



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – April 2006

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.

This issue of Merge's Monthly Mega-Minute may be **FREELY** distributed to friends, colleagues, and discussion groups, as long as the entire issue is included. You may use excerpts of it in your print, electronic, or other publications, as long as the following byline is also included:

Merge Gupta-Sunderji helps turn 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

Do you have a Martha on your team?

Martha used to be one of my employees. She's memorable because no matter what new idea or initiative was proposed, she had a similar negative response. The most common: "Tried that three years ago, didn't work then, ain't going to work now." Occasionally, I got some variety: "There's another cock-eyed idea from the suits above", or "Here we go again!!" (always accompanied by a dramatic roll of the eyes). If you are a supervisor or manager, you've probably experienced a Martha-equivalent on your team. And no doubt, she has likely been the source of at least some frustration in your role as a leader.

True, dealing with such an employee can be exasperating, but your Martha can actually be a source of strength ... if you can change your perspective about her. Think of Martha as an everyday kitchen utensil – the colander. A colander is used to strain the liquid from many foods, for example, to drain the water from a pot of pasta. You pour the boiling pasta into the colander, the water runs out through the holes, and the good stuff is left behind. Your Martha can serve the same function. Most Marthas have been around for a few years; they've seen initiatives succeed and fail. More importantly, your Martha probably has some very good insights into why things have succeeded or failed, information that could be invaluable to you in your current role as a leader. If you can see beyond the frustration and use Martha as a colander, you will turn her into a powerful resource. When she says "That won't work", ask her "Why don't you think it will work?", or "What could we do differently to make it work?" It may take some effort initially to extract an answer from her, but if you're able to engage her in a dialogue so that the water runs through and the good stuff is left behind, you've just turned your source of frustration into a source of strength!