



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – September 2007

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.

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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

Are you harnessing the power of wkinomics?

If you've read Don Tapscott's bestseller *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, then you've heard the story of how Goldcorp's CEO Rob McEwen bucked the trend in the conservative and highly-secretive gold-mining industry and shared the company's proprietary data with the world. As a result, he gained access to some of the most talented minds on the planet, almost all of which were outside the boundaries of his organization, and transformed his struggling \$100 million company into a \$9 billion mega-force. McEwen had the foresight to realize that by sharing some of his closely-guarded intellectual property, he could harness the power of collective genius and capability, and thus, take his company to the cutting edge of innovation and wealth-creation. I was compellingly reminded of this story a few weeks ago, but unfortunately, only because I came across a colleague who didn't understand the power of wkinomics.

I often work with a client who has its own in-house travel agent. Because my office makes all my flight arrangements, the agent simply provides us with a maximum dollar allotment that we can bill the client. Last month we received an allotment that seemed to be error, so we queried to find out what city routing the agent used to come up with the figure. She declined to provide us the information saying: "We use several different creative faring options when pricing itineraries ... It seems counterproductive for us to do the work and then just pass on the info."

Yikes! Let's think this through. In order to provide the allotment, she would have to do the work anyway. Yet, she did not want to share her expertise with us, because she was afraid that making the knowledge available to others would put her at a disadvantage, and perhaps even



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make her role obsolete. Unfortunately, she did not realize that sharing her knowledge and expertise would actually make her more valuable to others, not less! It would have positioned her as an expert, and a resource to be used and recommended to others in the future. Ironically, we ultimately solved our problem by tapping into the power of mass collaboration. We took our question to an Internet chat room that I have participated in for several years, and where some of the smartest minds on this subject gather. Within minutes, we had a dialogue going, and within hours, we had answers, several of them even more creative than the original. If my travel agent colleague had only understood the value of sharing her knowledge, she could actually have gained access to resources that would have further increased her expertise! But alas, instead she felt threatened!

In organizations, many people hoard information because they feel that it makes them more influential. Paradoxically, it's those who are willing to share their expertise and collaborate with others who are more powerful. As a leader, you have access to much information; *but*, are you an information-sharer (or an information-hoarder)? Are you furthering yourself and the success of your organization by tapping into the capacity of mass collaboration? Are *you* harnessing the power of wkinomics? I hope you are.