



UNIT-3

Leading Virtual Team

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Plan and lead virtual team meetings.
- ✓ Use technology to support your virtual workplace.

Unit 3

Leading Virtual Team

Scheduling and Conducting Team Meetings

Choosing a Method

Team meetings are a crucial part of your virtual team's success. Here is an overview of team meeting methods, from most to least interactive:



Things to Consider

If you choose a telephone or video conference, make sure that:

- Toll-free numbers are provided to participants if their telephone lines are not paid for by the company
- The service is reliable and good quality
- Team members have the necessary tools (such as headsets and web cams) and software to participate in the meeting

Setting Expectations

Ensure that all team members know when the meeting will be held and what format it will take. Send out the agenda and action items that team members are responsible for at least one day ahead of the meeting.

Scheduling recurring meetings can help maximize attendance. If this is not possible, give team members as much notice as possible before a meeting. If the time, date, and/or method of the meeting changes at the last minute, contact team members by phone or instant message to inform them. Scheduling meetings using information management software (like Novell GroupWise or Microsoft Outlook) can help automate updates and keep everyone informed.

Choosing the Time and Place

Meetings should always be scheduled at the most convenient time for participants and in a fair way. For example, if you have one person who is four hours ahead of everyone else, they should not always be the one at their desk at 8 p.m. If necessary, rotate meeting times.

Conducting the Meeting

Once everyone is online, have each team member introduce themselves. Then, start the meeting with some small talk to break the ice. You may even want to conduct a short icebreaker, like asking each person to share something funny that happened to them during the past week.

Make sure that everyone has a copy of the agenda and that you stick to it. Frequently stop to check in with group members to see if there are additional points or questions. Some teleconferencing software offers a “Raise your hand” or “Ask a question” feature, which can alert the facilitator when their attention is needed. This is especially useful when teleconferencing or when having a video conference with a large number of people.

Following Up

Wrap up with a summary of what was discussed. You should also review action items and remind everyone of the next meeting date (if it has been set). If appropriate, you may want to e-mail everyone a summary of the meeting with any documents that were provided or discussed.

Some teleconferencing software allows you to record meetings. If so, you may want to post these recordings on the team site for easy reference later on.

Test Driving

You manage a virtual team of four people who are responsible for the design, development, and testing of an accounting software package. (There are two developers, one tester, and one designer.) This week’s goals were to complete development of version four and assign the package to the tester. The team was also supposed to start brainstorming ideas for version five. In addition, you have an important human resources update to share.

person. Likewise, if the CEO sends you a compliment about the new website design, pass that along to the person who designed it.

Be Results-Focused

Successful virtual managers focus on results rather than hours and minutes. Of course, this depends on the organization, but many mobile workers put in fewer hours and get more done. Most employees feel grateful for this flexibility and more loyal to their employer.

Show People That You Care

Mobile workers often need more personal support in order to prevent isolation and disengagement. Check in with them frequently and ask how they are doing to build a personal connection.

Build Trust and Credibility

In the virtual world, it's all about your actions. Do what you say you're going to do and go to bat for your team when necessary. Otherwise, your team members won't trust you, and you won't get the productivity and results that you're looking for.

Keep Learning

The virtual workplace is constantly changing. Keep learning about technology and stay in tune with what your competitors are doing. It's also wise to periodically check in with your team to see if their tools are still meeting their needs.

As well, don't forget that your primary role is a leader. Continue taking leadership courses and building related skills (such as communication, conflict resolution, and personal productivity).

Help People Do What They Love

If you can give team members some control over the type of work that they do, they'll be even more motivated and results-oriented. Remember what Marc Anthony said: "If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life."

Build People Up

This is one of the most basic principles of leadership and relationships: build people up rather than tear them down. Offer constructive criticism and development opportunities to help people grow.

Be Consistent

When working with people in a virtual environment, they have to fill in a lot of gaps. Be consistent to minimize those gaps and to ensure that they're getting the right message: you're there to support the team and help them achieve their goals.