



## turning managers into leaders

### Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – February 2003

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*Merge Gupta-Sunderji helps turn managers into leaders. Through engaging keynotes and facilitated workshops, she gives people specific and practical tools to achieve leadership and communication success. Contact her at [www.mergespeaks.com](http://www.mergespeaks.com) or 403-605-4756*

### Isn't soap just soap?

Think about this for a minute. If you sent a friend a gift box containing a dozen individually wrapped fragrant soaps from The Body Shop, she'd probably be delighted and call to thank you. But if you sent that same friend one dozen bars of Irish Spring, she'd likely think you rude and insensitive, and probably smack you the next time she saw you. Why is that? After all, isn't soap just soap?

The difference lies in the message. With apologies to Colgate-Palmolive, the implied message in sending a dozen bars of Irish Spring is "Take a bath!" However, the implied message in sending The Body Shop's soaps is "Pamper yourself!" Same product, but two very diametrically different reactions from the recipient!

Think about that in the context of leadership. Every employee in your organization gets weekly or bi-monthly paycheques - bars of soap, if you will. In some organizations, the implied message with the paycheque is "We're paying you, just get the job done". In others, it's "Thank you for your contributions, we value you and your skills". Same product, but not surprisingly, diametrically different reactions from the two sets of recipients.

Leaders, think about your departments and organizations. Are you giving fragrant soaps from the Body Shop or bars of Irish Spring?