INSPIRE

THE NEW LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT

WHY REMOTE INNOVATION IS KEY
REMOTE WORKING IS HERE TO STAY

——

6 STEPS TO REMOVE COGNITIVE BIAS
BE AWARE OF YOUR OWN BIASES

——

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A STORY-TELLER TO TELL STORIES
BRINGING STORYTELLING INTO YOUR LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

LEADERS WITH
IMPACT

Leadership is the task of making things different.
Because of this every leader can be described as making an impact,
but not every leader can be described as an Impact Leader.

How to Ensure the **success** of Virtual Global Teams

Allyson Stewart-Allen, Associate, Møller Institute

Allyson is an award-winning educator, advisor, author, speaker and non-executive director whose expertise in brand internationalisation is sought by leading businesses globally.

The leader of the future needs to be comfortable with shaping and enabling virtual teams to function. Allyson Stewart-Allen shares some fundamental tips on how to get the foundations right.

How much has your world has changed since March? Even before Covid-19, you were probably working virtually with colleagues, bosses or business partners in various parts of the world.

What has changed is the frequency that you – and all of us – are now doing so, while overwhelmed by the options. Zoom? Skype? Google Meet? BlueJeans? HopIn? WebEx?

Compounding the challenge is the virtual nature of the work, making an aligned, happy and high-performing team that much more difficult without being able to see the body language in 3D, or share the informal office gossip in person.

So what are some of the top tips for ensuring your virtual and global team doesn't derail? Here are a few – in no particular order – based on my over 3 decades working with a range of leaders and companies around the world:

Know the predictors of success, and test the team's views on each. Research shows high-performing teams that are physically distributed perform best when there is:

◆ A clear team purpose

◆ A culture by design

◆ Strong relationships/trust

◆ Balanced control and autonomy

◆ Use of varied media

◆ Shared accountability and responsibility

◆ Agreed team mandate, roles and rules

◆ Regular tracking and celebration of success

◆ Flexible structures/design

◆ The right skills mix

> *My advice is to ask each member to score the team on each of these 10 predictors on a scale of 1-10 (10 being best) so a rich discussion can follow about how the team operates and what it can do better/differently in the future. Where the scores are between 1-6, see if you can agree how it can get closer to 8, 9 or 10*

Invest the time to help team members build trust within the team. According to author Patrick Lencioni, this fundamental is crucial if the team mandate is to be achieved. With the dimension of trust in place, the team can move on to higher-order functions such as mastering constructive debate, achieving commitment, embracing accountability with the full attainment of commitments and focusing on collective outcomes.

One helpful exercise you can do with the team is the Accelerators/Decelerators activity. Each person on the team writes 2 PostIt notes for each other team member. On one they record "what you do now that moves our team forward" and on the other, "what you can do that would help us go faster." In this way, each member gets helpful feedback in a climate of trust with a focus on collective effort..

Finally, appreciate the range of business cultures in your team and use them as a lever for better decision-making. We know diverse points of view yield more innovative and resilient outcomes, so making the most of these different vantage points will help your team look at a broader range of options, outcomes and strategies than if it was more homogeneous. Examining each person's preference for how they like to relate to others, how they see the use of rules and how they use reason will uncover more about each member. And with these revelations comes more knowledge of each person and therefore more trust and positive feelings.

So next time you have a virtual global team meeting, why not try out one of these activities to help the team reset, relate and recognise that there is strength in its diversity and ways it can be even more high-performing. It's never too late…