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In-Group (Us) / Out-Group (Them) Dynamics and Effectiveness in Partially Distributed Teams: A Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT

As organizations that are dispersed collaborate, they often form partially distributed teams (PDTs). In Partially distributed teams, some members are collocated while others are geographically distant. In-Group / Out-Group Dynamics often occur in such teams, when co-located members treat one another as a preferential ‘Us’ vs. treating distant members as the outsider ‘Them’. This paper presents a pilot study with 30 professionals, of factors contributing to reduction of such ‘Us-vs.-Them’ and to an increase in team effectiveness. The study examines partially distributed team challenges, as reported by participants, and relates them to Us-vs.-Them susceptibility. The pilot study also gives an insight into the negative impact that ‘Us-vs.-Them’ has on effectiveness. Lastly, it investigates policies that exist in partially distributed teams and their impact on both Us-vs.-Them and effectiveness. Findings suggest that the concerns of partially distributed team members can lead to Us-vs.-Them occurrences and that there is a correlation between these occurrences and effectiveness (as Us-vs.-Them increases, effectiveness decreases). There is also evidence in the results that policy establishment is beneficial for partially distributed teams.

Keywords

Partially Distributed Teams, Virtual Teams, In-Group, Out-Group, Effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Partially distributed teams are a hybrid between fully collocated teams and fully virtual teams. They share some characteristics with each configuration, but because of their distinct characteristics, partially distributed teams are more susceptible to Us-vs.-Them occurrences (Huang and Ocker, 2006). At the outset, there exists an imbalance in communication channels. Co-located members can meet face to face; chat in the hallway; have lunch together; and otherwise socialize, while they are restricted to electronic communication with remote colleagues. Research suggests that collocated sub-group members are more likely to seek assistance from local teammates than from remote ones (Bos, Olsen, Nan, Shami, Hoch and Johnston, 2006). In addition, electronic communication is more conflict prone than face to face interaction (Hiltz, Turoff, and Johnson, 1989). It follows that there is more likelihood for conflict between sub-groups than within sub-groups, creating the Us-vs.-Them effect.

Susceptibility can further be heightened by the cultural differences that often accompany geographic distance (Maznevski and Chudoba, 2001); language barriers; and even unique technical jargon between cross-functional sub-groups (Sauder, 1987). Other PDT features that render them especially vulnerable are long term ties within an existing sub-group hindering relationship building with a newly joined sub-group, different norms and practices (Lau and Murnighan, 1998), compensation inequality (Pauleen 2003-4), parent company affiliation of one sub-group (Li and Hambrick, 2005), and headquarters location (or a location closer to the leader / customer) of one of the sub-groups (Huang and Ocker, 2006).

It is also common in organizations for employees to have a variety of responsibilities, and often local responsibilities take precedence over remote responsibilities. Another important susceptibility to mention is lack of context knowledge of the other location. When this occurs, difficulties that occur are often attributed to the distant team members, instead of to the circumstances that surround them (Cramton, 2002). Communication delay can precipitate Us-vs.-Them as well and is often inherent with lack of synchronous availability in teams working across time zones (Piccoli and Ives, 2002).

Susceptibility to Us-vs.-Them certainly exists in partially distributed teams and as Us-vs.-Them progresses, it impedes team cohesion and therefore team effectiveness. To understand how team member attitudes and views may fuel Us-vs.-Them progression, we asked our participants to describe challenges they face and related them to the susceptibilities described above. Based on prior research on global teams, virtual teams, student partially distributed teams, and field interviews that we have conducted, we developed a survey instrument to explore the following questions: Can partially distributed teams...
become effective despite Us-vs.-Them? What about policies to regulate communication and procedure? Would the right policies reduce Us-vs.-Them and increase effectiveness? The research described in this paper combines a qualitative and quantitative preliminary examination of these questions. We begin by reviewing the theoretical foundation that leads to the formulation of our research questions, followed by our methodology and study results. We focus on Us-vs.-Them and susceptibility to it by partially distributed team members, as a central theme to the research, thereby contributing to the understanding of its origins and impacts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Us-Vs.-Them and Effectiveness

IS project performance consists of two dimensions: process performance and product performance (Espinosa, Delone, and Lee, 2006). Process performance refers to how well the information systems process has been undertaken (including on-time / on-budget completion, team satisfaction, morale, etc.) Product performance refers to the performance of the information system (including: quality, functionality, impact, etc.) We focus on process performance as we administer surveys to partially distributed team members at a given point in time. Some projects will be new while other will be close to completion. Team members on newer projects may not yet be able to assess the use or impact of the resulting system. We base our measures on those used by Espinosa, Delone, and Lee (2006). They included on-time completion, within-budget completion, system costs/effort, quality, and project team satisfaction.

Us-vs.-Them exists in partially distributed teams, but there is evidence in the literature that such teams can be effective nevertheless. For example, Aubert and Kelsey (2003) did not find a significant association between level of trust and effective performance. Research suggests that effective partially distributed teams adopt certain behaviors, whether with direction from management or by necessity, to counteract Us-vs.-Them sentiments and achieve the team goal. For instance, technology incompatibility can render Partially Distributed Teams susceptible to Us-vs.-Them. However, Maznevski and Chudoba (2001) write that irrespective of their access to various technologies, effective virtual teams appear to be able to adapt to technology and match it to the communication requirements of the task at hand.

Espinosa Delone and Lee (2006) found through interviews of global team members that despite global, temporal, and cultural boundaries, participants rated most projects as successful. Some helpful factors appeared to be: using time separation effectively (including schedule flexibility), prior global experience, quality assurance processes, increased documentation, rigorous task monitoring procedures and increased project management discipline. Processes to raise cultural awareness, presence awareness (who is where when), task awareness (what was done when), and local context were among the researchers’ recommendations for effective PDT work.

These findings suggest that Us-vs.-Them may not have a negative impact on effectiveness in partially distributed teams. However, Forsyth (1999) wrote that group cohesion has been shown to increase stability, satisfaction, and efficient communication. Since stability, satisfaction, and efficient communication increase process effectiveness and Us-vs.-Them reduces group cohesion, it follows logically that Us-vs.-Them will have a negative effect on effectiveness. And so, we argue that although partially distributed team members adapt practices to accomplish their end result, those teams with less Us-vs.-Them reported will prove to be more effective.

Policies

There is evidence in the literature that due to the distributed nature of virtual teams, management by observation is simply not possible, and that increased discipline and control are required. Clear definitions of process, availability policies, norms, and expectations are among the policies recommended for effective virtual team work (Armstrong and Cole, 2002; Espinosa and Carmel, 2003). Some of the potentially helpful policies found through a literature review are listed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cascio and Shurygailo (2002)</td>
<td>Members should be available by pager or some other means during work hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayworth and Leidner 2000</td>
<td>Explicitly make clear the time zone used for posted meeting times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Cramton, 2002)</td>
<td>Team leaders should pay careful attention to communication norms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lings, Lundell, Agerfalk, and Fitzgerald (2006). | Project goals should be thoroughly documented to reduce misunderstandings
---|---
Rosen, Furst, and Blackburn (2007) | Publish each team member’s knowledge profile and areas of expertise.
Malhotra, Majchrzak, and Rosen (2007) | Require team members to regularly post work outputs in the team repository and electronically link it to action item lists and project timelines.
Espinosa and Carmel (2003) | Create formal structures for messages and activities.
Cramton (2002) | Operating processes should collectively be examined, especially when problems arise.
Kayworth and Leidner (2000) | Set clear goals and provide continuous performance feedback
Espinosa and Carmel (2003) | Bunch-and-batch (Complete large portion of the task before sending to a remote site).
Espinosa and Carmel (2003) | Focus on non interdependent tasks during non overlapping time.

Table 1. Types of Suggested PDT Policies

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CONJECTURES**

Our research questions are based on the theoretical foundations discussed above; related to PDT challenges; the relationship of Us-vs.-Them and effectiveness and policy establishment. Figure 1 describes the relationships between the constructs we examined.

![Figure 1. Us-vs.-Them, Effectiveness, and Policies in Partially Distributed Teams](image)

**Research Question 1**

*What are the greatest challenges to partially distributed teams? Are they related to Us-vs.-Them susceptibility?*

After establishing that partially distributed teams are especially susceptible to Us-vs.-Them, we would like to learn of the concerns that members of such teams have and attempt to relate these concerns to susceptibility and occurrences of Us-vs.-Them. We expect that most concerns expressed will be related to susceptibility factors, such as lack of synchronous availability and uneven channels of communication.
Research Question 2

Does Us-vs.-Them negatively impact effectiveness in PDTs?

We expect that Us-vs.-Them will negatively impact effectiveness because it decreases team cohesion and team cohesion is linked to improved performance (Forsyth, 1999).

Research Question 3

What types of policies exist for partially distributed teams? And what is their impact on Us-vs.-Them and effectiveness?

Researchers recommend policies for effectiveness improvement (Armstrong and Cole, 2002; Espinosa and Carmel, 2006). We expect that policies will reduce Us-vs.-Them as well because many policies such as interaction guidelines and courtesy policies normalize organizational preferences, increase the perception of fairness, and therefore reduce Us-vs.-Them susceptibility.

METHODS

We designed an initial survey instrument with open ended questions using measures from existing IS literature when possible, with many drawn from a large scale student partially distributed team study by Ocker, Kracaw, Hiltz, and Rosson, 2009 (See Appendix A). In order to improve face validity we conducted a pre-test of the instrument with five industry professionals which resulted in further refinement of the instrument. The resulting instrument took about 15 minutes to answer, with some Likert type items, questions about demographics, team configuration questions, and three open ended questions. We recruited participants through convenience and snowball sampling, beginning with former colleagues of the first author. Because of the small N, only examination for trends was used, rather than batteries of statistical tests.

On-line survey software was used to administer the survey. Participants received email invitations with an explanation and some examples of Partially Distributed Teams. They were asked to proceed to the survey website, if they had experience working in such teams. They were also asked to forward the invitation to other colleagues, etc. In the first section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to describe the configuration of their partially distributed team (specifically where each sub-group is located, how many members are in each sub-group, and the share of the work that each sub-group is responsible for). This team was the basis for the remaining questions. Resulting data were stored and analyzed in EXCEL. Because this is a non-random and small sample, tests of statistical significance were not appropriate, at this pilot stage. SAS was used to perform reliability analysis (Cronbach’s Alpha) on the dependent variable measurement of Us-vs.-Them and Effectiveness, and to perform factor analysis.

Us-vs.-Them was measured using a 7 point semantic differential scale with 18 items. Thirteen items were taken from previous studies (Jarvenpaa and Leidner, 1999; Ocker et al., 2009) and the rest were Us-vs.-Them themes identified from a literature review. Effectiveness was measured using a 7 point semantic differential scale with 10 items. These items were taken from previous studies (Edwards and Sridhar, 2002; Espinosa et al., 2006; Ocker et al., 2009). This paper focuses on relating Us-vs.-Them responses to Effectiveness responses and on the first open ended question: “Based on your experience what is the greatest challenge for a partially distributed team?”

Policy implementation was measured by presenting participants with a list of ten policies and asking them to indicate for each policy if it is mandated by the company or implemented informally by team members. This paper focuses on those policies that were reported as mandated by the company.

RESULTS

Thirty professionals participated in the pilot study: twenty-two males and eight females. 44% reported 1-3 years of distributed work experience and 35% reported 4-10 years. Close to 60% were from the telecommunications and financial industries with 80% of respondents located in the east coast of the US. 40% of respondents were team members, 25% were team leaders, and 35% were sub-group leaders. Almost 40% were members of software development teams and another 20% were in the IT field. These demographics reflect the bias introduced through convenience sampling.

Challenges Facing Partially Distributed Teams related to Us-vs.-Them Susceptibility

In order to answer our first research question: What are the greatest challenges to partially distributed teams? Are they related to Us-vs.-Them susceptibility? We asked the following open ended question on our survey: “Based on your experience what is the greatest challenge for a Partially Distributed Team?” Relevant responses are categorized in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Susceptibility</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attribution / Local Context</td>
<td>“The occasional face-to-face meetings and being able to see and understand the different environments that each sub group may work in depending on location/region is important.”&lt;br&gt;“Understand the challenges of the remote team or in other words to be in their shoes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting goals and responsibilities</td>
<td>“Everyone in the team, including all sub-groups, must agree on the priority of the project. Very often we see the same project as high priority when the team in India has higher priority items in their project queue.”&lt;br&gt;“Maintaining focus upon and adherence to clearly defined objectives”&lt;br&gt;“Transparency, good means of communication, timely sharing of information and common goals and values”&lt;br&gt;“Securing membership buy-in to the given projects’ goals.”&lt;br&gt;“A Comprehensive Goal.”&lt;br&gt;“Competing demands on team members’ time – each individual typically has a number of projects, and local ones tend to gain priority over remote ones, which are often add-ons.”&lt;br&gt;“Some sub groups may be on more than one project or support more than one group, therefore sometimes presenting time and resource allocation issues.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Differences</td>
<td>“Cultural differences, for a multi-country team.”&lt;br&gt;“We had cultural challenges because the team manager was American, located in America with mainly American team members.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different norms and practices</td>
<td>Distributed teams may span multiple organization and cultures and be under different corporate policies and management style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Synchronous Availability</td>
<td>“Communication and scheduling with team members in different time zones”&lt;br&gt;“Not losing time to time zone differentials. In my case my sub-group was in NYC while the sub-group we worked with was in London. When we encountered issues in the afternoon, London was already done for the day.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Synchronous Availability and Cultural Differences</td>
<td>“Having the same information level and targets on projects. Our sub groups are in different countries with a time zone difference of 6 hours. This plus the cultural differences are challenges for successful cooperation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferential location of one of the Sub-Groups</td>
<td>“Ensuring that members distant from the team lead do not feel left out and are engaged in all key decisions.”&lt;br&gt;“Building teamwork, especially at a location where team leader is not based. Training new members, especially when expertise is centered at a different location; managing remote employees to ensure they are producing results.”&lt;br&gt;“Where executive sponsorship / leadership is located relative to the team lead.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferential location of one of the Sub-Groups And Uneven communication channels</td>
<td>“I experienced that the part of the team that had the same location as the team manager was benefited in some ways. For example they were usually better informed since a lot of information is distributed top-down. Also they had more possibilities to sell the work they did to their manager. Face time is obviously always better than other ways of communicating, such as email, telephone and video conferencing.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As suggested, concerns of partially distributed team members reflect the susceptibility of such teams to Us-vs.-Them. Susceptibility factors mentioned most were: conflicting goals and responsibilities; uneven communication channels; preferential location of one of the sub-groups; and limited asynchronous availability.

**Us-vs.-Them and Effectiveness**

In order to answer our next research question: “Does Us-vs.-Them negatively impact effectiveness in PDTs?” we summed up the reported Likert-scale scores for Us-vs.-Them items and Effectiveness items and graphed the results as seen in figure 2. We found that as Us-vs.-Them increases, effectiveness tends to decrease. Using cross tabulation of Us-vs.-Them and effectiveness, below and above their median values, we found significance at the .1 level.

![Figure 2. Relating Us-vs.-Them to Effectiveness](image)

**Policies**

To test the effect of policies on Us-vs.-Them and effectiveness, we compared the means where each policy was implemented to means where it was not. Table 4 displays each policy that was reported as company mandated by at least 3 participants. It
appears that there are benefits to policies. The policies in the table are listed according to impact on Us-vs.-Them and effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Us-vs.-Them Decrease</th>
<th>Effectiveness Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedures for coordinating work</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly scheduled whole-team audio tele-conference</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly scheduled whole-team meetings video-conference</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Updating</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Milestones and Delivery Schedule management</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of project documents and memos</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly scheduled whole-team face-to-face meetings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Us-vs.-Them and Effectiveness where policy exists

DISCUSSION
This study was instrumental in supporting our general propositions. We first explored challenges faced by partially distributed team members and the increase of Us-vs.-Them likelihood that such challenges present. We were able to relate many of the challenges reported by participants to susceptibility factors discussed in the literature such as communication channel imbalance, conflicting goals and responsibilities, preferential location of one of the sub-groups, and limited asynchronous availability for sub-groups with time-zone differentials. We then examined the relationship between Us-vs.-Them and effectiveness. Results confirmed the relationship between Us-vs.-Them and Effectiveness — when Us-vs.-Them increases, effectiveness decreases. Preliminary results about policies showed support for some of our propositions. Although the sample size was not large enough to draw statistically solid conclusions, the trends observed were instrumental in refining a set of hypotheses and developing a survey instrument for a more comprehensive study.

CONCLUSIONS
This study provided insight into concerns of partially distributed team members. Even with our small sample size, we discovered that some concerns are more important than others, such as seemingly conflicting goals and responsibility levels between sub-groups and the imbalance of location-prestige. Identifying these factors is important so that they can be dealt with before Us-vs.-Them develops and escalates. This study also contributed to establishing a relationship between Us-vs.-Them and Effectiveness. Corporations are concerned with team effectiveness and because increased Us-vs.-Them deters from effective team work, it is important to study how it may be reduced. This study corroborated research findings that suggest that policy establishment can reduce Us-vs.-Them and increase effectiveness, and gave us an idea of which policies are especially effective in doing so.

LIMITATIONS
As a small scale pilot study results can only be suggestive of possible relationships. This study has a small sample size and uses a non-random sampling method. One of the biases introduced by our sampling method is geographic, as most participants were from the east coast. Another limitation is that each partially distributed team is represented by one participant and therefore his or her bias is introduced. We do not plan to remedy this in future research, as we would like to preserve anonymity of individuals and teams in order to promote frankness in the self reported results. An additional advantage of this method is that it gives us a glimpse into many partially distributed teams, rather than a detailed exploration of one or two teams that may have their own idiosyncrasies.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A – Relevant Survey Instrument Questions

A partially distributed team (PDT) is a team that consists of sub-groups working in different physical locations.

Example 1:
Sub-Group 1: NJ with 3 members
Sub-Group 2: India with 1 member

Example 2:
Sub-Group 1: NY with 13 members
Sub-Group 2: NY with 3 members (a different office building in NY)
Sub-Group 3: TX with 7 members
Sub-Group 4: CA with 10 members

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about policies and practices that can make such teams effective. To answer this survey, you should currently (or within the past 3 years) be part of one or more PDTs. If you belong to more than one, pick the one on which you spend the most time, or the one about which you know the most. We will refer to this as “your team.”

Please enter a state or country for each sub-group, as well as the number of members and % of their total work time that is allocated for this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% of total work time allocated to this project</th>
<th>Number of members in this location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Group 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Group 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Group 3</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Group 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Group 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To what extent are the following means of communication used between distant sub-groups?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instant Messaging</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>System for archival and/or document sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>System for collaboration such as: viewing each other’s schedules, setting up meetings, recording meeting minutes, tracking progress, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC based software with Webcam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video conferencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chat System</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-Teleconference Calls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Person meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (Mobile, Landline, or Broadband)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section refers to policies. Some policies are mandated by the company or team leader. We refer to these as ‘company policies’. Other policies are adapted by team members informally. These may be established as etiquette, or simply because they work well for the specific team. We refer to these as ‘informal policies’.
Please indicate if Company Policies or Informal Policies existed related to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Policies</th>
<th>Informal Policies</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Procedures for coordinating work
Project Milestones and Delivery Schedule management
Status Updating
Management of project documents and memos
Regularly scheduled whole-team face-to-face meetings
Regularly scheduled whole-team meetings via audio teleconference
Regularly scheduled whole-team meetings via video-conference
Always adding a ‘dial-in’ component to face-to-face meetings so that remote team members do not feel left out
Working extended hours in order to meet with remote team members
Returning phone calls, email, etc. within a set amount of time

Compared with other teams you have worked on, rate your team based on the following dimensions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Efficiency
Quality
Adherence to Schedule
Coordination between sub-groups
Communication between sub-groups
Satisfaction with the project experience
Learning from teammates
Satisfaction with the team experience
Team Effectiveness
Project Success

Please answer the following referring to interaction between sub-groups of your Partially Distributed Team.

Relations between Sub-Groups is such that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Every sub-group does their fair share of the work
I am aware of the activities and information of distant sub-groups
I am aware when distant sub-group members are available to meet (either electronically or face to face)
I need information and advice from other sub-groups to perform my tasks
I work directly with individual members of distant subgroups
There are important differences concerning goals and objectives
There is good team spirit
We experience interruptions or delay in the flow of work
Much disagreement exists

My feelings towards distant sub-group members are such that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
I am unsure of their motives
I feel comfortable approaching them for help
I feel confident that they would not exploit me

**Distant sub-group members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoid consulting me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame my sub-group for their mistakes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compete with my sub-group in unproductive ways</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail to pass on information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have unfair advantages</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often do not give my work the priority I need</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, are trustworthy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show a great deal of integrity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put a great deal of effort into their work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on your experiences what is the greatest challenge for a partially distributed team?

Is there something that is important to the success of partially distributed teams that we neglected to ask about?

Do you have any comments or suggestions about improving this survey?