

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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Drive-Up Window



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*Who signs
your
paycheck?*

The other morning I arrived at our Bank America branch in Wilsonville before the lobby was open, so I drove up to the drive-through window. When I stopped at the drive-up teller window, I noticed a white board hanging on the wall just behind the young drive-up teller. I could see something handwritten in red magic marker. I asked the teller, "What does that say?" "What do you mean?" "The writing on the white board." "Where?" "Back there just behind you. That white board. What's on it?" "Oh," she said, "that's says 'Listen to the customers'". "What does that mean?" I innocently asked. She said, "Well, I'm not sure, but I know it's something that we are supposed to do."

Yes, it is something we are all supposed to do. In fact, it is safe to say that if you don't listen to your customers, you will not stay in business very long. If you do listen, really listen and learn from your customers, you will find ways to serve present and future customers better than your competition. Here is the simple little test in the foreword of my first book, **Repeat Business – 6 Steps to Superior Customer Service**:

Your Name: _____

*For Whom Do You Work? _____

*Who Signs Your Check? _____

(*answer at end of article)

I have conducted this test with over 10,000 people in audiences of dozens to several hundred. Less than 10% pass the test. I give those who pass the test a complimentary copy of one of my books. Of course, if everyone passed the test, I would go broke giving away free books and I guess there would be less need for what I do. So far, at least, there doesn't seem to be any danger of us running out of opportunities to help people do a better job of "listening to their customers".

There are books, articles and multi-day

courses on listening. There are audio/video learning programs that include hours of instruction and a variety of exercises. These are all valuable and helpful. What they teach can be distilled down to one key skill. Your mastery of this skill, through discipline and practice, is all you need to become an excellent listener.

The best listening skill is concentrated, focused attention. Lean forward; face the customer directly. Focus your attention on the customer's face, on their mouth and eyes.

Listen without interruption. Listen as though you were hanging on every word your customer is saying. Listen as if the customer was about to give you the winning lottery numbers and you would only hear it once. Listen as if this were a million dollar prospect who was just on the verge of giving you a major order. Listen as if there were no one else in the world to whom you would rather listen to at this moment than this customer, and to what they are saying.

The ability to pay close, uninterrupted attention to a person when they are speaking is the primary listening skill. It is a difficult faculty to develop and is simultaneously the most important of all. It requires continuous practice and discipline. It is hard to keep your thoughts from wandering, but the payoff is tremendous.

Ask a trusted friend to rate you on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being a lousy listener, 10 being a great listener. Great listeners win friends and cement client relationships.

*the customer

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