



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – February 2012

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

Could your weakness be your competitive advantage?

Why is it that doctors always seem to keep you waiting? No don't answer, it's a rhetorical question. But I think many of you will agree that this is a common frustration about visiting the doctor – he or she is “running late”. I was waiting at my doctor's office a few days ago and I noticed a new sign just behind the receptionist's desk:

We apologize for delays caused by patients with unexpected complex or multiple problems. When booking, we can't foresee which patient will need more time than average. Please forgive any delay. You may one day need extra time for your problems or concerns.

I was impressed with their approach. Clearly, “running late” is a common occurrence in this office, but the staff here have found a way to turn this negative feature into something positive. It reminded me of something I read several years ago called “Feature the Flaw”. Blogger Scott Anthony explained how the eco-tourism hotel industry has turned a set of flaws — basic rooms with no air conditioning, no TV and no room service, but a plentiful supply of mosquitoes — into features that can command price premiums. They positioned something negative as a benefit. Clearly this doctor's office has taken a similar tactic.

So what can you do to apply this principle in your workplace? You no doubt have flaws in your products and services; is there a way to position these flaws differently so that your stakeholders will see them as positive features? If your clients or employees tell you that there is a potential failing in one of your ideas, can you spin the problem around by looking for an external client or internal customer who would consider that very failing a feature? By changing your point of view (and helping others see it), you could very well turn a weakness into a competitive advantage.

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