

Vol. 9 No. 1, January 2006

SPECIAL ISSUE ON VIRTUAL WORK IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Guest Editor: Celia Romm Livermore, Wayne State University

EDITORIAL PREFACE: VIRTUAL WORK IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Celia Romm Livermore, Wayne State University, Detroit.

Virtual teams have been defined as geographically and/or organizationally dispersed co-workers that are assembled using a combination of telecommunications and information technologies to accomplish an organizational task. Virtual teams are also in many cases cross-national and cross-cultural and are associated with innovative and possibly controversial practices, such as outsourcing. The guest editor Dr. Celia Romm Livermore introduces the papers in this special issue. These papers represent an attempt to address and discuss some of the “hottest” questions in the research on global virtual work today.

ARTICLES:

VIRTUALITY AND TEAM PERFORMANCE: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF VARIETY OF PRACTICES

Mei Lu, Intel Corporation, Mary Beth Watson-Manheim, University of Illinois, Chicago, Katherine M. Chudoba, Florida State University, and Eleanor Wynn, Intel Corporation.

In this study conducted at Intel Corporation, the authors examine how different components of virtuality influence specific aspects of performance of virtual teams. Both quantitative and qualitative data are used for analysis. The findings indicate that variety of practice creates significant negative influence on several aspects of performance, including communication and trust in team members, and ability to meet commitments and complete projects on time. Also, members experiencing more variety of practice perceived less risk-taking in their teams and less ability to focus the team on the right questions for the projects being undertaken.

A RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES ON IT OUTSOURCING

Anil Gurung and Edmund Prater, University of Texas at Arlington.

This conceptual paper looks at the effect of cultural differences on IT outsourcing and virtual teams' performance. The applicable literature on outsourcing, virtual teams and culture is analyzed and a framework of offshore outsourcing success is developed. This framework includes the concept of psychic distance to better understand the phenomenon of virtual teams and outsourcing success. Adding this as a key research component provides a more realistic way of researching global virtual teams. By assessing the cultural differences of virtual teams in IT outsourcing, the research framework will help academics pursue this growing business phenomenon.

A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION IN COLLABORATIVE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Reza Barkhi, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, Ali Amiri, Oklahoma State University, and Tabitha L. James, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State

University

Examined are the communication, coordination, and satisfaction of members as they work with both co-located and remote members in virtual software development teams. Results indicate that virtual teams can have communication and coordination problems if not properly managed but successful virtual teams can work effectively despite the lean electronic communication. Members who use a lean communication mode are more likely to break communication with their team members and tend to be more critical of the contributions of their remote members. Our results suggest that successful teams communicate information that is perceived to have value and develop a shared context within the communication and coordination structure.

THE EXPERT OPINION, AN INTERVIEW WITH ALAN HUBERTY, CONSULTANT TO FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Conducted by Alison Link and Peter Filias, Wayne State University

Ford Motor is firmly entrenched in the status quo as one of the world's largest makers of cars and trucks. It makes vehicles with such brands as Aston Martin, Ford, Jaguar <http://www.hoovers.com/jaguar-cars/--ID_56156--/free-co-factsheet.xhtml>, Lincoln <http://www.hoovers.com/lincoln-mercury/--ID_131287--/free-co-factsheet.xhtml>, Mercury <http://www.hoovers.com/lincoln-mercury/--ID_131287--/free-co-factsheet.xhtml>, and Volvo <http://www.hoovers.com/volvo-car-corp./--ID_137886--/free-co-factsheet.xhtml>. The interview discusses the virtual team experience at Ford, and the various technologies and practices associated with virtual work.

BOOK REVIEW: CREATIVITY IN VIRTUAL TEAMS – KEY COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESS,

by Jill E. Nemiro

Reviewed by Celia Romm Livermore

The focus of this book on the creative aspect of virtual work is unique. The author explains this choice by indicating that the emphasis on creativity was motivated by the role that virtual teams play in global competition. The book describes tools that assess and develop creativity in virtual teams, including diagnostic instruments, reflection questions, checklists, and exercises.