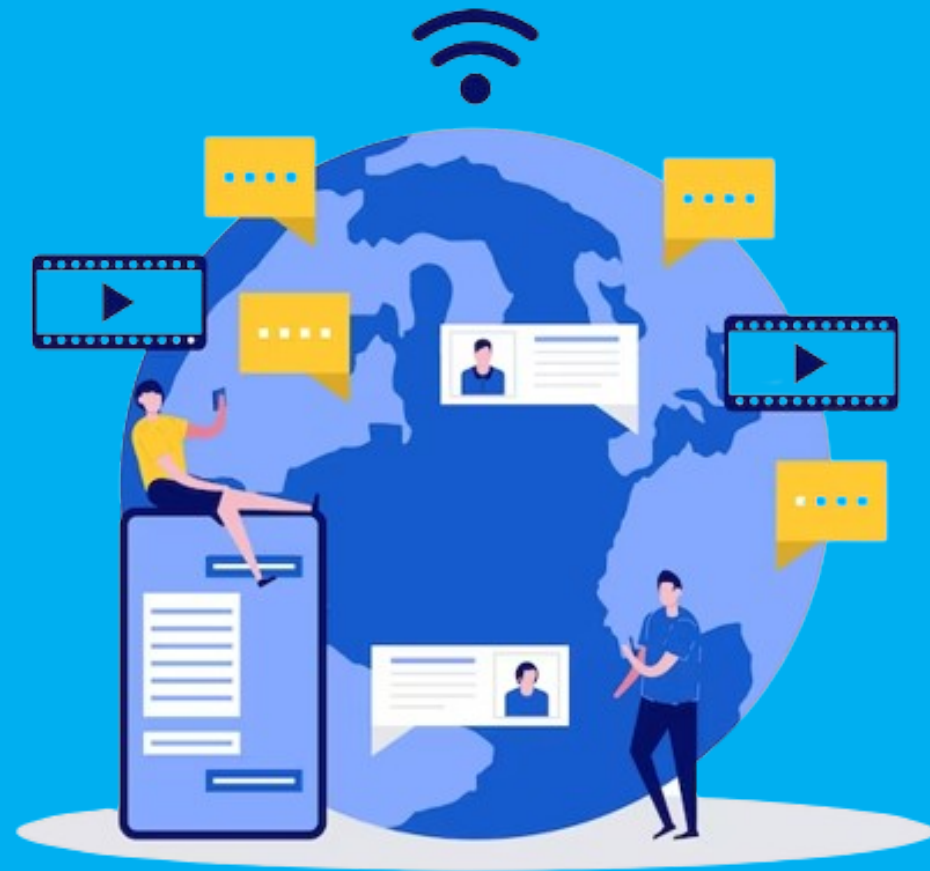


Wired for Success: Directing Communication Technology in Virtual Teams

Woody Silverstein,
Bernadette Matutino,
Shiv Patel, Gabby
Meyer



CONTENTS

What are ICTs?	03	Effective Strategies	08
Pros of ICTs	04	Being Proactive	09
Cons of ICTs	05	In-Person vs Remote	10
How Virtual Teams Work	06	Future of Virtual Communication	11
Communication in Virtual Teams	07		

What are ICTs?

ICTs, or Information and Communication Technologies, refer to various technologies used for communication and getting information across from within organizations or beyond. This broad category encompasses a wide range of devices, applications, and systems that facilitate the creation, storage, retrieval, and exchange of data and information.

ICTs include not only software but the hardware that the applications run on. Examples of commonly used ICTs in the workplace are the apps Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack. ICTs are used to make workflows more efficient, whether the team is remote or in the office. For the most part, they provide instant communication among employees, teams, and departments regardless of their physical location. Email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and collaboration platforms allow for seamless communication and collaboration. ICTs also help documents get made, with ones like Google Docs enabling collaboration to let everyone on the team get their work done.



Woody Silverstein

Pros of ICTs

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual work has been on the rise, facilitated by the use of ICTs. There is a reason why many companies are staying put with either a hybrid or completely online workflow, as ICTs provide a lot of benefits. ICTs provide better communication for virtual teams, as when the team is spread across the country, good communication tools are necessary. They enable instant communication through email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and social media platforms. Zoom is one of the most popular video conferencing tools, and it powers a lot of meetings for virtual teams. Using this rich tool is like having a meeting in a conference room from anywhere, allowing workers to get work done from anywhere that would be the same as in-person work.

Workers can participate in their work from anywhere, which can make the workplace more efficient. They can focus on the task at hand for longer without distractions. Workers can also implement tools to speed up their work. ICTs can automate repetitive tasks, streamline business processes, and facilitate workflow management, leading to improved efficiency and productivity. This automation reduces manual errors and frees up employees' time to focus on more strategic tasks.



Woody Silverstein

Cons of ICTs

While ICTs can provide a lot of benefits for companies and the teams that use them, they also have their downsides. ICTs are extremely helpful in workflows but people need to be careful to not rely too heavily on them. Over-reliance on ICTs can pose risks in case of system failures, technical glitches, or cyber-attacks. Downtime or disruptions in ICT services can disrupt business operations, communication, and access to critical services, leading to financial losses and productivity issues.

Also, ICTs allow for work to be done when not in the office. There is a lack of in-person interaction from this, leading to isolation and loneliness. This can impact a worker's well-being and, in turn, impact everyone's productivity. While virtual work can improve work-life balance, there can be challenges for some. Blurry lines between work and personal life can make it difficult to "switch off" and maintain a healthy balance. And also for others, being at home can distract others. Working from home or in a non-traditional office environment can be more susceptible to distractions, impacting productivity.

Woody Silverstein



Shannon Silverstein on the cons of ICTs: "I don't know how many. Sometimes like it, it is hard to pay attention, like if you're in a conference for a long amount of time, like we'll have, like, I don't know, a couple, like training sessions and stuff like that. I feel like it's a little bit harder to concentrate and stay focused without multitasking and doing emails and getting caught up."

How Virtual Teams Work



Virtual teams have become popular due to advancements in technology. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more companies have moved to virtual work.

Virtual teams work by utilizing digital communication tools and platforms, allowing team members to collaborate and achieve goals regardless of their locations. Virtual teams rely on communication tools such as email, instant messaging apps, and video conferencing software. These tools allow team members to communicate in real time, share files, and keep track of the progress of tasks.

Virtual teams need to have clear goals, objectives, and expectations. Each team member should understand their roles and responsibilities. Building trust among team members is important for the success of virtual teams. Trust enables effective collaboration, encourages open communication, and encourages team members to take accountability. Trust allows team members to remain focused and committed to achieving their goals. Team members also have to be flexible to accommodate other team members' work hours and preferences while staying productive.

By utilizing these strategies and tools, virtual teams can surmount geographical limitations and work together to accomplish their goals.

Gabby Meyer

Communication in Virtual Teams

The Importance of Communication in Virtual Teams

Communication in virtual teams is key to their success. Since team members are not physically present in the same location, effective communication becomes even more important to ensure everyone is on the right track and working towards the organization's goals.

One of the challenges in virtual teams is the lack of face-to-face interaction, which can lead to misinterpretation of messages or misunderstanding of tasks. To overcome this challenge, virtual teams should utilize various communication tools like email, video calls, and instant messaging, to stay connected and share key information.

Organizations can utilize the seven levels of virtual communication: text, slack, email, audio messages, phone calls, video calls, and in some cases, in-person interactions. Teams can create a T chart outlining the purpose and agreements for each level of communication. For example, if texting about a task on the weekend was not agreed upon in the T chart, members can establish clear guidelines and return to the chart as a source to avoid any communication conflict. This chart helps define



roles and responsibilities, sets expectations for response times, and provides feedback on communication styles. By having synchronous conversations about what is expected, teams can establish a culture of efficient and effective communication.

Real World Application

Igor Krutyanskiy, an Inside Sales Executive at RHO Inc., moved to another state and thought he had to leave RHO Inc. However, he was able to keep his job despite living hours away from the office since many of today's jobs use technology. In an interview with Krutyanskiy, he mentions how important communication is for him and his team members. Since he is in sales, he has a lot of customer meetings and internal meetings with the sales team. He uses software programs like Microsoft Teams Video or Zoom to meet with people. He uses email and Microsoft Teams Instant Message to communicate with his team members for a quick response. If a conflict arises, Krutyanskiy and his team members go on a video call to ensure any misunderstandings are cleared up so it doesn't snowball into a bigger conflict that affects the company. Virtual working has raised the importance of communicating with team members to effectively collaborate and achieve the organization's goals.

Gabby Meyer

Effective Strategies with ICT's

There are many uses for ICT's, however it is important to know how to use them efficiently in order for your team to work to its full potential.

This video talks about a real life experience on how an individual's business was saved by utilizing virtual teams. He shares his story on how he was able to grow his business faster in 6 months compared to the 7 years he had prior before discovering virtual work. He continues to explain that he rebuilt his business in order to give him comfortability and freedom. He was able to hire people that were motivated, educated, and committed regardless of where in the world they were in.



Manuel Pinster utilized strategies in order for his company to overcome bankruptcy such as:

Getting the Right Team:

Team composition and distributing tasks to the right people will make working smoother and easier. Working with people who understand their strengths and their suitability in working collaborative virtual setting will avoid unwillingness to work and improve for the group.

The Right Leadership:

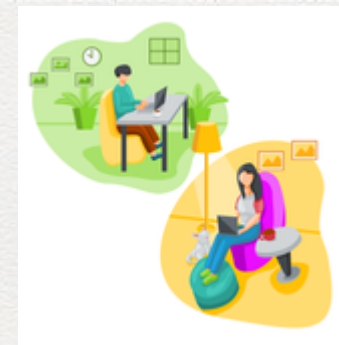
Catering and fostering trust within the group leads to good leadership and effectiveness managers have on their team. A good leader encourages communication and feedback. They establish clear expectations and goals for the group to accomplish together and individually.

The Right Touch Points:

It is important to meet with groups when important events happen such as adding a new member to the group, when a problem arises or an important accomplishment occurs so that the group is regularly updated and it ensures that all group members are on the same page and working together.

BEING PROACTIVE

What makes a good team member?



To avoid potential complications working in virtual teams it is important to know how an individual can work and improve themselves as a team member. Here are a few tips to help.

Qualities

- **Accountable**

Being accountable means taking responsibility for your decisions, actions and outcomes. Do not blame or make excuses others when things go wrong. It is your responsibility own up to mistakes and actively work towards finding solutions or making amends.

- **Goal-oriented**

Goal-oriented members driven by clear objectives and aim to complete specific goals. They know how to set ambitious yet realistic goals for themselves and the team. They are continuously work towards attaining them and improving the team.

- **Strong communication skills**

Whether it be through virtual calls, emails, text messaging, or other digital communication channels, members should be able to express themselves clearly and articulately. Individuals will face conflict if there are not able to communicate their ideas, opinions, or concern with one another.

- **Adaptable**

Working on a multimedia / digital platform is very different from the traditional face-to-face. Members must be open to learning and have a growth mindset. Virtual work spaces are constantly evolving and it is your job to keep improving your skills as time goes on

Bernadette Matutino

In-Person vs Remote

In-person and remote communication have distinct advantages and disadvantages, but technological advancements have made distant communication more equivalent to in-person interactions, particularly in online environments.

In-person communication excels at providing quick, detailed interactions via body language and vocal tone, fostering deep personal bonds. However, methods such as high-quality video conferencing and virtual reality may now create immersive situations that are nearly identical to being physically there.

These virtual platforms enable organized, worldwide interactions that are both affordable and inclusive. As technology advances, remote communication is proving to be a viable option to in-person meetings, balancing efficiency with the depth of contact.



In the video, the speaker uses an intriguing metaphor, comparing in-person communication to organic bananas and virtual communication to non-organic ones. They suggest that while in-person interactions may seem more natural, they often lack focus, which can lead to inefficiency. Conversely, virtual communication, with its intentional structure, can foster more effective and enduring connections. The speaker outlines seven levels of virtual communication—text, Slack, email, audio messages, phone calls, video calls, and in-person meetings.

Shiv Patel

Future of Virtual Communication Tools

As we gaze into the future of virtual work, communication technologies stand at the forefront of this evolution, promising to transform how global teams collaborate and connect. The rapid advancements in this field have not only made remote work viable but increasingly preferred, catalyzing a shift in organizational structures and worker expectations.

Virtual work requires technological breakthroughs in telecommunications. Business Strategy Insider Natalie Hamingson emphasizes the importance of video chat, stating, "Live video feeds enable out-of-office workers to communicate in real time, anywhere with a web browser, closely replicating a face-to-face meeting." This demonstrates how important these tools are for sustaining successful communication and collaboration from different places.

In the future years, we could anticipate a dramatic shift from standard video conferencing to more engaging and interactive modes. Technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) have the potential to build settings that resemble actual workplaces, giving remote workers the impression that they are sitting next to their colleagues.



Natalie Hamingson

Natalie Hamingson has over 15 years of experience in print and digital communications, focusing recently on business operations. Skilled in using software tools like Salesforce and Buffer. Hamingson, excels in conveying complex concepts across various formats, including email campaigns and longform writing. She advises small business owners on marketing, website content, and tools for accounting, payroll, and sales.

Shiv Patel



- AJ, Investment Banker at Fidelity: Exploring the Future of Finance through Virtual Communication Technologies

Future of Virtual Communication Tools

In this next section, we turn to a professional who is at the crossroads of finance and cutting-edge technology. Meet AJ, an investment banker at Fidelity, whose daily work is steeped in the use of advanced virtual communication technologies. AJ brings a unique perspective on how these tools are not just facilitating but actively enhancing the financial sector.

Through his insights provided through the interview, we explore the tangible impacts and future possibilities of virtual work within one of the most dynamic and high-stakes industries in the world. Listen as AJ shares his experiences and predictions, illuminating the path forward for virtual work in the financial realm.

Shiv Patel

Bibliography

Barboglio, P. (2023, July 11). Leveraging productivity and tech tools to empower efficiency and growth in remote teams. *Forbes*.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/07/11/leveraging-productivity-and-tech-tools-to-empower-efficiency-and-growth-in-remote-teams/?sh=673d06343748>.

Ferrazzi, K. (2021, September 2021). Getting virtual teams right. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2014/12/getting-virtual-teams-right>.

Hamingson, N. (2023, April 12). Communication Technology and Inclusion Will Shape the Future of Remote Work. *Business News Daily*.

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/8156-future-of-remote-work.html>

Shachaf, P. (2008). Cultural diversity and information and communication technology impacts on global virtual teams: An exploratory study. *Information & Management*, 45(2), 131–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2007.12.003>

Laitinen, K., & Valo, M. (2018). Meanings of communication technology in virtual team meetings: Framing technology-related interaction. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 111, 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2017.10.012>.

Leikvoll, V. (2022, June 8). How to build an impactful virtual team. *Leaders*.

<https://leaders.com/articles/leadership/virtual-team/>.

Littlefield, C. (2021, March 8). How do virtual teams best communicate. *Youtube*.

<https://youtu.be/0THPxOVKwSQ?si=rkTSveYvRpQ7X4YN>.

Skillsoft YouTube. (2020). Dealing with Communication Challenges for Virtual Teams. *YouTube*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjMCBK0wL-Q>.

Workman, V. (2023, September 13). How Does Technology Affect Communication In

Virtual Teams. *Youtube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRW1n3yPsc0>

YouTube. (2019, August 28). How new work and virtual teams saved my company Manuel Pistner | tedxruhruniversitybochum. *YouTube*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAgyzl-z4bc>.

Levi, D. & Askay, D.A. (2021). *Group Dynamics for Teams*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.