

# Turbo Leadership Systems™

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

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Issue 580



To our clients and friends

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## Resolve Misunderstandings at Work



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We've Moved!  
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Seeing things from the other person's point of view is the first step to resolving contract issues.

Kevin, Project Manager, for a general contractor in Salem, OR., told Session 10a of Turbo's Leadership Development Lab (LDL):

"In late spring of 2013, we were working on a municipal project that included improvements in a water quality swale. The original contract design did not include some elements required by a state regulatory agency. We were asked to provide a change order price to add in the elements needed to meet the regulatory requirements. The City felt that the added costs were beyond the scope of their budget so they directed us to proceed with the original contract design and not to add in the extra items. We followed their direction and completed the swale per the original contract. After the construction of the project was complete, our contract required us to maintain the facility for two years. At the end of the two years, the City performed an inspection and told us the swale was not performing to the regulatory agency's requirements and that we were going to have to bring it into compliance – essentially to do the work they had directed us not to do during the construction phase because the costs were too high. Our initial communication to address this issue didn't go very well due to misunderstandings between myself and the City's project manager regarding what was required in the contract and what happened during the change order request process.

"I was determined to get this misunderstanding resolved and realized I needed to be persistent, try harder to see it from the City's point of view and provide more clarity regarding our position. I provided a letter that clearly documented each step of this project's process.

"The City's project manager now agrees with our position and understands what took place during the construction process. We have been given the authority to now move forward with finishing up the maintenance punch list based on actual contract requirements and not what the City originally thought they should have gotten.

"The lesson I learned from this experience is when I am dealing with situations that result from misunderstanding, if I stay persistent, try to understand the other point of view and communicate my position clearly, we can get on the "same page".

"The action I call you to take is to be persistent in working through misunderstandings until the issue is resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Don't give up on yourself or others.

"The benefit you'll gain is your misunderstandings will be put behind you and you will gain the confidence that always comes when you can take credit for working through difficult and uncomfortable issues."

So often the disputes and unresolved issues we experience come as a result of misunderstanding. Misunderstandings that resulted from failing to understand the other person's point of view and failure to be crystal clear without an emotional charge about the facts of the matter.

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