

Virtual Team Development

Author: Faisal Alsalamah

Abstract— The office of upcoming generation may not look like our offices at all. Virtual Team development is going to become a prevalent concept where work means logging in to the companies' management website from your home and collaborating with the colleagues who work for different teams. The physical location like building becomes least important in the case. In this way, company can hire best of the talents regardless of their locations. The efficiency of the company can be enhanced by handing off work across time zones that make them to be productive all the times.

Index Terms— Virtual Team, Team work, Team productivity.

Identification of Issue

1 The need:

The ultimate aim of this report is to develop a professional virtual team and in the last seminar discussions we discussed various approaches that could prove to be useful. One option that we discussed was to design a parallel team. The virtual world café model could be a real asset in this regard. It is all about getting participants to a discussion platform regarding developing an ideal virtual team.

-
- *Faisal Alsalamah is currently pursuing masters degree program in Organizational change and Development in Hawaii Pacific University, Honolulu, HI United States Of America, PH- +13143086285. E-mail: falsalam@my.hpu.edu*

There is no doubt about the fact that Virtual Team development is going to become a prevalent concept where work means logging in to the companies' management website from your home

and collaborating with the colleagues who work for different teams. The physical location like building becomes least important in the case. However in order to align the workforce to this mode of working regular training sessions and workshops need to be arranged. The virtual world café model seems to be providing that platform.

1.2 Problem Statement:

What approaches could be used to develop a professional virtual team?

1.3 Who will benefit?

The findings of this report will certainly help the organizations to hire the best resources for specialized tasks by overcoming barriers that could come in the way of any individual. By rectifying those barriers the firm would be in a better position to achieve the set targets and goals. The workforce will also benefit as a result of an adequate working environment which will be the most likely outcome as they would be able to enjoy greatest level of

flexibility. This would raise the quality of work as work force would get ideal working scenario.

1.4 Report Credibility

This study would employ quantitative methods as it is a splendid tool to analyze a number of studies. It helps in understanding the behaviors of society with utmost clarity and transparent manner. While taking these kinds of researches, it the responsibility of the researcher to take care of the sentiments of the participants. The surveys or questionnaires shall be designed in such a manner that these provide an ease to the respondents to express their opinion in true means. The beauty of Survey research is that it can be conducted on even a single group of people. Survey research is simple and involves directing questioning through interviews or polls. The process of selecting samples in the survey research includes probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The probability sampling based surveys produce unbiased results. Thus, the expected sample mean value is always equal to the population mean value. However, it has a slight measureable error of sampling often expressed in margin of error.

Ethical consciousness has emerged as one of the fundamental needs of organizations as most of them aim for their members to project unified code of ethics. The research problem revolves around

the concept that ideal sharing of ethical reasoning and moral intent can be achieved by sharing determinants related to individual, organizational and social factors. There might be barriers present in a particular organizational setting which act as a hindrance in our activity. However the process of data collection can be a difficult and researchers might face some difficulties in that.

The data collection needs to be carried out in the most efficient and precise manner as reliability of research is directly linked with it. For any scientific research to be credible, it has to be valid and reliable. Reliability can simply be described as the consistency of the measurements and validity as the accuracy of the measurements used in the study. The quality of a research can be tested using validity and reliability. The credibility of the research can be enhanced by looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the research which is done by analyzing available data.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Research Study Literature Related to the Problem:

The Virtual Knowledge Café is the term used by Bo Gyllenpalm. He is the member of Faculty of Arts in Organizational Management. Bo has a strong professional back ground. He designed a

virtual course called Organization Development Concepts and Methods. He tried to use the world café approach in the virtual world.

Several members from national and global enterprises attempted to enroll in the course and Bo managed to develop a class composed of nine members. The course was comprised of 12 weeks. A general check in was there in the first week where students shared their biography, interests, the reasons for enrolling in course and motives among all the members. Thus, similar to face to face world café approach, a mutual trust was developed.

At first, every member was a bit doubtful about the effectiveness of the approach but by the end of the source, every member came to know that they all were experts in the field. All the participants managed to have the knowledge of equal level. Bo claims that virtual learning café environment was even more effective than face to face world café approach. It provides a considerable time to the participants before presenting their reflection. They can see the speed and the content of each and every individual and hence can compare themselves with others (Gyllenpalm, 2002). The most significant advantage of the approach is that all the multicultural group people got an opportunity to

understand each other. Thus there was no room for harsh cross cultural communications. People learned from the experience of others rather than their own. Thus, by this powerful collaboration a global knowledge web is formed.

There are several cafes on the internet that are effectively working like a chat room but the chat room does not fit in to this model (Brown, 2010). So far there is no online course being conducted on such principles. Thus one may deduce that it is not about the physical appearance of the members but the presence of basic principles of world café model that help crafting the best learning atmosphere.

2.2 Conceptual and theoretical literature related to issue/ problem:

Participants are prescribed to share their relevant factual stories one by one and hence a context of the conversation can be created. Each participant would be provided with a welcome note making the climate bit more hospitable. Participants would come together to share life experiences according to the prescribed plan and sit with the portraits or picture of another person around a hypothetical table. In this way, participants can be divided into several groups. There are the experiences of the participants that will further clarify the question under discussion.

This method is intended to generate a question that cannot be answered in a simple yes or no. They have the participants can easily write on the cards that are visibly placed on the white board. In this way a replica of table board like face to face world cafés is there. In this way the fourth principle of the contribution of encouraging their contribution is encouraged. The participants move from one group to another very easily and share their experience.

The insights of the participants are known by conducting the three café rounds of twenty minutes each similar to real workshops. Each working group in the software is assigned a moderator. Thus, at the conversation between these hypothetical tables creates a meaningful sense to the whole group. The participants are prescribed to listen more keenly such that one may connect himself to the diverse perspectives of others. Participants will share collective theories by making visible writing cards on the whiteboard. Thus, in this way various groups can be rotated similarly to face to face world café model.

2.3 Options identified in literature for approaching the problem

Although there are plenty of options for creating and designing a team, the options regarding structure and nature of work are:

1. Networked Teams: A temporary team not necessarily from same organization.
2. Service Teams: The members are geographically located in distinct time zones. All the members are not always active.
3. Parallel Team: Composed of professionals and does not melt after completion of task.

The parallel team seems to be a good choice under present circumstances because that will be composed of several groups with different group leaders connected to one boss. Thus, a tree structure is formed. Regarding collaboration, conference and document storage, we shall use software like Redbooth, Skype and Dropbox respectively.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusion:

The office of upcoming generation may not look like our offices at all. Virtual Team development is going to become a prevalent concept where work means logging in to the companies' management website from your home and collaborating with the colleagues who work for different teams. The physical location like building becomes least

important in the case. In this ways company can hire best of the talents regardless of their locations. The efficiency of the company can be enhanced by handing off work across time zones that make them to be productive all the times. The virtual learning café environment can be even more effective that face to face world café approach. It provides a considerable time to the participants before presenting their reflection. They can see the speed and the content of each and every individual and hence can compare themselves with others. The most significant advantage of the approach is that all the multicultural group people got an opportunity to understand each other. Thus there was no room for harsh cross cultural communications. People learned from the experience of others rather than their own. Thus, by this powerful collaboration a global knowledge web is formed.

3.2 Recommendations:

Advancement in technology has made it much easier to manage dispersed group of individuals. It is now very common for a company to fifty percent of their employees to virtually exist somewhere. The global market workforces have made the virtual team an essential essence for the business for many organizations round the globe. Making sturdy business strategies and taking bold steps for the advancement of the business does not means

that the strategy is always going to work the same way as we want or the plan is going to be well executed. Many companies use the same guideline and practices for their co-located teams and hope for everything to work as desired.

The OnPoint Consulting performed a case study of 48 virtual teams to work out the success factor of the best performing virtual teams. The results surprisingly showed that twenty-seven percent of the global teams were not fully active. We have worked out four factors that are causing the ineffectiveness or poor performance of these virtual teams. These factors are lack of clear goals and priorities, lack of clear roles or job description, lack of cooperation and trust among individuals and last but not the least lack of engagement.

Lack of priorities lies because it is not easy to communicate and inform the other members of the team who are actually isolated. It is a tough job to keep the entire member to focus on the same goal and work for the same cause. Lack of clear roles is also a major problem. It is important for the members to understand their responsibilities and their rights. Knowing their impact on the company and team members makes the one feel about their importance. In this way the subordinate takes the work seriously.

Cooperation and trust is the main essence that works as a glue to keep the team members to work jointly as a team. The main protocol that works as vital roles is the voice of a person. It is unanimously accepted that voice plays a bigger role for developing a trust rather than the video streaming of the individuals. By engagement we mean the commencement of regular meetings. An individual only working as a one man force becomes bored. There is a very critical need of conduction of the meeting with proper check in with proper agenda and a proper check out with a fruitful outcome.

References

- [1] Brown, J. (2010). *The world café: Shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. ReadHowYouWant. com.
- [2] Schieffer, A., Isaacs, D., & Gyllenpalm, B. (2004). The world café: part one. *World*.
- [3] Gyllenpalm, B. (2002). *A Virtual Knowledge Café*. na.
- [4] Furst, S., Blackburn, R., & Rosen, B. (1999). Virtual team effectiveness: A proposed research agenda. *Information Systems Journal*, 9(4), 249-269.
- [5] Sarker, S., & Sahay, S. (2003). Understanding virtual team development: An interpretive study. *Journal of the association for information systems*, 4(1), 1.
- [6] Lepsinger, R., & DeRosa, D. (2010). *Virtual team success: A practical guide for working and leading from a distance*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [7] Kirkman, B. L., Rosen, B., Gibson, C. B., Tesluk, P. E., & McPherson, S. O. (2002). Five challenges to virtual team success: lessons from Sabre, Inc. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 16(3), 67-79.