



IDONEITA' LINGUA INGLESE

ENGLISH – EM

Master's Degree in Management
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RICEVIMENTO: SU TEAMS
VENERDÌ ORE 18:00-19:00

STUDIO 3, 1° PIANO
FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE ECONOMICHE, GIURIDICHE E POLITICHE
SANT'IGNAZIO, 84 (BIBLIOTECA ECONOMIA)



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IDONEITÀ LINGUA INGLESE

CdL magistrale Economia Manageriale



MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
LESSONS		LESSONS		LESSONS		TUTORATO	
TEAMS		TEAMS		TEAMS		TEAMS	
26 April	18:30-20:00	27 April	18:30-20:00	26 April	18:30-20:00		
3 May	18:30-20:00	4 May	18:30-20:00	5 May	18:30-20:00	6 May	15:00-16:30
10 May	18:30-20:00	11 May	18:30-20:00	12 May	18:30-20:00	13 May	15:00-16:30
				T 19 May	15:00-16:30	20 May	15:00-16:30
				T 26 May	15:00-16:30	27 May	15:00-16:30
		T 1 June	15:00-16:30			3 June	15:00-16:30

Working Across Cultures

MARKET LEADER



Business English

Adrian Pilbeam

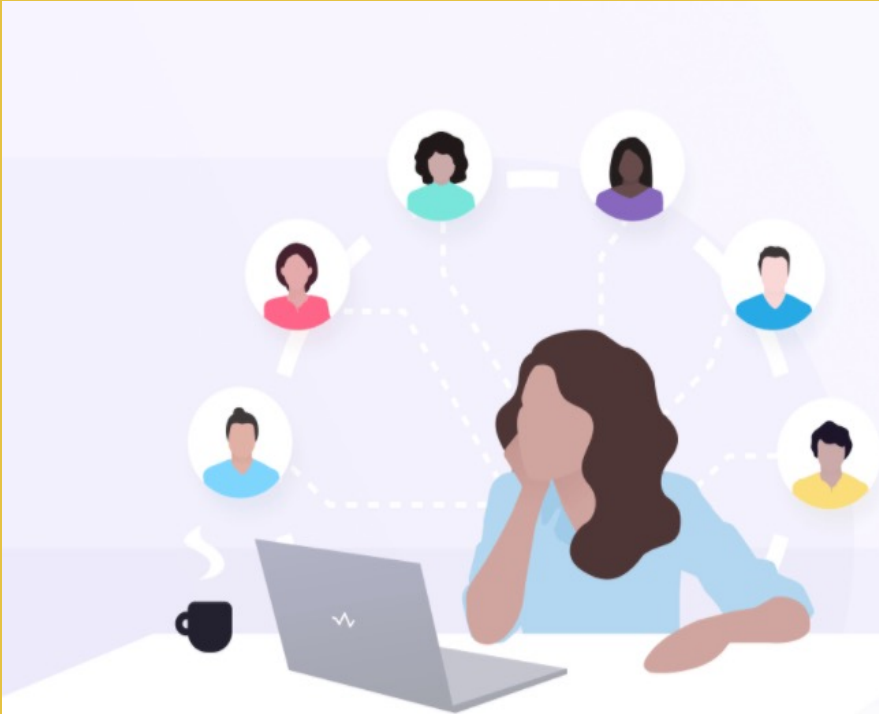
This unit considers the challenges of working in virtual teams.

BEFORE YOU READ

Discuss these questions.

- 1 How would you define a 'virtual team'? Have you ever been a member of one? If so, what was your experience like?
- 2 What are the benefits of virtual teams?
- 3 What are the difficulties of working in virtual teams?
- 4 What strategies can be used to ensure virtual teams work as well as possible?

VIRTUAL TEAM MANAGEMENT



- **Managing tasks & projects:** Creating and assigning tasks to team members and tracking progress.
- **Tracking tasks:** Making sure tasks are actually being completed and targets are being hit.
- **Maximising productivity:** Ensuring team members are getting enough done, quickly enough.
- **Remote collaboration:** Making it as easy as possible for team members to work together, wherever they are.
- **Language & cultural differences:** Getting the best out of diversity while preventing any misunderstandings.
- **Building & maintaining trust:** Creating a sense of trust between management and remote workers, as well as individual team members themselves.

Virtual teams need to build trust

ML p. 53



BOOKS OPEN LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Open

WHAT MAKES VIRTUAL WORKING DIFFERENT?

Virtual teams are similar to co-located teams, but critically different in three key areas:

1. Complexity
2. Invisibility
3. Handicapped communications

by Alison Maitland

A Jenny Goodbody's team of six people is spread across six continents. Once a week, they meet through a teleconference, which means that she must be wide awake by 6.30 a.m. in New Jersey, while her colleague in Sydney, Australia, has to stay in work mode until well past 8.30 p.m.

B 'It's horrendously early in the morning for me and late in the evening for Australia,' says Ms Goodbody, Global Change Manager at Process Gas Solutions, a division of BOC, the industrial gases group which is now part of The Linde Group. 'I'm having a debate about whether we need to split into hemispheres and maybe do it once a month.'

C This would mean that at least two of the team would be less tired. On the other hand, some of them might feel more isolated if they had fewer opportunities to talk as a group.

D It is the kind of dilemma that faces any geographically dispersed team that has to communicate through e-mail, telephone calls or video conferences rather than face to face. While trust is crucial for every team to operate effectively, it is harder to build that trust among people who rarely, if ever, see each other.

E Ms Goodbody recently studied nine 'virtual teams' in her company for her MBA at Henley Management College in the UK. Only a third of them thought that they were successful in meeting their objectives – a finding that is in line with other research on virtual teams, she says.

F Part of the problem is that people working in a virtual team often assume that trust will come about automatically. 'The teams that were more successful put in an effort to try and build trust,' she says. 'They had short-term activities for people to work in pairs or threes, getting to know each other in smaller groups.'

G A face-to-face group meeting at the start is important. 'The teams that got together once could kick off that trust-building much more quickly. With the ones that didn't meet face to face, it was slower.'

H Virtual teams should agree a code of practice that sets out how to behave and communicate with each other, according to John Gill and David Birchall, two Henley academics, who have drawn up a framework for managers to build trust. The code should cover practical things, such as responding to e-mails within a fixed time. It should also cover psychological support, which could include sending

encouraging messages and acknowledging the efforts of others.

I 'An important aspect of management behaviour, identified as supporting the development of trust, is consistency and its encouragement among other team members,' they add.

J Ms Goodbody found that the first stage, when the team is actually formed, is the most important in determining success. Team leaders can help to build relationships in different ways. 'They can try and get people to share some level of social information, for example about their country or their family.'

K As team co-ordinators, they also need to know how to summarise relevant information from the conversations that they have with individual members for the rest of the group. 'There's a fine line between making sure everybody is aware of what's going on and inundating people with e-mails they don't need,' she says.

FT

Challenges

Motivation

- Easier to be distracted
- Risk of burnout due to loss of separation between work and personal life
- Accountability may be harder to maintain

Social Engagement

- Hard to socialize and to build trust and cohesion among team members
- Harder to share common ground
- Feeling of isolation and disconnection
- Cultural diversity

Communication

- Decreased body language cues when communicating
- Misinterpretation of written text
- Ignoring communication and / or lack of communication expectations

Logistics

- High reliance on technology
- Lack of IT support
- Managing across time zones
- Physical distance

VOCABULARY

A Word search

Complete these sentences with words and phrases from the article.

- 1 If some members of a global team are not contacted very much, there is a danger they may feel i..... and cut off. (paragraph C)
- 2 A g..... d..... team is one where the team members are located in different countries. (paragraph D)
- 3 If something is extremely important, it is c..... (paragraph D)
- 4 Jenny Goodbody's study of the success rate of virtual teams was similar to, or i..... l..... w....., other research findings. (paragraph E)
- 5 The best way to build trust in international teams is to have f..... -t..... -f..... meetings at the start, so that people can get to know each other. (paragraph G)
- 6 A set of rules or guidelines on how virtual teams should communicate with each other is called a 'c..... o..... p.....' by Gill and Birchall. (paragraph H)
- 7 'C.....' means not changing your mind or the message you give to different team members. (paragraph I)
- 8 One way for new team members to get to know each other is to exchange personal and s..... i..... (paragraph J)
- 9 A 'f..... l.....' is where there is only a very small difference between two things. (paragraph K)
- 10 One aspect of good practice in international teams is to avoid i..... people with too many e-mails. (paragraph K)

isolated

geographically dispersed

crucial

in line with

face-to-face

code of practice

consistency

social information

fine line

inundating

VOCABULARY

B Word partnerships

Match the verbs (1–6) with the nouns (a–f) to form word partnerships from the article about working in teams.

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|---------|
| 1 to build | a) success | 1 e)/f) |
| 2 to summarise | b) objectives | 2 c) |
| 3 to build | c) information | 3 f)/e) |
| 4 to determine | d) a team | 4 a) |
| 5 to meet | e) relationships | 5 b) |
| 6 to form | f) trust | 6 d) |

C **Opposites**

Find words or phrases in the article which have opposite or contrasting meanings to these.

- 1 half asleep (paragraph A)
- 2 early in the morning (paragraph B)
- 3 frequently (paragraph D)
- 4 destroy (paragraph F)
- 5 long-term (paragraph F)
- 6 ignoring (paragraph H)
- 7 failure (paragraph J)

- 1 wide awake
- 2 late in the evening
- 3 rarely
- 4 build
- 5 short-term
- 6 acknowledging
- 7 success

D **Verbs and prepositions**

Match the verbs (1–5) with the prepositions (a–e) to form phrasal verbs from the article. Then match each phrasal verb with a definition (i–v).

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|---|
| 1 to come | a) up | i) to start |
| 2 to set | b) off | ii) to think of and write a list |
| 3 to kick | c) in | iii) to happen, develop |
| 4 to put | d) about | iv) to spend (time or effort doing something) |
| 5 to draw | e) out | v) to explain or describe something in a clear and detailed way |

- 1 d (iii)
- 2 e (v)
- 3 b (i)
- 4 c (iv)
- 5 a (ii)

VOCABULARY

E Sentence completion

Use the phrasal verbs from Exercise D to complete these sentences.

- 1 Before they start working, members of a virtual team should a team charter or set of guidelines on how to work together. **draw up**
- 2 In the early stages when a team is formed, the team members need to time and effort to build trust. **put in**
- 3 All new teams should with a first meeting to get to know each other and build relationships. **kick off**
- 4 A team charter should the behaviour and attitudes team members should have when working together. **set out**
- 5 A successful way of working as an international team does not easily. Everyone needs to work hard to build trust and follow a code of practice. **come about**

READING**A Understanding the main points**

Read the article on the opposite page and answer these questions.

- 1 How global is Jenny Goodbody's team?
- 2 What is one of the challenges she has with her team?
- 3 What does research on virtual teams generally show?
- 4 What is the most important thing needed for virtual teams to work effectively?
- 5 What is particularly important when a virtual team starts working together?

- A**
- 1 Very global. It is spread across six continents, from the US to Australia.
 - 2 Because they are spread across six continents and many time zones, some of the team have to wake up very early or stay at work very late when they have teleconferences.
 - 3 That only a third of virtual teams are successful in meeting their objectives.
 - 4 The most important thing is trust.
 - 5 To establish relationships within the team from the very beginning.

READING

B**Understanding details**

Read the article again and answer these questions.

- 1 How many people are in Jenny Goodbody's team?
- 2 How often do they meet through a teleconference?
- 3 What is one way she has thought of to get round the problem of communicating across different time zones?
- 4 What would be the pros and cons of this?
- 5 How is a virtual team defined?
- 6 Why is trust hard to build in virtual teams?
- 7 What is the best way to build trust in virtual teams?
- 8 What does John Gill and David Birchall's code of practice for virtual teams include?
- 9 What is one important thing to do when an international team is first formed?
- 10 How should team co-ordinators handle communication with members of the team?

READING

B Understanding details

Read the article again and answer these questions.

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- 9 What is one important thing to do when an international team is first formed?
- 10 How should team co-ordinators handle communication with members of the team?

- B**
- 1 Six
 - 2 Once a week
 - 3 She has thought of splitting the team into hemispheres.
 - 4 Pros: the time-zone differences are not so big when they have teleconferences, and people aren't so tired.
Cons: some people would have less contact with each other and might feel isolated.
 - 5 It is a geographically dispersed team that has to communicate through e-mail, telephone calls or video conferences rather than face to face.
 - 6 Because people rarely, if ever, see each other.
 - 7 To meet face to face when the team is formed and to take part in activities to get to know each other.
 - 8 It includes practical things, such as responding to e-mails within a fixed time, as well as the importance of psychological support, which could include sending encouraging messages and acknowledging the efforts of others.
 - 9 Team leaders should help to build relationships by trying to get people to share some level of social information, for example about their country or their family.
 - 10 They should summarise relevant information from conversations with individual members of the team for the rest of the group, but not overwhelm people with too much information.