



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – February 2009

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

How to protect your Spitfire

Spitfires were probably the most famous fighter aircraft used in World War II. Designed by the British, they were cutting edge technology in their time. Light and compact, these fighter planes made up in speed what they lacked in size. However, as the war progressed, this very lack of size and solidity became a disadvantage as the Spitfires repeatedly, more than any other fighter aircraft, went down in combat. In an attempt to overcome these serious losses, Winston Churchill struck a task force to investigate and solve this problem. The task force initially focused entirely on how to better shield the aircraft from enemy fire. The result: a heavily-armoured aircraft that resembled a tank more than the original plane! The advantage of speed was clearly lost so, not surprisingly, Churchill sent them back to the drawing board. Seeking inspiration, the group decided to view some of the planes first-hand. As they stood on the tarmac around several bullet-ridden Spitfires, they brainstormed ideas on how to better protect the punctured sections of the fuselage. Legend has it that Churchill stepped in to shift them to an alternate perspective. "Why are you focusing on the areas of damage?" he asked. "These are the planes that didn't go down, these are the ones that made it back home. Obviously, enemy fire to these sections of the plane isn't fatal. Why aren't you concentrating on the areas that don't have bullet-holes? Those are the ones that really matter!"

Many organizations today are choosing to retreat in the face of tough economic times. As a leader under enemy fire, what are you focusing on? Where are you using your energy? It's far too easy to mourn the decline in those sectors of your business that are affected immediately. But your true gain will come from concentrating on your competitive advantages, the areas of your business that are still relatively undamaged. What is it that makes you strong? Is it your technology, your people, your cost-competitiveness, or something else? Whatever it is, are you making the most of it? And are you protecting it? Step back, look at your Spitfire with a critical eye, and concentrate on protecting and enhancing what really matters.