



Operating Successfully in a Virtual Environment

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Rahul Dogra works as an international management and leadership instructor. He has developed and delivered programs on a wide array of management topics by working with customers to design and tailor solutions that enable attendees to access practical tools and approaches to common issues and problems faced. He has delivered programs to clients in five continents to date. Rahul writes on a Blog at www.rahuldogra.com and is a co-author of two books on Executive Leadership.

Rahul has worked with large and small organizations, for and not for profit organizations including: BP, Shell Global Solutions, Food and Agricultural Organization, International Fund for Agriculture and Development, Emerson Electric, Islamic Development Bank, World Wild Life Fund, HP, NATO, UNICEF, King Faisal Specialist Research Hospital, Axa Rosenberg, JP Morgan, Pepsico, Sunrise Communications, Clear2 Pay, Kuwait Oil Petroleum, Autodesk, Societe Generale, Ford Credit, Deloitte UK, World Food Program and US Federal Government Social Security Administration.






Poll Question

Have you ever worked with someone by email – yet not known their gender my looking at the name alone?



Poll Question



How many of you telework and if so to what extent?



Operating Successfully in a Virtual Environment



- We will:
 - Identify how to operate in a virtual world
 - Focus on where it matters:
 - Building relationships
 - Managing proactive communications
 - Delivering tasks



What Challenges Are Faced in a Virtual World?



Defining Virtual Working



- Occurs when individuals collaborate towards a mutual goal, using communication tools
- Your virtual situation may appear as working:
 - From home (telecommuting)
 - On a different floor of a building
 - In a different time-zone
- These approaches have associated challenges
- This way of working is becoming the norm



How We Work



Focus on tasks
(Getting work done)

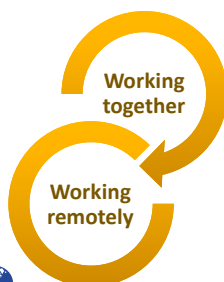


Communicating effectively
(Proactively adopting tools)

Building and maintaining effective relationships
(Individual and organizational)



Effective Partnerships



- We work well with others, once a relationship has been formed
- In a virtual setting, the tendency is to focus on the task and see the relationship as not being important
 - Ignoring this impacts the ability to achieve the task

Working Together



- Focus on:
 - How people interact
 - Creating engagement
 - Exchanging knowledge



How People Interact



- We relate to others if we understand each other
- Factors that influence this include:
 - Personality
 - Your life outside of work
 - The work being undertaken
 - Upbringing and culture



Creating Engagement



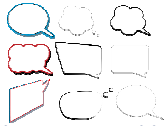
- When we work together we interact and engage
- Think about having a coffee/tea with colleagues
 - What happens?
- How do we create the **virtual coffee** moment?



Exchanging Knowledge



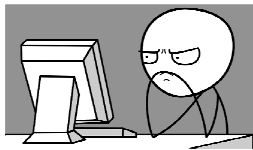
- There are two main types of knowledge we focus on:
 - Explicit
 - Tacit
- In a virtual environment the main goal beyond getting work done, will be the exchange of knowledge
 - Particularly tacit knowledge



What Happens in a Virtual World



- The focus is on the task not on:
 - Forming relationships
 - Understanding the individual
 - Developing effective communications
- Trust has not been built or maintained
- There is focus on task alone



Characteristics of An Effective Team

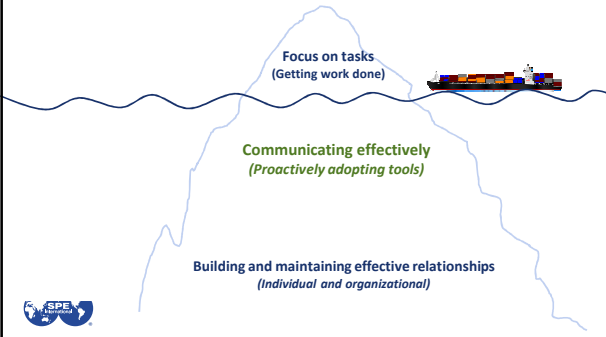


- Shared aims and goals
 - A sense of commitment
- Enhanced communications, understanding the big picture
- Acceptance of group values
- Involvement in decision making
- Free flow of knowledge



How We Work







Focussing on Communications



- In a virtual team, you need **more** communications not less, when compared to co-located working
 - Not a case of quantity but quality
- What do we mean by communications?
 - The tools used
 - How they are used
 - The frequency
 - Selecting a tools specific to the message being delivered





Poll Question



What available communication tools do you use?

What have you been trained in using?

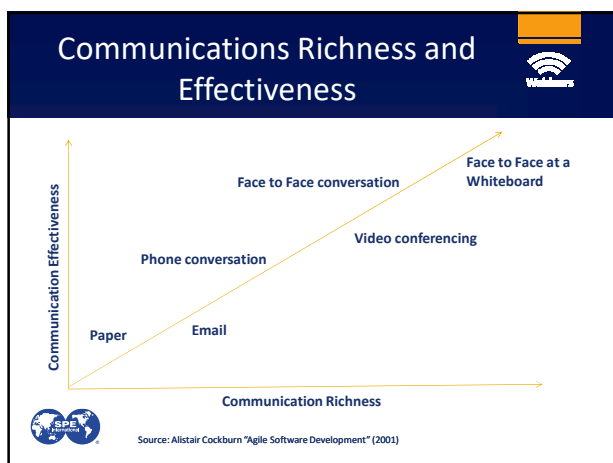


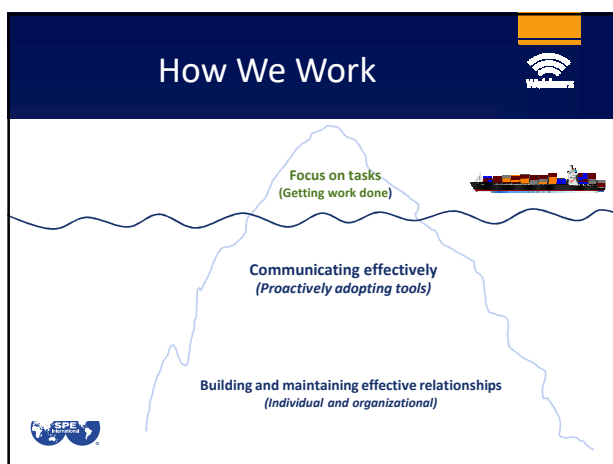
Communications Golden Rules



1. Audit to make sure that everyone has access to the tools
 - Version
 - Peripherals (headsets; web cams)
2. Ensure all are trained in the use of the tools
3. Consider the message then select the **best** tool





Developing the Ground Rules



- High performing collaboratively develop ground rules
- Explicit rather than implicit rules
- If not, then the tendency is to move towards local rather than global rules
- You need to decide what these ground rules are
 - Internalize them
 - Make sure new team members are on-boarded
 - Stick to them



Virtual Ground Rules



- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Roles and responsibilities
- ✓ Escalation of issues
- ✓ Keeping the team informed
- ✓ Operating at virtual meetings
- ✓ Using communication tools proactively
- ✓ Ensuring that everyone understands what we are doing and why
- ✓ Coordinating activities



Take Away



- Focus on developing relationships, communications then the task
- Leverage the diversity, by understanding the individual
- Look at the message and then identify the tool
- Focus periodically on how the team is operating virtually