



## turning managers into leaders

### **Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – October 2011**

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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](http://www.mergespeaks.com) or 403-605-4756*

### **Don't ask the barber whether you need a haircut**

One of the lesser-known of the famous Murphy's Laws is the First Law of Expert Advice. It states:

Don't ask the barber whether you need a haircut.

Like all Murphy's Laws, within the humour lies an essential kernel of valid and legitimate advice. If you're in a position of leadership, then you often have to solicit and rely on advice from others. After all, you can't know enough about everything to make sound decisions solely on the basis of your own knowledge and experience. But always evaluate where you seek out your guidance. Yes, you should go to an expert when you are seeking counsel on any subject, but continually ask yourself whether the advice may be biased. Does your advisor have a vested interest in one decision over another? Ideally, you want the person who guides you to be impartial and unprejudiced and not likely to gain an advantage from one alternative over another. Independence from the outcome is always a good measure of the quality of the advice received.

Having said that, it doesn't necessarily mean that you should completely ignore any counsel that comes from someone who will benefit from your decision. However, you must temper any advice you receive from such a source with a healthy dose of pragmatic skepticism. Always remember, if you ask the barber whether you need a haircut, the answer will always be a resounding "yes", even if it isn't true!