

turning managers into leaders

Merge's Monthly Mega Minute – July 2012

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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

Leadership is NOT about managing people!

Effective leadership is like tending a garden. Assume that it's a large garden, so you can't do it on your own; you need to hire a gardener or two. Never forget that your objective is to manage the garden – you can decide what you want to plant, where and when – and you can make arrangements to get the right tools –spades and hoes and rakes and wheelbarrows – but don't lose sight that your goal is to manage the garden, and not the gardeners. You see, the gardeners manage themselves! Sure, you need to tell them what you want done and make certain they understand, but they are the ones who actually dig and plant and weed and prune. There's no point in standing over the gardeners while they dig holes and plant bushes and weed beds and prune trees; it's not going to make the plants grow any faster. In fact, when you think about it, the gardeners don't actually grow anything either, the plants grow on their own. So your gardeners are really your assistants, people you can trust and rely on to help you get your garden to where it needs to be. Sure, you might check in often to ensure that they don't need clarification or your help in obtaining the required tools, but your time is really best spent on long-term strategy – envisioning the overall layout of the garden, planning for the next season, and going through the seed catalogues. But ... the key in making all this happen lies in ensuring that you get right gardeners in the first place.

So when you think about it, effective leadership is about managing situations, processes, events, strategies (and even outcomes), but it's not about managing people. Because people manage themselves! Your job is to focus on the big picture, tell them what needs to be done, get them the tools they need, and to check in periodically to support and encourage. But you can't do this unless you get the right people on your team. So put your energy into building your team and then trust them to get on with it.