



The Leader's Toolbox

by David Garic

www.garicconsulting.com

What's *Really* Going On?

An irony exists surrounding leaders and their responsibilities. As they rise to positions of increasing responsibility and become accountable for progressively more important decisions, leaders often find themselves insulated—first, from the people who will enact their decisions and, second, from those who can provide information critical to decision making.

Information leaders receive can be filtered, spun, interpreted, and transformed, often bearing little resemblance to its original form. **How can leaders ensure they know what people are thinking? How can they get the information they need?**

- **Utilize *direct source* listening.** Meet with the people who have the knowledge you need. Don't exclusively rely on information that is relayed through second-hand sources. Listen to those who will feel the impact of your decisions—the ones who will *act* on them.
- **Develop a system for listening to all levels of your organization.** Meet with people as often as possible—make it part of your schedule and stick to it.
- **After listening, let people know what you heard.** Issues raised in one department may be valid concerns of another department. Do your best to facilitate *cross talk* between groups.
- **Finally—DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER!** Insist that you want to hear bad news immediately. Reward those who bring it to you!