

## **Regina Peruggi Role Switch**



As president of the Central Park Conservancy, Regina Peruggi normally spends most of her time digging around New York City for donations to maintain the world-famous park. For one week, however, she was swinging a pick ax, seeding grass, and literally digging the earth as a groundskeeper in the park. The role switch was filmed by BBC/PBS as part of the series *Back to the Floor*, which drops executives from atop the corporate ladder to the lowest rung. The idea is for executives to get a reality check on what front-line employees face every day. Peruggi knew that gardening in Central Park is hard physical labor, but she did not anticipate some of the other realities. For example, grounds staff spend up to three hours each day picking up trash even though some of them are expert horticulturalists. "You're really wasting the talent of somebody like John, who really knows horticulture, who could be doing horticulture all day long," she says. Peruggi also realized the dangers that her staff face from drug dealers in some parts of the park. "I learned things I could never have learned any other way," she admits.

Companies can learn from this executive. Rather than waiting for film crews to arrive, some executives step into the shoes of their employees as a regular routine to understand their problems and help resolve them to the best of their abilities.

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