**TOS Check In Example Story**

**A Story told to by the CEO of an after-market auto parts manufacturer about a problem with a customer.**

This CEO told his coach that at a recent meeting his team had brought this problem with a customer to his attention. The customer is a retailer of their products. They had worked with them for about two and a half years. The commercial relationship was very profitable in the first year but had – according to the COO in this meeting - ‘gone bad’ over the last six months as sales to this account grew quickly.

The CEO told the coach, *“They told me that while we rarely had to expedite orders or shipments for this buyer in the first two years, this year we were experiencing constant expedites and emergency shipments, which was making it difficult operationally,, and overall unprofitable to service this account. We are always focused on meeting customer expectations but this situation was unheralded in terms of the special activities and the extra costs we were incurring. Logistics, Production and Finance were frustrated with the account. Our production head said,* *“I’ve seen this before, these people have swelled heads because they are growing so fast - they think we’ll put up with anything to keep their business!”* *All the departments but Sales were advocating for steep processing and change order charges. Sales reacted angrily to this, fearing loss of volume or even loss of an account it had taken them years to land. Everyone in the meeting agreed that this buyer obviously had issues in managing their own rapid growth of retail outlets, and all but Sales thought it was unlikely to be a profitable account again any time soon.*

The CEO was discouraged after the meeting. He told his coach, *“We chased this opportunity for years, but now we are experiencing SELLER’S remorse!”*

Breakout Discussion Questions for The Call:

* **MOST IMPORTANT: Separate Facts from Interpretations**: What facts and data did you hear? What Stories were people telling? (that is, what interpretative leaps were being made?)
* ALSO: Can you imagine Data that, if uncovered, would DISCONFIRM the Stories being told?
* How might the leader ‘check out’ the stories? What could he/she say or do before making a decision about how to respond? What might be a skillful way of checking out the story with the customer?

**In the large group debrief we will want to hear quick take-aways from as many groups as possible.**

Conductor facilitates the breakout: “*I’ve got you set up in groups of three. Remember to introduce yourself in the breakout. You are going to have approximately 6 minutes for this discussion. There will be no timer to switch. You are set up and may begin now.*