



## turning managers into leaders

### **Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – March 2004**

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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*

### **A lesson in communication from ants and farming**

When you think about it, the development of agriculture was humankind's way of creating a food supply that didn't fight back or run away. It turns out though that humans weren't the first animals to discover farming. In fact, 5 to 15 million years ago, farming was invented by the leaf cutter ant. Leaf cutter ants, today found primarily in Central and South America, cut up leaves in the forest, carry them back to feed the growing fungus inside their nests, and then harvest the fungus for their own dinner. In the process, they create by-products - leaves, fungus, ant wastes - that add fertilizer to the scant topsoil of the rainforest. In other words, not only do leaf cutter ants actively cultivate their food supply, they add to health of the environment by fertilizing the soil. Think about this final statement in the context of communication.

Are you communicating in a style that causes others to either fight back or even worse, run away? Or are you following the lead of the leaf cutter ant? If you're consciously cultivating your relationships by building up others (feeding them, if you will) so that you can harvest the created goodwill, then you're setting yourself up for communication success. Think about what you can say or do to others that will help them grow or achieve their own objectives; then they'll be much more likely to help you achieve yours. And when you take this "cultivating" approach to communication, you'll create a positive atmosphere, and that'll add to the health of your professional and personal environment.