



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – October 2008

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 turns 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 paying attention to those who disagree with you?

Unless you've been hiding under a rock, you know that last month, September 2008, was a tough one in the world of finance. Starting with a credit crunch and subsequent money melt-down in the United States, other markets reacted and stock indices around the world began a free-fall, some landing harder than others. In the days, weeks and months to come, the pundits, politicians, lawyers and accountants will no doubt dissect and analyze what went wrong, who to blame, and what might have changed the course of history, but for now, it is patently clear that there are a few key reasons that contributed significantly to the crash and burn. A crucial factor – there was information and analysis aplenty that predicted that such a credit crunch was imminent, yet corporations chose to disregard, discount, dismiss and deflect anything that got in the way of their puffed-up profit projections. The nay-sayers were branded as radical rebels, intent on spoiling the free enterprise and economic growth party. Their knowledge and their warnings were overlooked and disregarded. Herein lies the lesson for leaders.

Are you paying attention to those who put forward information you don't want to hear? Honestly answer these tough questions.

- What is your reaction to a nay-sayer in your department or organization?
- What would be your response if one of your employees were to suggest that there was an error in long-held assumptions or a shortcoming in one of your processes or products?
- Would you readily listen to someone who spoke up against your preferred course of action?
- How willing are you to listen alternate points of view, or are you more likely to dismiss the input because you don't want to hear the message or don't like the source?

A key characteristic of successful leaders is their willingness to keep an open mind and a predisposition to listen, really listen, to their critics. And in times of crisis, this skill becomes even more vital. Are you paying attention to those who disagree with you?

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