



## turning managers into leaders

### **Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – November 2006**

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

### **What leaders can learn from the medical profession**

A few years ago, Dr. Wendy Levinson conducted some interesting research, subsequently reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association. She compared the communication behaviour of physicians who were often sued for malpractice to those who were not, and discovered significant differences between the two groups. Doctors who spent time educating their patients about what to expect, laughed and used humour more, solicited opinions from their patients, checked for understanding, and encouraged their patients to talk didn't get sued. However, doctors who did not engage in this level of interaction found themselves at the receiving end of malpractice lawsuits. It wasn't just the level of communication that was a factor, it was the average amount of time spent with the patient as well: 18.3 minutes spent with each patient by the doctors that did not get sued versus 15 minutes by those that did.

While Dr. Levinson's findings were interesting, on reflection, they're really not that surprising. And the parallel to leadership is evident. If you're a leader, you know it's important to earn the trust and commitment of your people. In the day-to-day of the workplace, it's not unusual to encounter speed bumps in the road: those times when things go awry and the unexpected occurs. Without the commitment of those you lead, those speed bumps can seem insurmountable. But if you invest the time to teach your employees, laugh with them, encourage and solicit their input, and support them, then you'll earn their commitment. And just like with some of the doctors, when you work to enlist and engage your people, the journey towards success will be smoother.