

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Virtual Team Effectiveness Survey

The Issue

According to the World Economic Forum, telecommuting is “one of the biggest drivers of transformation” in the workplace. New technologies are released every day to help teams of employees in remote locations work effectively together.

It’s not just technology fueling this trend – rising costs, increasing globalization and higher productivity have all contributed to an 800% increase in virtual teams in the last five years alone.

In summary, businesses are launching head first into establishing virtual teams, with barely a backwards glance at the unique challenges for leaders and team members. Powers Resource Center set out to understand best practices, key challenges and the impact of virtual teams.



But virtual teams pose their own unique questions.

How do you instill a sense of 'team'?



How do you ensure team members feel like part of the company and fit into corporate culture?



How do you implement training across oceans, cultures and languages?



How do you prepare managers to supervise and lead a team that they've never met face-to-face?



What We Learned

1

MIND THE GAP

Is a virtual worker like the proverbial tree falling in a forest? If you can't see the worker, is work happening? Our research confirms that there IS a productivity perception gap. Team members report that virtual team productivity is strong. That opinion is not shared by executives.

When asked if increased productivity is a key benefit of virtual teams....



50%
Team Members
agree

13%
Executives
agree

2

CHA-CHING!

The cost savings of virtual teams is often cited as one of its key benefits. When asked, 67% of Team Leaders and 53% of Execs reported that virtual teams provided savings equivalent to 16 – 25% of revenue.

Estimate of Cost Savings



3

FINDING THE BALANCE

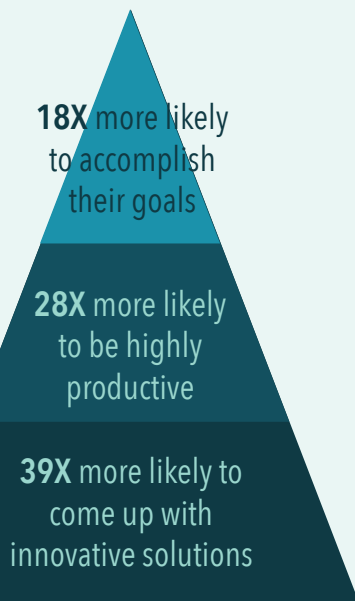
Virtual team members, leaders and executives all agree that promoting work-life balance is a key benefit of virtual teams. Team members and leaders also see virtual teams as a way to increase productivity while Executives view virtual teams as a means of cost savings and a means to get the right people to work together regardless of location.



4

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Create the rules at the beginning and stick to them. Teams that set and adhere to standards regarding how the team works together are:



5

FACE TIME MATTERS

41% of virtual teams meet in-person monthly. Teams that meet in person very frequently (weekly or monthly) had higher effectiveness ratings (defined as meeting goals, team productivity and engagement) than those that meet 2-3 times a year.

“There needs to be more opportunities for the team to meet physically to build stronger relationships and better create an environment for collaboration.”

6

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

Virtual teams have different challenges as they evolve.

New teams struggle with communication and leveraging new technology



Experienced teams struggle with conflict resolution and building stronger relationships.



7**COMMUNICATION IS KING**

Good communication leads to good outcomes in new and old virtual teams.

Experienced teams that communicate effectively were **19 times** more likely to report that their members were highly engaged.

Likewise, newly formed teams that communicate effectively are **12 times** more likely to accomplish their goals and **55 times** more likely to be responsive to customers.

When virtual team leaders and executives viewed communication within the team as strong, they were **31 times** more likely to indicate the team accomplishes its goals and **21 times** to view the team as effective in responding to customers.

8**KEEP TECH SUPPORT ON SPEED DIAL**

Teams that rate themselves as effective at using collaborative technology are:

98 times more likely to come up with innovative solutions

74 times more likely to deliver on time and within budget

37 times more likely to accomplish their goals

9**HOW TO WIN**

Looking at all the data collected across all topics and by all survey participants, the top 3 predictors of overall virtual team effectiveness (defined as meeting goals, productivity and team engagement) are:

#1

Understanding cultural differences

#2

Leveraging technology

#3

Accountability

10**FEET TO THE FIRE**

Team members must do what they say they're going to do. When virtual team leaders and executives indicated the team had high levels of accountability, they were:



32 times more likely to indicate the team **accomplishes its goals**



41 times more likely to indicate the team meets **deliverables on time and within budget**



24 times more likely to view the team as **effective in responding to customers**

The Bottom Line for You

The use of virtual teams will continue to grow, despite major barriers to effectiveness revealed in this study. Organizations must recognize the unique challenges of virtual teams and invest in ongoing training and support to realize the benefits of virtual teams.

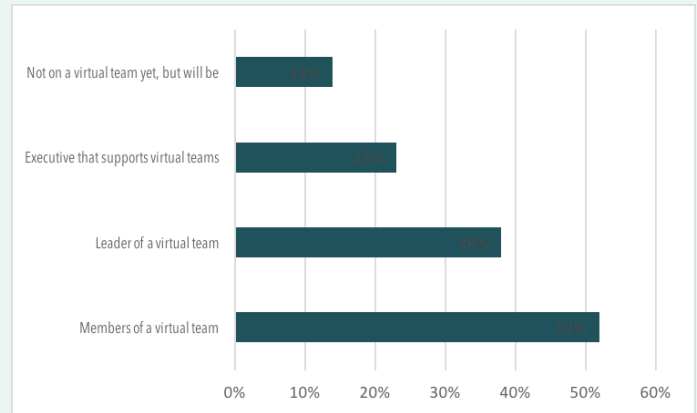
This Executive Summary clearly identifies the challenges for virtual teams. Now you need the tools for how to solve them. The full research report/white paper is available for download here www.VirtualTeamSchool.com and it takes the research a step further into detailed action plans:

- What qualities to look for in a virtual team member
- Qualities of a great team leader
- Communication strategies to keep virtual teams all on the same page
- Continuous feedback tools to ensure all team members are accountable, responsive and actively working to support the team and its goals
- Training plans for every life stage of your virtual team
- Action plans for developing strong rapport and bringing far-flung teams together if you can't meet face-to-face

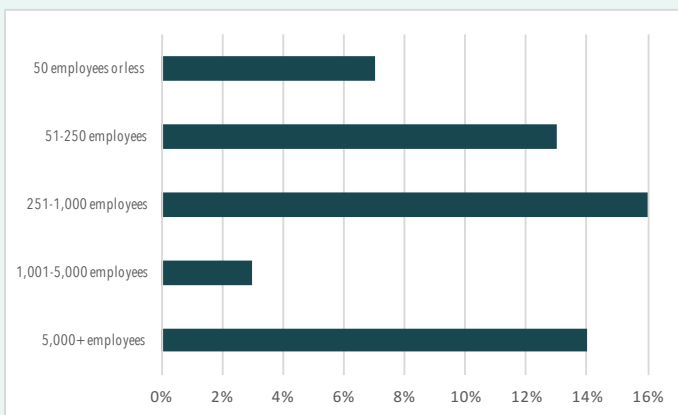
The Study

Over six-months in 2016, hundreds of participants completed an online survey about their experiences leading or participating on a virtual team. Survey participants represented various roles, industries and sizes of organizations.

Survey Participant Role on Virtual Team

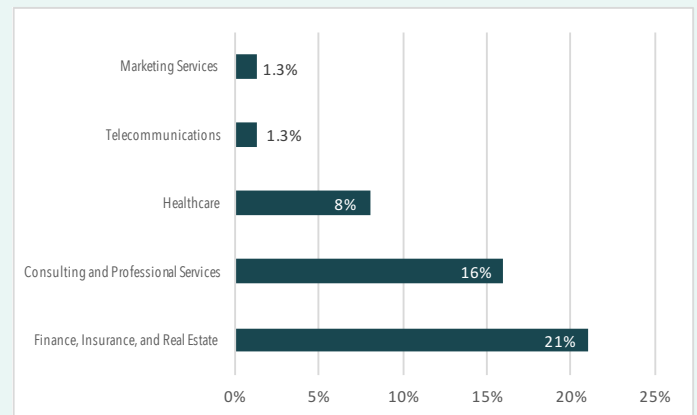


Size of Organizations in Survey



47% of respondents did not indicate the size of their organization.

Industries Represented in Survey



Industries not included in table: Manufacturing; Acquisition, Management and Collections; BPO; Logistics; Senior Living, and "Other" all represented .6% of survey respondents' industries.

Our Team

Powers Resource Center is on a mission to close the talent gap prevalent in most companies today. We deliver innovative, fully customizable solutions that actually work and create real change for you and your teams.

We are led by Tara Powers, MS, an award winning leadership expert, sought after speaker, experienced talent development consultant and crusader against boring, ineffective employee engagement and leadership training. With award-winning programs and workshops,

we help conscious companies build cohesive teams and engaging leaders every day. Find out more at www.powersresourcecenter.com.

Support for the Virtual Team Survey and data analysis was also provided by Kelly Doyle Duncan, of Powers Resource Center, and Newmeasures, LLC., a consulting firm specializing in survey design, employee engagement and business analytics.