

Distributed Team Collaboration in Organizations: Emerging Tools and Practices

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<i>Jim Waddell, Program Management Academy, USA</i>	

In this first chapter, Russ Martinelli, Tim Rahschulte, and Jim Waddell recount the history of globalization and outline the forces and drivers that have influenced global expansion and contraction over the past several centuries. They then focus on recent events and trends that have accelerated global expansion and describe how some organizations have become globalization leaders by developing and effectively executing global strategy. Three globalization strategies are suggested, and leaders cautioned to match strategy with redesigned structures, processes, tools, practices, and skills to ensure that their organizations are well prepared to compete in the globally distributed environment.

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<i>Tim Rahschulte, George Fox University, USA</i>	

This chapter operationalizes the term “collaboration” by distinguishing it from cooperation and coordination. Tim Rahschulte details the genesis of collaborative work in human history, detailing how the notion of work has evolved as man has grown in his understanding of the value of working with others to satisfy mutual needs. Starting with a biblical reference, then reviewing pack mentality, and thoroughly detailing the innovativeness of human interaction, this chapter explores the evolution of collaborative work in an effort to set the stage for later chapters that rely on an understanding of this history.

Chapter 3

Culture: Leadership Principles for Building Healthy and Productive Distributed Teams 32

Mark A. Rennaker, Indiana Wesleyan University, USA & South University, USA

Dan Novak, South University, USA

The word “culture” is used in many contexts and is interpreted in a variety of ways. In this chapter, Mark Rennaker and Don Novak provide a synopsis of the research supporting our understanding of culture and then focus on culture as an organizational foundation that represents a pattern of beliefs, values, assumptions, and behaviors that both develops and persists over time within a social unit. The authors then focus on the multiple locations and individual cultures represented by distributed team members and suggest that creation and enhancement of culture by distributed team leaders is more complex than in face-to-face teams. The chapter offers guidance to leaders who strive to develop and sustain a culture that will support distributed team collaboration.

Section 2

Theory and Research

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Sustaining Organizational Culture in the Globally Distributed Environment 51

Kathy L. Milhauser, Concordia University Portland, USA

One of the challenges that faces organizations as they distribute globally is that of maintaining a core mission, vision, and set of values to provide unity of purpose for employees in increasingly dispersed teams. In this chapter, Kathy L. Milhauser details the issues involved in sustaining an underlying culture in a way that project teams can connect the work they are doing with the core purpose and heritage of their organization. A case study of a global product development team is used to illustrate how one company has faced these challenges and is growing their organization while remaining focused on its core values and heritage.

Chapter 5

The Effect of Cultural Dimensions on the Development of Intra-Team Trust in Global Virtual Teams 64

Kurt D. Kirstein, City University of Seattle, USA

Kurt D. Kirstein draws from Hall and Hofstede’s research into cultural dimensions and outlines the effect of four specific cultural dimensions on the development of intra-team trust. Recommendations based on research as well as Kirstein’s global virtual team experience are provided to leaders who are charged with leading distributed multi-cultural teams.

Chapter 6

Re-Examining Trust Development and Knowledge Sharing in Virtual Teams 82

Su Jin Son, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

Eun Jee Kim, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

Trust is consistently noted as a fundamental necessity in effective teamwork. Trust is even more critical to develop and sustain when teams are distributed. This can become complicated when dealing with individuals who interact primarily via phone and electronic means, with minimal face-to-face contact. As distributed teams are becoming increasingly common in global companies, the challenge of how to ensure knowledge is being shared is gaining more attention among practitioners and scholars. However, there have been few attempts to integrate trust and knowledge sharing behaviors in distributed teams. In this chapter, Su Jin Son and Eun Jee Kim thoroughly explore the existing literature on different approaches to trust and the knowledge sharing process, and then introduce an integrative three-stage process model of trust and knowledge sharing for distributed / virtual teams.

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Stephen Rylander, OnTheHeap, Inc., USA

Continuing on the theme of team trust, Stephen Rylander blends theory with his experience as a software engineer and consultant to introduce a new perspective on the development of trust in teams. Rylander suggests that trust is developed differently in a professional context than interpersonal trust, and then goes on to suggest some of the obstacles to trust development in the distributed environment. Rylander suggests a system dynamics view of trust development based on Brooks Law and includes recommendations for building and sustaining trust for leaders of distributed teams.

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Laurie Yates, Eastern Oregon University, USA

Another critical component to the success of distributed teams is effective leadership. This chapter introduces research on leadership, with an emphasis on ethical leadership and its relevance to cross-cultural distributed teams. Laurie Yates reviews literature and prior research relevant to the topics of a variety of leadership approaches and includes a brief accounting of a qualitative research study that examined whether ethical leadership attributes are viable across cultures.

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Peter L. Bond, Learning Futures Consulting, UK

Peter L. Bond tackles a variety of organizational and social development theories in this chapter, and suggests how they apply to distributed team collaboration. Bond introduces the reader to theories such as Dunbar’s Social Brain Hypothesis, Humberto Maturana & Francisco Varela’s work on spracritical systems, the KALiF system of community practice and team development, and others. He then goes on to illuminate the connections between theories in these domains and the challenges of distributed team collaboration. Bond suggests a proposed model for distributed team development and function based on the foundation of the theories and models outlined in the chapter.

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John David Smith, Learning Alliances & CPsquare, USA

This chapter suggests that distributed project teams can benefit from the practices and technologies that have been leveraged in recent years by communities of practice (COPs). John D. Smith compares and contrasts the COP and the distributed project team, suggesting that the learning that has emerged through COP practice and research might be leveraged to improve distributed team effectiveness. Smith suggests that many of the challenges are the same while COPs and distributed project teams strive to work together effectively in the virtual environment. Building on the notion of a “digital habitat” (Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009) Smith describes the landscape of technologies and practices that, in combination, will enable a project team to accomplish its tasks.

Chapter 11

A Distributed Requirements Collaboration Process 169

Brandon Rydell, Portland State University, USA

Sean D. Eby, Portland State University, USA

Carl Seaton, Portland State University, USA

While models for distributed and virtual teams are still new, one field where relatively more experience exists with these new models is the field of software engineering. Distributed teams are becoming more the norm than the exception in software engineering and development teams. In this chapter, Brandon Rydell, Sean D. Eby, and Carl Seaton introduce a new process and tool that they developed to manage one of the most complex and problematic processes that software engineers face—collaboration on the definition and prioritization of software requirements. The authors briefly outline relevant literature in the field and then proceed to describe the process and tool that they developed, including reflections on their learning and validation process

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Dimensions of Team Distribution within a Software Team..... 182

Eric M. Wilson, FEI Company, USA

In this chapter, Eric M. Wilson expands the definition of distributed team to encompass a broad range of dimensions that can result in what he refers to as team distributedness. Wilson challenges the reader to think past the typical dimensions such as geography, timezone, and cultural differences, and to consider other dimensions which significantly impact the normal functioning of a team. The chapter focuses on the dimension of network connectedness, referring to a team in which the major difference between members is the degree to which they are connected or disconnected from each other and centralized resources. A case study approach illustrates how one software development team evolved their use of version control software to support the challenges of distributed software development. Wilson encour-

ages leaders to identify dimensions of distributedness and look for ways to leverage those dimensions in the pursuit of distributed team performance.

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Inter-Organization Partnership and Collaborative Work Tools..... 212
Deanne Larson, Larson & Associates, LLC, USA

In this chapter, Deanne Larson recounts a case study of a U.S. and an Indian organization engaged in an interorganizational partnership in the technology sector. Larson describes the technology infrastructure that was put into place to support the partnership and outlines how telecommunications, networks, wikis, and Web-based training were used to bridge differences and allow these organizations to function as one. The chapter includes a summary of the lessons learned by the organizations in the partnership through Larson's reflections on the integrated teamwork model and enabling technologies deployment.

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Kathy L. Milhauser, Concordia University Portland, USA

In this chapter, a leading technology and learning futurist, Elliott Masie, is interviewed by Kathy L. Milhauser regarding his views on the emerging role of the virtual leader. Elliott shares insights from his collaboration with global leaders in over 240 companies regarding what is needed for success in the distributed team environment, what challenges are being faced, what technologies are being deployed, and what lies ahead for organizations who hope to leverage distributed models of teamwork. Elliott shares his surprise; as he began to research this topic and found that what constitutes effective leadership in the virtual environment is not so different than in traditional environments, he asserts that success in this venue is more about adapting to a new delivery model than developing a new set of skills.

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Teaching Globally Distributed Software Development (DSD): A Distributed Team Model..... 234
Stuart Faulk, University of Oregon, USA
Michal Young, University of Oregon, USA

In this chapter, Stuart Faulk and Michal Young share work that is being done between the University of Oregon and Peking University to jointly prepare students to create software in highly distributed software development teams. The challenge of preparing students for real distributed teamwork is addressed in this chapter through a collaborative effort between the two universities to develop and deliver a distributed software development course that places students in situations that simulate the teamwork environment they will experience in industry. Faulk and Young describe the current state of this project and invite further research and participation from colleagues in education and industry.

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New Approaches Needed to Support the Distributed Environment 251

William H. Young, University of South Florida, USA

Brenda G. Young, Marbay Group, USA

Examining the trends in disruptive and innovative technologies that are emerging to support distributed work, this chapter deals with the developmental needs of people and organizations for the future. William and Brenda Young draw from research and consulting experience to suggest a new value proposition for distributed teams, encouraging organizations to use these teams as their external eyes and ears in the marketplace. The authors go on to offer suggestions for developing and supporting the distributed workforce, noting the interpersonal challenges of doing so at both the individual and team level.

Chapter 17

Creating the Environment for High Performing Distributed Teams: Human Resource
Strategies and Practices..... 264

Tim Rahschulte, George Fox University, USA

Jim Steele, George Fox University USA

This final chapter turns the focus to the Human Resource profession as a crucial partner in strategically deploying distributed teams to accomplish organizational mission. Tim Rahschulte and Jim Steele share research that was conducted in a variety of global companies, examining questions of how best to accommodate the evolving organizational landscape. Their findings indicate that, while organizations are relying on their Human Resource (HR) division to support business strategy, growth, and development, in most cases, HR divisions are struggling to support business needs in perhaps the greatest time of flux in modern day business. This chapter offers best and next practices from HR leaders accommodating the needs of their businesses, as well as a set of propositions for future research.

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