



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – November 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 or 403-605-4756

Do your employees want chemistry sets or Rescue Rangers?

Little Johnny just celebrated his eighth birthday and his dad gave him a top-of-the-line chemistry set. I'd been hearing about this chemistry set, almost daily, for several weeks leading up to the birthday. In fact, his dad was probably more excited about this chemistry set than Johnny was. And therein lay the problem. At his birthday party, Johnny was playing excitedly with his many presents, but the chemistry set lay unopened on one corner of the coffee table. His grandmother noticed, "Johnny, why aren't you playing with your chemistry set? Don't you know that your dad picked it out specially for you?" In complete childish innocence, Johnny replied, "Yes, I know, but it isn't what I wanted. I asked Daddy for a Rescue Ranger."

If you've attended one of my leadership sessions, you've heard me say that different employees are motivated by different rewards, and it's important to find out what motivates a specific employee. Some employees thrive on public appreciation, others appreciate a small gesture such as a coffee certificate, and yet others prefer a simple thank-you note or e-mail. The key: for a reward to be motivating, it must be tailored to that specific employee for it to be meaningful. And the best way to find out what motivates specific employees is to ask them. But ... it's just as important to listen to the answers. Leaders, when your employees tell you they want Rescue Rangers, are you giving them what they want, or are you giving them chemistry sets?