

# Managing Virtual Teams

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# Agenda

Introductions

Creating Trust

Organizing Projects

Managing Communications

Managing Performance

# Creating Trust: The #1 Building Block

## Question #1:

Among geographically distributed teams (GDT's), building trust is the #1 way to enhance meeting project deadlines and within budget.

What ways have you used to build trust in the teams you have managed or participated in that are not co-located?

# Creating Trust: The #1 Building Block

## Perform Competently

- Deliver on results
- Fulfill commitment and obligations
- Get the needed resources



## Act with Integrity

- Know your own management style and accommodate
- Align values and behaviors
- Stand behind your team
- Consistent and balanced communications

## Be Concerned for Others Well Being

- Understand the impact of the team
- Positive transitions on/off the team

# We're Meeting ROI!: Organizing Projects

## Question #2:

There are some basic “to-do’s” in organizing geographically disbursed work to ensure accomplishing on time within budget projects.

What things do you/have you make (made) sure to do when organizing your GDT's to make sure you meet deliverables?

# We're Meeting ROI!:

## Organizing Projects

### Create Team Identity

- Conduct Face-to-Face
  - Charter, shared goals, norms, communication and documentation processes, information flow, roles and responsibilities, definitions
- Be Customer Centric (remember "internal" customers)
  - Cultural Sensitivities (Power distance, accountabilities, ambiguity)
- Embrace Ongoing Learning (Plan, Do, Check, Act's)
  - Create subgroup tasks that require working together

# We're Meeting ROI! Organizing Projects

## Estimate Schedules

- Objectives Clear
- Chunk subtasks into 2-3 week
- Review historical docs



## Clearly Define Deliverables

- What is it? What it's purpose? Who receives it? How is it verified? What's the cost to produce and verify?
- Quantitatively measured (ex: functional specs, design docs, test plans, prototypes)
- Use iterative and review process

# We're Meeting ROI!: Organizing Projects

## Partition and Locate the Work

- Close collaborators in same “time zone”
- Provide uniform access to specialized equipment
- Consumers west of suppliers
- Minimize physical transfers
- ? “hidden physical deliverables”
- Know team competence and skills

# Can You Hear Me Now?: Managing Communications

## Question #3:

When we are face to face, we take for granted frequency of communications, the informal exchanges, similar time zones, our multiple channels to receive information, etc. The greater the distance, the more increased the challenge and the less likely the frequency of communication.

What methods have you used to foster a highly “communicative” environment for the GDT’s that you’ve managed or on which you’ve participated?

# Can You Hear Me Now?: Managing Communications

## Establish Standards

- Create closed loop communications
- VMail and Email conventions
- Prioritize communications



## Manage Context

- Social & Physical

## Adopt Technologies

- Match task and context
- Synchronous (same time) vs. asynchronous
- Consider permanence, symbolism, time constraints

culture

# Can You Hear Me Now?: Managing Communications

## E Mail Conventions



### Date Sender

6/12/03 [tsteege@transformastrat.com](mailto:tsteege@transformastrat.com)  
- "R"

### Subject Heading

db-1 Comments on Your Document

1. Use initials of the addressee
2. Use a Priority Code
3. Use a "R" or other symbol to indicate a "Reply Requested"

### Priority Code

1. Read NOW
2. Read TODAY
3. Read THIS WEEK
4. Read AT YOUR LEISURE

# Can You Hear Me Now?: Managing Communications

## E Mail Conventions

- Use replacements for gestures (smiley, winks, etc)
- Include the email to which you are responding in the email
- Page Layouts
  - Use carriage returns, exclude tabs, plain text (no HTML)

# Can You Hear Me Now?: Managing Communications

YOU SNOOZE?

YOU LOSE!

# But I Can't See Them! Managing Performance

Question#4:

The #1 fear of managers of geographically distributed teams is **LACK OF VISIBILITY**. How do you know they are really working and working on the right thing?

What techniques have you used to improve the visibility you have to remote workers?

# But I Can't See Them!: Managing Performance

## Know Your Team

- **Interpersonal Skills:** communication skills, self management, self awareness, values
- **Intercultural Competencies:** boundary management and context understanding
- **Leadership Skills:** learning, coaching, problem solving, decision making skills
- **Project Management Skills**
- **Technology Proficiencies**



# But I Can't See Them! Managing Performance

## Establish Clear/Manageable Objectives

- Clear expectations for current and incoming members
- Chunk deliverables and refine

## Establish Shared Processes

- Documentation
- Timelines/Milestones/Checkpoints
- Nomenclature
- Performance Measures

# But I Can't See Them! Managing Performance

## Plan for "Intentional Visibility"

- Schedule
- Clear Plans
  - Planning Document Outlines and/or Prototypes
  - Contingency

## Issues/Performance Problems

- Clear the air asap and increase your visibility
- Document conversations results and forward to employee

# But I Can't See Them! Managing Performance

## Remote Employee Success Factors

- Strategic direction is sufficient
- Good communicator, maintains contact
- Good at building relationships, team players
- Reliable and trustworthy
- Disciplines, results focused
- Able to work independently; self starter
- Problem solver and decision maker
- Assertive and confident
- Good time management skills

## Remote Employee Failure Factors

- Needs tactical direction;
- Ambiguity resistant
- Poor at communicating
- Too independent
- Haphazard management style
- Can't maintain focus
- High need for social inclusion
- Inflexible work approach
- Doesn't push back
- Blames others
- No access to technology or doesn't use them well

Reference: John D. Adams, OD Practitioner, 2001, Managing Dispersed Work Effectively

# Summary

- Conduct “Intentional Leadership”
- Foster trust – it’s KEY!
- Know and build your team
- Develop robust communications
- Create a learning culture

# Priority Matrix

		URGENCY	
		High	Low
IMPORTANCE	High	<p><b>Important and Urgent</b></p> <p>Ex: your design which is currently holding all shipments of your company's product</p>	<p><b>Important But Not Urgent</b></p> <p>Ex: Long term planning; developing professional skills</p>
	Low	<p><b>Urgent But Not Important</b></p> <p>Ex: telephone calls, drop in visitors</p>	<p><b>Neither Urgent Nor Important</b></p> <p>Ex: reading junk mail, netsurfing, playing computer games</p>

# Discussion Questions

1. Among geographically distributed teams (GDT's), building trust is the #1 way to enhance meeting project deadlines and within budget. What ways have you used to build trust in the teams you have managed or participated in that are not co-located?
2. There are some basic "to-do's" in organizing geographically disbursed work to ensure accomplishing deliverables on time within budget projects. What things do you/have you make (made) sure to do when organizing your GDT's to make sure you meet deliverables?
3. When we are face to face, we take for granted frequency of communications, the informal exchanges, similar time zones, our multiple channels to receive information, etc. The greater the distance, the more increased the challenge and the less likely the frequency of communication. What methods have you used to foster a highly "communicative" environment for the GDT's that you've managed or on which you've participated?
4. The #1 fear of managers of geographically distributed teams is lack of visibility. How do you know they are really working and working on the right thing? What techniques have you used to improve the visibility you have to remote workers