



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – January 2013

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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

What leaders can learn from (righteous!) surfers

Experienced surfers make it look so easy! A few weeks ago, I spent some time in Hawai'i watching (from the comfort of my beach chair) skilled surfers ride the waves with acrobatic precision and ballet-like choreography. I noticed that each one followed a very similar routine before venturing into the water. Every single surfer walked up to where the waves lapped the shore and then stopped and scanned the ocean for several minutes. Next they waded in up to their knees and paused and assessed the water again. This observation interested me enough that I asked two of them about the significance of what they were doing. Their answer was not entirely unexpected.

"We're looking at several things," one of them told me. "The size and shape of the waves, whether there are any rip or longshore currents to be wary of, obvious hazards where the waves break such as cliffs and piers, but also rocks, boulders, and rock-bottom breaks that aren't always immediately visible. All these are things we need to know about before we ride." "And," added the second surfer dude, "we gotta watch out for other surfers! I always look to see if there are people on the water I don't know. If so, the chances are good that they are *groms* (beginners) or *kooks* (people who don't respect surfing etiquette). You gotta watch out for those guys, they can be dangerous!"

Assessing your environment is obviously critical to the success and welfare of a surfer, but it occurred to me that it's also a good leadership practice in the workplace. Before you launch a new initiative, are you scanning your surroundings and looking for obstacles or roadblocks? Do you have *groms* or *kooks* in your workplace that will jeopardize your efforts? What are you doing to lessen their impact? Let's get the conversation started online on my blog at: www.mergespeaks.com/blog.

Telephone > (403) 605.4756 Fax > (403) 451.9759 Email > info@mergespeaks.com
www.mergespeaks.com