



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – February 2005

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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

Build electrical cables, not chains

As leaders, whether formal or informal, it's our job to build strong, healthy and vibrant teams. Recently I heard a professional colleague liken this process to the links in a chain. His philosophy was that if you focus on building and making each individual link stronger, then the complete chain will be stronger as a result. He suggested that when you help employees or team members build up their self-esteem and self-confidence, you are strengthening each link in the chain. True. However, it also occurred to me that in this philosophy, all it would take to break the chain would be one weak link!

Consider a slightly different analogy. Think of the process of building healthy robust teams as one of making electrical cable: individual wires, each one strong in its own right, intertwined together and covered with an outer sheath of insulation. You still need to focus on building the strength of each individual wire by helping staff members build up their self-esteem and self-confidence. However, take it one step further. Just as the real strength of the cable comes from the intertwining, the real success in your teams will come from helping employees learn to work with and rely on each other. Teach them to communicate respectfully, and give them opportunities to learn from one another. Work on developing a positive team spirit, and encourage open and honest dialogue among team members. As you intertwine the individual wires to make the cable stronger, your leadership role will shift to become the outer sheath of insulation. Be the buffer; insulate (as much as you can) your people from the impact of other equipment and cables around them. Then sit back, and watch the electricity crackle through!