



turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – August 2009

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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

How welcoming are you to your new employees?

I recently visited the Museo de la Inmigracion in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It's located in the former Gran Hotel de Inmigrantes, originally built in 1911, and converted to the present-day Immigration Museum in 1953. As remarkable as the museum itself was, what I found infinitely more fascinating was the building's history. Buenos Aires is a city built on immigration – during the last two decades of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, entire families came here from Italy, Spain, France, Germany, and the rest of Europe, seeking to leave the problems of their native lands and build a new life in the “new world”. In order to make conditions easier for new arrivals, the government of the time built and managed the Hotel for Immigrants. As the migrants came off the ships, they were given seven days of free room and board at the Hotel. In addition to housing and feeding 4,000 people at full capacity, the hotel also offered language lessons, medical care, job-search assistance, library resources, and perhaps most importantly, a precious week in which the new arrivals could acclimatize and “learn the ropes” in their new chosen homeland. In those seven days, the new settlers were matched up with others who not only spoke their language, but also in many cases, had similar backgrounds. They were offered seminars ranging from filling out job applications to adapting to a new culture. All this with one single-minded objective: to welcome the new immigrants and help them make a success of their new lives in the “new world.”

If you are a manager or supervisor, what are you doing to welcome new employees into your department or organization? Do you have a system in place to make conditions easier for your new arrivals and to help them “learn the ropes”, or are you leaving them to fend for themselves in the “new world”? Do you have a way to help them acclimatize, at least in their first week, or do they have to stumble around and hope for the best? Are you matching them up with “buddies” who have similar backgrounds and speak their “language”? If your objective is for your new employees to succeed in your organization, then perhaps you need to think like the founders of the Buenos Aires' Gran Hotel de Inmigrantes.

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