



## KEVIN LANE TURNER & TURNER LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

*Sustainable change through Training-Over-Time.*



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### Spring 2016 Newsletter

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#### What Others Say

Client Feedback  
*Our firm builds enduring client relationships through the results we produce. Find out "how" from unsolicited feedback we've received.*

#### Contact Us

KevinTurner.com  
tls@kevinturner.com  
(972) 233-9998

*Help us learn how we can serve you and your organization.*

#### Our Office

16479 Dallas Pkwy, Ste. 730  
Addison, TX 75001

#### What Others Say:

*"Kevin,*

*My very, very best to you. Making others thrive is the key to happiness and success. And from all I can see, you are very, very good at that!"*

Kip Tindell, CEO  
The Container Store

## "Original" Ideas, Firearms & Automobiles: What do these three have in common?

Take a moment to answer these three questions:

First, how many original ideas are actually "original?"

Second, did you know that if it were not for firearms your ride to work this morning might never have occurred?

Third, did you know that your level of success with your career is largely dependent upon the answers to the above two questions?

#### Innovation and "Original" Ideas

Successful people are ones who add more to the job than what's "expected", engaging both their head and their heart in their work. Approaching their work in this way makes their work "fun" for many of them. And one of the easiest ways to make work fun is through *innovation*, creating inventive solutions to obstacles and issues at work.

What's interesting is that when you study the history of innovation something stands out: The vast majority of innovative, creative ideas and solutions do not come from "eureka" or "flash" moments. They most often come from "bridging." Bridging is when you take an idea or solution that works in one task, field, or industry, and apply (or "bridge") it over to a different task, field, or industry. In this way, there are rarely any "original" ideas. Rather, old ideas are recycled and applied in new and different ways. For example, did you know that Henry Ford borrowed the famous automotive manufacturing assembly line idea from meat packers and sewing machines?

#### Precision, Your Automobile and Firearms

So, if Henry Ford came up with the "bridged" idea of the auto assembly line, who came up with the idea for interchangeable parts used in those assembly lines and the automobiles they create? Interestingly, the answer came from a Vermont farm boy.

From its infancy, the automobile took the world by storm. The idea of using one machine to do the same work as a team of four to eight horses was revolutionary. There was only one (huge) problem. Every part on those "horseless carriages" was made by hand, one at a time, even for repairs. This prevented the possibility of scaling automobile production.

## Quote of the Day

*"Proficiency can be maintained only by working at it."*

- Wernher von Braun  
Director,  
Apollo Space Program

With demand far exceeding supply, all 300 auto manufacturers (that's right – between 1900 and 1910 there were over 300 automobile manufacturers in the USA) faced an incredible problem. How do we ramp up the automobile supply to meet the public demand, given the scaling limitations of hand-crafted parts? What to do?

In comes our farm boy from Vermont. He left the farm to seek his fortune, and took a strong work ethic with him, which landed him his first job. This was during the Civil War, 1861 to 1865, and the two opposing armies faced an enormous problem of their own. They couldn't supply enough firearms to their soldiers fast enough (in some cases Confederate soldiers could only throw rocks to combat Union rifles).

Pressed for a solution, gun manufacturers bridged Eli Whitney's idea of interchangeable precision parts into their firearms. This transformed gun manufacturing in the North and helped bring the War to an end.

Working on these firearms at Colt and later, the Springfield Armory, our Vermont farm boy learned the significance of precision, so much so that he became obsessed with it and learned the keys to parts interchangeability. After the Civil War, this farm boy took his innovative insights and applied them to a job with Brown and Sharp, manufacturers of sewing machines and hair clippers.

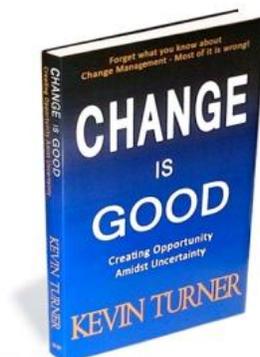
At his new job, this farm boy gained a reputation as a gifted engineer and efficiency expert. Consequently, he rose in the Brown and Sharp ranks to become national sales manager which required frequent trips to Detroit, the epicenter of the new-fangled horseless carriage industry. Detecting an opportunity, our farm boy bought out Henry Ford's early, failing enterprise, The Detroit Motor Company, in 1902 and reorganized it around a luxury vehicle he christened Cadillac, in honor of the founder of Detroit.

The farm boy was Henry Leland. Fascinated with precision, Henry Leland defined an industry when he "bridged" what he'd learned about precision parts interchangeability into auto manufacturing, thus making it possible to scale auto manufacturing to meet an enormous consumer demand. If it were not for Leland's obsession with precision parts interchangeability, cars and trucks might still today be repaired with parts made strictly by hand, one part at a time and there would be *far fewer* vehicles available for today's world population. Can you imagine our world today without 80-90% of its vehicles? That's the difference in scalability with interchangeable parts.

What are two to three problems or issues that make your work less than enjoyable? *What are one or two ideas or disciplines you picked up sometime in your career that might be "bridged" to address one of these issues?* Apply precision and innovative "bridging" into your own every day workplace and see how it improves your situation.

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## Change is Good



*"Practical...easy to understand, not theoretical. [The] stepped approach...[is] a good process to stay focused and avoid distractions (or temptations) that divert one from the task at hand"*

- Mike Kotubey, President of TDIndustries, Inc.

Kevin Lane Turner's book ***Change is Good: Creating Opportunity Amidst Uncertainty***.

Learn about implementing sustainable change.

**Order your copy today.**