



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – June 2006

Welcome to **Merge's Monthly Mega-Minute** - a bite-sized, yet substantial and practical, nugget of information that you can use immediately to enhance your professional and personal success.

This issue of Merge's Monthly Mega-Minute may be **FREELY** distributed to friends, colleagues, and discussion groups, as long as the entire issue is included. You may use excerpts of it in your print, electronic, or other publications, as long as the following byline is also included:

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

The case of the uneaten chicken wings

Night out at the local pub: six people, appetizers, dinner entrees, dessert, lots of beverages, several hours of great conversation. Recipe for a very pleasant evening ... until one of us asked for his leftover eight chicken wings to be wrapped up to take home. "I can't do that", said the waiter. "Why not?" my friend asked, puzzled. "They're specially priced at 25 cents a wing, that's lower than our cost, so we don't do take-out on these" replied the young man. "Well it's not really take-out; we just spent the entire evening eating-in, so giving us the remaining wings shouldn't be a problem" said someone else in the group. "I'm sorry, that's our policy" came the firm reply as he walked away. Perplexed, we asked to speak to the manager. Much to our surprise, the manager shrugged his shoulders and insisted that the policy would hold! Yikes! We watched while the remaining lonely eight chicken wings made their way into the garbage.

You don't have to be a math whiz to see how shortsighted this manager was. For a paltry \$2 in chicken wings, he lost the patronage of at least six customers, most of whom could have a lifetime value to this restaurant of several thousand times this amount. Pretty obvious, right?

Yet, I've seen so many managers take a similar approach towards their employees. They get so caught up in the "policy" book, that they stop exercising good judgment. As a leader, one of your most powerful resources is your flexibility. Take the risk and bend the rules occasionally to fit the needs of your department and your people. Now let's be clear: I'm not saying take foolish risks, but I am asking you to take calculated ones where the potential positive outcome outweighs the possible negative consequences. True, policies are there for a reason, but follow your instinct and be flexible. In the long run, it will be the right decision!