three of the **Leadership Development Lab**:



"I had just started my first job in the heavy equipment auction business. I had been a bookkeeper and came from a background of condominium management so I had no knowledge of heavy equipment. I knew what a forklift and a 'dozer' was but I had no idea what a backhoe was and I thought an excavator was called a 'digger.'

"We were setting up for the next auction and we were short-handed in the yard. Sparkie, the yard manager, came into my office and asked if I would be able to help park equipment. Eager to learn more about what we do, I jumped at the chance.

"He took me into the yard where there was a row of backhoes that needed to be re-set. There were Case, John Deere, and Caterpillar backhoes all waiting to be moved to the auction staging location. While pointing in the direction of the backhoes, Sparkie looked at me and said, 'Hey, go get me that cat over there and bring it here.'

"I thought the request was odd but proceeded to walk down the line of backhoes. I looked under the Cases - but there was no cat. I looked behind the John Deere's - no cat. I walked around the Caterpillars - no cat to be found.

"Finally, Sparkie asked me what I was doing. I replied, 'I can't find a cat over there!' He replied, 'Ned...CAT-er-pillar.'



When I heard Ned tell this wonderful story as an impromptu talk, I laughed as hard as anyone in the class. I laughed almost as hard as Ned was laughing. I have cautioned, counseled, and directed class members to be careful about using product jargon, technical acrostics, in-house slang, and industry shorthand. We have a hard enough time being understood without creating our own secret language.

Communication is about getting our ideas across. Now with the advent of technology and three initials being assigned to frequently used phrases (LOL, DIY, FAQ, OMG, TBA) this just makes communication tougher than ever. We assume that everyone knows what we mean. Often we are too lazy or too thoughtless to remember this is all new to our listener. So we say, "Go get that cat." When the person we are talking to wastes time, makes a mistake, fails to get the job done - they more than likely feel like an outsider, a failure. They often have the devastating feeling of embarrassment. As an encouraging leader we want to help them avoid embarrassment because it sets them back on the journey to growth and contributing as a member of your team.

So, begin today to look a little closer at your communication practices. Be aware of in-house, industry jargon that you may be using unconsciously. Think before you speak. Make it easy for your listener to understand you.

Great seeing you!

LoL, wuz gr8 2 c u 2
but omg gtg ttyl!



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