

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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What's for Lunch?



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*Courage is
the first
requirement of
an empowering
leader*

Cathy, purchasing manager for a paper mill in northern Ontario, Canada, told Session 5B of the Leadership Development Lab:

“In 1976, I was working for a large newsprint mill with the millwrights. I applied for a position as Instrument Mechanic apprentice. I felt well qualified for the job. I already had taken the training and passed the tests to earn a Power House Operational and an Electricians license.

The instrument shop was considered to have the highest standards for workmanship, dedication to their jobs, and safety. This was exactly the kind of department I wanted to be in. The Instrument Mechanics strode out on the shop floor like geeks” in their hardhats, goggles, and long sleeve shirts they were required to wear whenever they were out of their shop.

Within just a few weeks, I was asked to be safety man for the shop. I had some reservations, but accepted the job and what I considered the serious responsibility that went with it. I was concerned about the amount of mercury that seemed to be all over the shop. There were usually two to five steam meters being overhauled at any one time, as well as airflow transmitters and level transmitters. They all used a lot of mercury back in those days.

Mercury was everywhere; on the floor, in the cracks of the old workbench, on shelves, everywhere. While having

lunch, one of our mechanics even found mercury at the bottom of his soup bowl!

The steam meters were boiled out with chromic acid to make sure they were clean. At the time, I didn't really know how hazardous it was, but I had a feeling this was not a healthy situation and should be investigated. My foreman was less than impressed when I told him I was going to try and determine the risks, and that I felt no more than two meters should be in the shop at any one time. How dare I question the most safety conscious shop in the mill?

As it turned out, the chromic acid was found to be a deadly carcinogenic and was completely removed from the property. The mercury was determined to be a health hazard and a special work booth had to be built. All the mercury had to be cleaned up, properly stored, controlled, and accounted for. All this at a cost management was not impressed with.

The lesson I learned from this experience is that when I am given a job, to do it to the best of my ability. When I do the best I can, I can change my world for the better. The action I call you to take is to complete your assignments regardless of opposition and pressure to suite someone else's agenda.

The benefit you will gain when you work hard and are honest about your findings is ways to improve processes, methods and results. Who knows, you may even save someone's life.” ###

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