

Virtual Teams - Performance Management and Motivation

Managing performance in a virtual team can be challenging due to limited opportunities for informal recognition and the need for scheduled meetings or written communication. However, the importance of performance management remains unchanged.

Implementing a performance management process that is embedded in team routines is beneficial. Monitoring each team member's work closely is not feasible or desirable, especially given the team's overall experience level. Instead, structures and routines can be created to replace traditional performance management and team development functions. Regular team conference calls, one-on-one phone meetings, and regular reports can help maintain the necessary level of contact with virtual teammates.

There are three important reasons to maintain regular contact:

- To promote a collaborative environment.
- To request constructive criticism.
- To provide team members more decision-making ability.

Consider the significance of these three objectives for enhancing virtual team performance and motivation. Reflect on the manifestation of this behavior in past experiences working with virtual teams and suggest ways to promote it further.

1. What are the benefits of **fostering collaboration**?

2. How did the teams you've worked on establish this behavior?

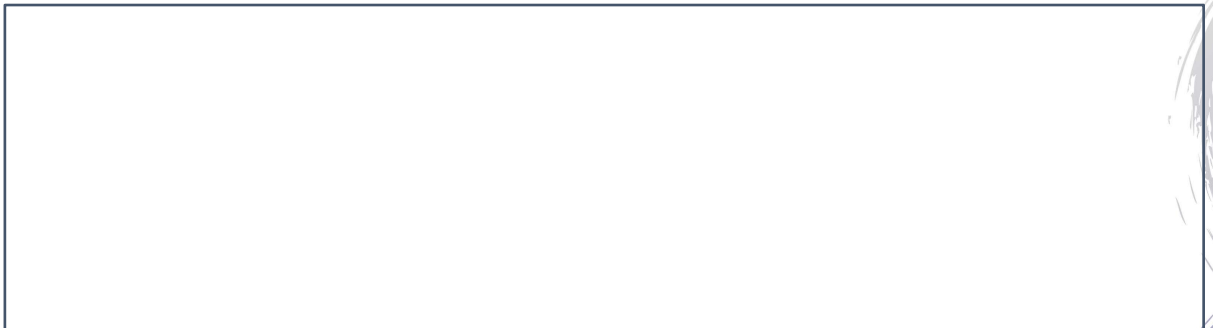
3. What steps can be taken to develop this behavior?



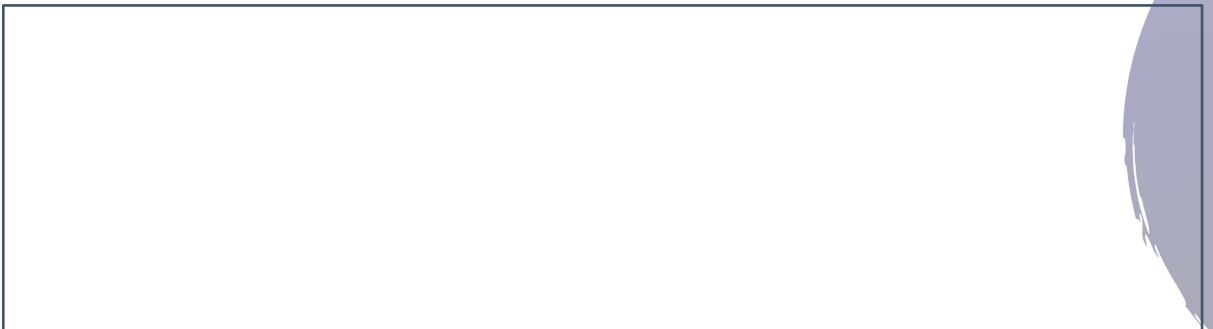
4. What are the benefits of inviting **constructive feedback**?



5. How did the teams you've worked on establish this behavior?



6. What steps can be taken to develop this behavior?



7. Why should you **empower team members**?

8. How has this behavior been developed in teams you've worked in?

9. What steps can be taken to develop this behavior?

Creating an environment of collaboration among virtual team members allows the team to form connections and establish collaborative processes that will improve performance. Increasing communication and discussions about work will generate synergy within the team, even with minimal face-to-face interaction.

It is important to let people know you are open to constructive feedback. This creates a comfortable environment for team members to voice their concerns and issues. These conversations can lead to improvements in performance and efficiency. Empowering the team to make decisions and delegating work allows you to monitor progress without micromanaging or getting overwhelmed with details.

Development and Motivation

Virtual teamwork has unique aspects that work in its favor for development and motivation. Virtual team members need to be self-motivated and comfortable working without much supervision. Providing day-to-day support and encouragement from a distance can be challenging. That's why generating intrinsic motivation through a compelling business challenge is imperative.

Reward and recognition are important in maximizing team performance. By acknowledging positive team behavior and individual accomplishments, virtual team members can be motivated and praised. Acknowledge and commend virtual team members for accomplishments and contributions:

- Encouraging cooperation.
- Staying positive and optimistic.
- Showing proactive problem-solving skills.

- Keeping promises made.
- Meeting deadlines for tasks.
- Asking inquisitive and analytical questions.
- Displaying positive virtual team behavior in general.

Consider the importance of reward and recognition in your virtual team and respond to the following questions.

1. Which team behaviors are currently being rewarded in your virtual team?

2. What are the recommended behaviors to reward in a virtual team?

3. How are these behaviors rewarded in order to support exemplary virtual teamwork?

4. What methods or protocols will be implemented to ensure the delivery of these rewards?

One of the responsibilities of a team leader is to identify opportunities to reward and acknowledge positive behavior, as well as organize formal recognitions for the entire team. These formal recognitions may include celebrating the completion of major milestones, projects, and honoring team achievements with awards.

The leadership style used in virtual teams can be highly rewarding. Managing a virtual team differs from managing a regular team, as virtual team members are self-reliant and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Excessive control over their work may have negative consequences.

A common arrangement is for leadership to emerge as needed in different situations. For example, when there is a technology issue, the IT expert will lead the discussion, and when there is a finance problem, the financial expert will take on the leadership role. This allows all team members to contribute their expertise and develop their leadership skills as they address specific challenges.

- What leadership experiences have you had in online collaboration?
- How have they encouraged you to carry out outstanding work?
- What chances for leadership could you offer?