How to Optimize Virtual Team Meetings
Virtual Team Builders

Keys to Optimizing Virtual Team Meetings
Introductions

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Virtual Team Builders
• 15 years of Corporate Training Experience
• Specializes in: Virtual Team Building
• Provides: training, consulting, coaching
• Associations: Canadian Association For Professional Speakers Toast Masters International
Objectives

- Identify 6 techniques to improve your virtual meetings.
- Discuss challenges to effective virtual meeting and develop solutions to those challenges.
- Evaluate meeting best practices.
Teams and Team Building
Setting the Ground Work
What Is A Virtual Team?

geographically dispersed

collaborate via communication and information technologies
Communications and Distance

MIT Study

Next door - 25% chance of communicating at least once a week

30’ or more apart - Only 10% chance of communicating at least once a week

More than 90’ apart – Little communication; same as miles apart
Same corridor – great 5X as much as…

Separate corridor, Same floor, much better than

Who?!

What?

Why?!

Better

Degree of collaboration

Worse

Separate floors

Collaboration and Distance Bell Labs Study

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What Makes a Virtual Team Successful?

Day in Your Life

Task related: Processes that help ensure that each team is contributing fully:

• Virtual Meetings
• Status reporting

Socio-emotional: Processes that increase the cohesion of the group:

• Trust
• Camaraderie
• Communication
Making Your Virtual Meetings Work
Conducting More Effective Meetings

1. What percentage of people day dream during meetings?
2. What percentage of people multi-task during meetings?
Conducting More Effective Meetings

the answer is...
3. What percentage of people actually doze off during meetings?
Conducting More Effective Meetings

the answer is ...
What Disengages You?

- Meetings that do not stay on track
- Meetings with no clear agenda
- Participants who are outspoken
- A poor facilitator
- Meetings where your attendance is not necessary
6 Techniques to Improve Your Virtual Meetings
Technique 1: Create a Graphic

Ottawa
Chris
Katie
Chad

Montreal

Winnipeg

Vancouver
Mike

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Connect Remote Team Members

🌐 “Buddy-up' local people with remote team members and encourage pre-conference discussion/collaboration between them.

🌐 Delegate some items of the agenda to remote team members so they 'take over' running the meeting.
Technique 2: Create Ground Rules

Ground rules (TOA) are critical for managing effective group interaction, but they need to be tailored to your team.

Examples:

- No multi-tasking
- Meetings start and end on time
- An agenda with associated time frames
- is sent 48 hours prior to the meeting
Agenda’s will be emailed 48 hours prior to the meeting

Specific
Measurable
Attainable/Achievable
Relevant/Realistic
Time Based
What rules of engagement would you like to see on your team?
Build Relationships

Technique 3: Build Relationships
Personal Idiosyncrasy

Idiosyncrasies?
How Has Your Week Been Going?
It’s in the Mail
Technique 4: Provide a Play by Play Commentary
Technique 5: Provide a Summary
Technique 6: Conduct an Evaluation

The Team

• Brand new team
• Minimal experience working virtually
• 5 locations US and Canada
Let’s take a break
Old Raincoat!
… and a Nice Tailored Jacket
Just Love Those Hats!
Honestly I love weekly conference calls!
If it weren’t for them, I’d never get caught up on my email
Meeting Challenges

- Lack of non-verbal cues
- Technology limitations or failures
- Multi-tasking/distractions
Lack of Non-Verbal Cues

How do you compensate for the lack of visual cues?

- Verify that the person on the other end is engaged
- Check in with people every 3 slides or every 6 minutes
- Call the behavior
- Listen for tone of voice and pitch
Technology Limitations

What contingency plans can you put into place?

- Have a back-up plan
- Have an alternative call in number available
- Send material in advance
- If the technology goes down don’t stress out about it
What can you do to minimize multi-tasking?

- Set up rules of engagement.
- Take responsibility to stay focused.
- Be present with someone—it helps build trust.
- Address the multitasking if it becomes disruptive.
- Remove all distraction.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Meeting should be used for status reporting</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A virtual meeting should not exceed 2 hours in duration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting attendees should put themselves on mute during a virtual meeting even if there is no background noise</td>
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<td></td>
<td>This statement will encourage discussion “Is there anyone who would like to begin?”</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>During a meeting engage your team by calling on people by name for input</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Six Techniques to Improve Your Meetings

Technique 1: Create a Graphic
Technique 2: Create Ground Rules
Technique 3: Build Relationships
Technique 4: Provide a Play by Play Commentary
Technique 5: Provide a Summary of Each Section
Technique 6: Conduct an Evaluation
What squared with what I already knew?

What do I see from a new angle or perspective?

What helped complete my circle of knowledge?

What new directions or actions will I take?
Thank you for your participation!

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