

Workshop 10: Virtual Teams in Changing Organisations

More than ten years have passed since the ground breaking book from Jessica Lipnack and Geoffrey Stamps on virtual teams appeared on the market.

Being an important milestone in that field nevertheless some important aspects were not in the main focus the time the book was written:

- Leadership and social presence in virtual teams,
- the intercultural dimension in virtual teams,
- the technology used for supporting virtual teams (synchronous or asynchronous),
- the impact of organisational (changing) frameworks and corporate e-culture on virtual teams.

Apart from these intellectual issues the environment has significantly changed over the last decade: Nowadays there is hardly any team that is not working together bridging space, time, organisational and cultural boundaries.

In the meantime most organizations are in a state of permanent change and a new generation of employees appeared on the market that were socialized with new media in a different fashion than their predecessors. Co-operative eLearning and eModeration are widely spread providing also an increasing knowledge basis for working together in virtual teams more successfully.

Web 2.0 and three dimensional virtual worlds such as *second life* have changed our approach to the internet significantly and one could imagine that the younger generation has already more intercultural first contacts virtually than face to face.

On the other side people in multinational organizations are more and more really fed up with the amount of emails they get daily and with the increasing number of telephone and video conferences.

How can we prepare people for virtual team leadership roles in an international context, i.e. manage the transition from f-t-f to virtual leadership roles? Getting people to experiment with or simulate the experience is not easy in traditional training environments. So, is it sink or swim? Or just a stream of checklists? Or what?

How can leaders of virtual teams support the sense of presence at any corporate centre – my feeling is that many at the corporate edges of the world can be made to feel lacking in understanding about “what really counts”.

This workshop is designed to bring together virtual team and eModeration practioners and to share our current practical knowledge openly regarding the above mentioned issues.

Short key-notes will provide grounds for shared mental models and topic focus.

Further we will explore the future perspectives of virtual teams in a changing environment: What are the emerging new needs for communication and cooperation in complex multicultural organisational environments and what could be our answers to it?

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