

Leading Remote Teams When the Stakes Are High



Presenters



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Leading Remote Teams



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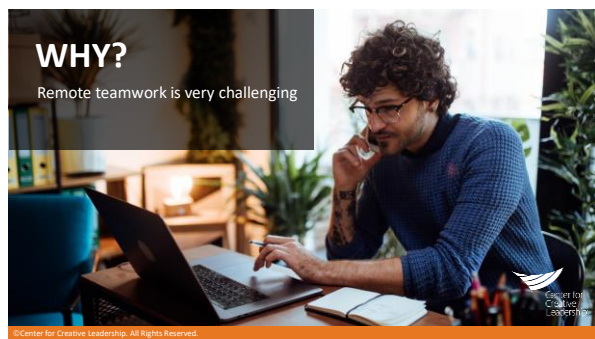
Overview of Outcomes



This webinar will help:

- Increase effectiveness as a leader and/or member of a virtual team
- Identify research-based best practices that contribute to an optimal virtual environment
- Sustain business continuity even in the midst of disruption
- Learn and practice the mindsets, skillsets, and tools for effective virtual leadership
- Quickly build a sense of “team” virtually in times of crisis

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WHY?

Remote teamwork is very challenging



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Common Challenges



Team Members
Feeling disconnected
Not feeling part of the team
Lack of feedback/growth opportunities
Lack of trust in technology, misunderstanding, and conflict
Lack of trust
Lack of information

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Common Challenges: We play both roles



Team Members	Team Leaders
Not feeling part of the team	Out of sight, out of mind
Lack of feedback/growth opportunities	Establishing personal bonds/connections
Lack of trust in technology, misunderstanding and conflict	Coaching/development at a distance
Lack of trust	Communicating via technology
Lack of information	Lack of trust
	Patience, can't help if you don't know

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Reasons Virtual Teams Fail



- Fail to recognize working at a distance presents new challenges that require new mindsets and skillsets
- Virtual teams mimic face-to-face solutions which overlook the complexity of virtual teamwork
- Training for virtual team leaders and members is lacking
- Virtual teams often don't take the time to invest in relationships, just drive quickly to task
- Some challenges virtual teams face are not problems to be solved, but rather, polarities to be managed

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Benefits of Virtual Work



Benefit to Employers	Benefit to Employees	Benefits to Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhead reduction • Reduced absenteeism • Flexibility and agility for employees • Increased productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in commuting time • Retention • Potential Work-life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on corporate responsibility and sustainability • Environmental • Traffic safety

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Working Virtually: A steady incline to a competitive advantage



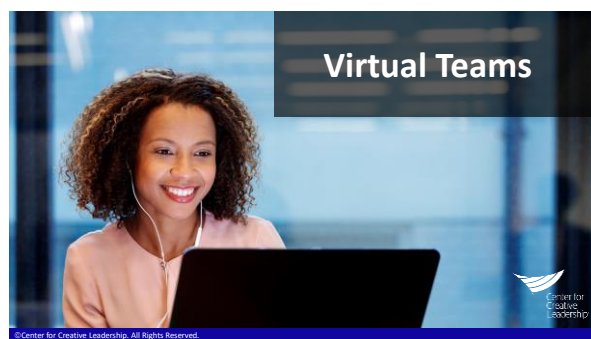
In 2016, 85% of teams reported that effective virtual teamwork is critical for their business success

In 2020, businesses globally scramble to maintain normal business operations by requiring employees work at home due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

What is the *now* normal?



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Virtual Teaming Requires New Mindsets, Skillsets, and a Tool Kit

Success Requires

- More trust
- More proactivity from all team members
- Forced interactions
- Use of multiple technological tools
- New ways of thinking about communication to feel less virtual



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Mindset, Skillset, & Tool Kit



Utilizing best practices and resources

Developing new ways of doing



Shifting to new ways of thinking

What are the mindsets, skills, & tools you need to lead effective virtual teams?

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Virtual teaming is different from working in co-located teams



Old Mindset	New Mindset
Learning to lead virtual teams = learning how to use technology	Learning to lead in a virtual environment requires knowledge of teams, teamwork, and collaboration processes
Being people-oriented is incompatible with technology	Using technology in a people-oriented way is possible
Technology is the cause of communication breakdowns	Communication breakdowns require process, interaction strategies as well as technological reviews
Collaboration happens when teams interact in fixed time and space	Collaboration has no boundaries and happens in an ongoing manner
Face-to-face is necessary for interaction	Different tools support quality interaction, what matters is how they are used

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How to build effective virtual teams?

- Polarity Thinking
- Inclusion
- Communication & Structure



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Polarity Thinking as a Mindset

The ability to recognize and the capacity to hold 2 opposing ideas, values, competencies, or strategic outcomes in your mind and get the best from both.



Can you supplement your initial view with an alternate view?

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Skillset: Leveraging Polarities



Develop your skill at asking the following questions:

- "how can we do both?"
- "which actions are most suitable for our team context?"
- "what do we need to do (or have) to accomplish that?"
- "What indicators might we anticipate when we are not leveraging the polarity?"

*"Both-and thinking" can initially feel counterintuitive and will take **both** practice **and** patience*

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The Benefits of Polarity Thinking



CCL's research tested the effectiveness of polarity training on 141 virtual teams across the globe.

Virtual teams who leveraged polarities had higher levels of:

- Performance
- Commitment
- Satisfaction
- Viability
- Informal Learning

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What Are the Benefits of Polarity Thinking



Teams that deliberately *focused on their critical team polarities multiple times* improved their outcomes more (often by over 50%)

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Checklist: How do you know if your virtual team is managing a polarity?



Outward signs of a polarity's presence are:

- persistent tension
- reoccurring chronic issues
- mixed contradictory messages
- strong resistance to change

The role of the leader is to explore opportunities/advantages in the tensions, rather than suppress or deny them.

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Which Polarities do Virtual Teams Need to be Exceptionally Skilled at Leveraging?



- **Relationship & Task Orientation**
- **Advocacy & Inquiry for Inclusion**
- **Informal & Formal Communication**
- **To Verify & Trust**

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How to build effective virtual teams?



- Polarity Thinking
- **Inclusion**
- Communication & Structure

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When you experience an inclusive workplace, you experience...



- Value – You are appreciated and respected
- Trust – You make meaningful contributions and share decision-making
- Authenticity – You can bring your “full self” to work
- Psychologically Safety – You can hold different perspectives, make mistakes, and address tough issues without being penalized

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INCLUSION



Inclusion is about a sense of belonging and safety with others.

Benefits:

- Stronger team problem-solving
- Stronger work engagement
- Employees are more likely to stay
- Employees are more likely to innovate

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How do we *lead inclusively*?



Leading Inward

Your own ability to act courageously, learn, and self-reflect.

and

Leading Outward

Your ability to bolster team members' capacity to be empowered, treated fairly, and flourish at work.

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How do we *lead inclusively*?



Leading Inward

Your ability to act courageously, learn, and self-reflect.

- Curiosity
- Humility
- Courage

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How do we lead inclusively?



Leading Outward

Your ability to bolster team members' capacity to be empowered, treated fairly, and flourish at work.

- Accountability
- Ownership
- Allyship

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How to Help Your Virtual Team Feel More Connected



- Prioritize collaboration tools – detailing *which* tools will be used for what purposes
- Provide training in technologies and tools
- Provide extra organizational support and formalize team norms
- Pay attention to human connections
- Honoring boundaries of personal life and professional life
- Protect members from burnout

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How to build effective virtual teams?



- Polarity Thinking
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VIRTUALITY

The mindset of viewing technology as an opportunity to communicate and help teams feel less virtual.



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3 Key Practices

- Technology
- Time Zones
- Team Structure



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Technology: Choice of Media Matters

- Phone Call
- Email
- Text/Chat/Instant Messaging
- Video Messaging
- Webinars
- Social Media



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What to use and when?



Phone

- Interaction that requires real time give and take
- Interaction that requires multiple individuals
- Addressing team effectiveness and functioning
- Complex problem solving
- Interpersonal issues

Video Conferencing

- All the above plus
- Interaction that requires visual social cues
- Feedback and coaching

Instant Messaging

- Interaction that requires real time give and take
- One-to-one or one-to-many communications
- Frequent interactions throughout the work day
- A sense of co-presence is needed

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Structure for Effective Virtual Meetings



- Look for virtual tools that enable both formal and informal communication
- Confirm team members have a solid foundation concerning how they will operate as a team (e.g., team charter, team-building)
- Use the best web tools and features available to your team
- Create and send out an agenda for every meeting
- Be ready to lead the meeting
- Start meetings with one personal question for each member to share their non-task related response (e.g., least favorite vacation and why?)
- Manage the time
- Encourage interaction from everyone
- Wrap up meetings so team members are clear about decisions and action steps

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Virtual Meetings: Watch Out!



- Technology doesn't consistently work
- People sometimes don't know how to use the technology or troubleshoot
- Technophobia – afraid of the technology
- Not focused
- Too long/too often
- Talking heads
- Time zones infringe on meeting times
- Same people talk
- In chat function: what would you add to this list?

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As Effective Leaders of Virtual Teams....

What outcomes can
we expect to see?



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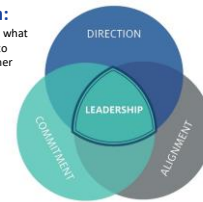
The Outcomes of Leadership

Direction:

Agreement on what
we are trying to
achieve together

Commitment:

Willingness to make
the success of the
collective a personal
priority



Alignment:

Effective coordination
of work so it fits
together



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Virtual Leadership Is:

The process of creating D,A,C with groups of
geographically, organizationally, and/or time
dispersed, mutually-dependent team members
brought together through technologies to work
on shared objectives.



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More resources to build your skillsets in Leading Virtual Teams



1. Executive Coaching:

Virtual, individual coaching with a CCL coach is available at www.ccl.org

2. Virtual Live Online Programs:

- DAC
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
- Emotional Intelligence
- Psychological Safety
- Learning with Agility
- Better Conversations Every Day

3. Video: Automatic CEO: Choosing a Virtual Workspace (<https://ma.tt/2019/01/ted-the-future-of-work/>)

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