

Achieving success and virtual teams



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In today's competitive world, companies are gradually vacating their cubicles and enter into the virtual workforce to increase work efficiency, reduce cost and resolve organizational problems (Ahmed & Ebrahim, 2009). Nowadays, companies are investing a bulk amount of money on virtual teams to enhance their performance since it has become an indispensable prerequisite for companies to stay in competitive in the era of globalization (Ahmed & Ebrahim, 2009).

Virtual teams consist of members from different cultural backgrounds who work in various organizations with different set of standards and members of the virtual teams have the least probability to meet in person (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348). The greater percentages (approximately 90%) of people are responsible for both success and failure of the virtual teams whereas technology plays only 10% role (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348). Communication effectiveness and stimulating work are considered two essential human factors in terms of shaping the success and failure of virtual teams (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

The task can be challenging and stimulating for virtual teams as it is often unsubstantiated and consequently team member's lack of concern on their work might turn into crumble (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348). Volvo has emerged to make the communication system as much effective as possible through emphasizing the concern of communication effectiveness and stimulating work (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348). Volvo assesses the efficiency of virtual teams into four different types which is depicted in a question pattern in the case (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348). Volvo's virtual

team are to be evaluated by shared accountability and shared leadership for attaining team's goal (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

Discussion Questions: 1. Describe the attributes that contribute to the success of virtual teams and those that contribute to the failure of virtual teams. The success of virtual teams depends on different factors in which people are the most significant determinant that assists virtual teams to be successful entity whereas technology plays only 10% role in virtual team's achievement (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348). Virtual team members have to be more self-motivated and disciplined in their assigned work and they must be proficient in using variety of tech tools in order to accomplish their task (Settle-Murphy, 2009).

Likewise, Virtual team members have to have the ability to manage their time effectively and those who can understand that how much time they need to get their task done are usually far more productive which in turns contribute to the success of virtual team. Moreover, communication effectiveness and stimulating work are the two vital features of actuating the success or failure of virtual teams; for instance, team members should know what to communicate, how and when and the whole communication process should be concise and lucid to avoid any misinterpretation (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

In contrast, the failure of virtual teams relies on several things wherein people play a major part in the context of virtual arena; for example, a consulting service company; NetAge reveals the fact that the percentage of having failure of virtual teams is around 90% of people (Nelson & Quick,

2013, p. 348). Vagueness in communication might lead to the failure of virtual teams; for instance, if the message is unclear and tough to comprehend then it would hamper the work procedure and create unnecessary pressure among team members (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

The important attributes for team members are to clearly understand their goals and their individual roles since lack of these attributes might turn into failure to the virtual teams. Moreover, the process of set up trust and ensuring healthy collaboration among team members is difficult but lack of these might lead to failure of virtual teams (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

2. Discuss the extent to which the characteristics of well-functioning, effective groups overlap the attributes that contribute to the success of virtual teams. The most effective virtual team exhibits different characteristics which would eventually lead to the success of virtual teams. The effective virtual teamwork determines the understanding of different aspects of cultures, peoples and organization (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

The selection of right people to provide services is very crucial for team's success and it is imperative to employ those workers who are self motivated (Erickson & Gratton, 2007). Moreover, the endeavor of virtual worker's is to involve in mutually supporting work relationships in which work members share common objectives and errands (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

Good virtual team members tend to do well in their assigned task in wherein they experience and tolerate haziness (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

Likewise, good team members are also independent thinkers who are always

willing to take positive initiative and they have a very good command over communication.

Strong leadership is needed to succeed in virtual teams though there is a little difference in between conventional teams and virtual teams; for example, virtual team's do not have the opportunity for face-to-face communication and thus virtual team leaders must emphasize on relationship building and have emotional intelligence (Erickson & Gratton, 2007). The above mentioned characteristics are somehow overlying the attributes that contribute to the success of virtual teams.

3. Explain how cultural diversity can affect the effective functioning of virtual teams operating in a global economy. Cultural diversity refers to the people of different races, cultures, religions, nationalities, ethnic groups and backgrounds that making up a society or institution and it is one of the standards that measure how progressive a society is. Virtual teams experience some challenges in their work due to the cultural diversity since they have deal with the other team members who belong to different cultures with different set of standards and behaviors (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

Team members sometimes face problems in understanding their messages or listening from them and consequently the whole communication might hamper and information got turned into misunderstood or misinterpreted (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).

4. Is Volvo's approach to evaluating the effectiveness of its virtual team's one that could serve as a useful model for other organizations to follow in evaluating their own virtual teams? Justify your answer.

Volvo's initiative could serve as a useful model for other organizations to follow since Volvo's endeavor is to emphasize on communication effectiveness and stimulating work and how it can make as effective as possible (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348). Volvo's mission is to facilitate teams with ensuring the effective way of communicating to attain business goals (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348). Volvo estimates the effectiveness of its virtual teams into four kinds and Volvo's virtual team are to be evaluated by shared accountability and shared leadership for attaining team's goal (Nelson & Quick, 2013, p. 348).