

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

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To our clients and friends

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## *When Standards Are Unknown, It Can Get Sticky*



Larry W. Dennis, Sr.  
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***Knowing downstream customer needs improves purpose, performance and profits.***

Eric, Assistant Supervisor for a particleboard plant in a Southern Oregon wood products mill, told session 8B of the Leadership Development LAB:

"I work in the Quality Control Lab. One of my key duties is to ensure the mill meets our formaldehyde emission standard. We do that by maintaining the proper mix of resin and additives that go into the board we manufacture. The day shift former operator's job, among other things, is to keep the formers up and running. From time to time, he has to temporarily adjust the mix of resin and/or additives so they can run faster and make their performance targets. The problem we were having was that he was not informing me when he made these changes. If we run in this modified state for a prolonged period, if left for too long it can result in the mill being out of environmental compliance. I had to talk with him. I didn't want to embarrass him in public. It took two or three visits to the forming control room before I found him alone. I began by giving him a compliment on his recent performance. Then I asked him if he would inform me when he made changes to the system. I went on to explain why it was so important for me to know, and how it can affect the overall mill performance. I told him why I had to be informed, so that if adjustments were needed to keep us in conformance, I could make them quickly. Dave said he had no idea the adjustments he made could affect the mill so greatly. He even offered to write down the time he made the changes to help out, even further.

The lesson I learned from this experience is that the proper approach to a person can help to guarantee a positive outcome. I learned that just because I know the what, when, why and how of a process, not to assume that others upstream who affect my outcome are aware of how their parts of the process effect me.

The action I call you to take is not to be afraid to ask someone why they do what they do a certain way. It could turn out to be a learning experience for both of you. I also encourage you to proactively inform your upstream supplier of the way their part of the process influences the overall macro process.

The benefit you will gain is having one more person out on the floor with a more complete understanding of the overall process, a better understanding of the big picture. This will make your job easier, improve efficiency, drive down costs and improve profits. Increased process knowledge paves the road to continuous improvement."

**If you or anyone you know is a motorcycle enthusiast, they will love the excerpts from Larry's newest book, *Motorcycle Meditations – A Vision Quest to Alaska*, which can be found in the June, July and August issues of *Twin Magazine*. The June issue goes on sale at newsstands May 10th. Pick it up, read it and share it with your friends!**

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