LEADING VIRTUALLY

Workshop Purpose

To inspire you to lead your remote team members in a way that **motivates** them, **creates alignment**, and **drives results** for the organization

Why Are You Here?

When communicating in a virtual environment, be clear and concise. In 12 words or fewer, why are you here attending this workshop on Leading Virtually?

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The Reality of Working Remotely

No News Is Not Good News

	Demotivated (negative)	Motivated (positive)
MOTIVATION	☐ Do I respond to the person at the door, or the person on the phone/chat?	☐ I am thrilled that I could get this global project without having to move my family.
	☐ I never hear anything about how I am doing.	☐ I love working from home; I am much more productive.
	☐ When are they going to hold others accountable for pulling their weight on this team?	☐ I always know how I am doing. I get feedback regularly and can just check the reports if I have questions.
	☐ I wonder how long before anyone notices that I am not participating.	☐ There is no way I could work across time zones without this flexibility.
	☐ It seems like those closest to the leader get all the recognition.	☐ Virtual teams get the most important projects.
	☐ Is everyone working as hard as I am?	☐ I am so glad to get rid of that commute.

	Isolated (negative)	Energized by Autonomy (positive)
ISOLATION	☐ Is anyone else noticing that team member who isn't pulling their weight?	☐ I like being completely responsible for my success.
	☐ I am the only one who notices this problem?	☐ I love being able to really focus on this design work.
	☐ Who else is on this team?	☐ I can schedule my work time based on my energy level.
	☐ Whom can I turn to?	☐ I appreciate that I do not have the distractions of coworkers, office politics, and fire drills.

Three Essential Practices for Leading Virtual Team Members

Be Attentive and Mindful

- Be present
- Pay attention to individual differences
- Ask for feedback
- Lead with intention

- Build trust
- Provide technology support
- Invest in connection
- Celebrate successes

Foster Community

Accelerate Performance and Development

- Focus on output
- Encourage self-reliance
- Facilitate networking
- Assist with career development

Leading Virtually Essential Practices

Be Attentive and Mindful

- Be present.
- Pay attention to individual differences.
- Ask for feedback.
- Lead with intention.

Practice 1—Be Attentive and Mindful

1. I am fully present with my virtual team members while on calls and in virtual meetings.

2. I pay close attention to what's being said and how it's being said to monitor how people are feeling.

3. I know what motivates and what irritates each of my virtual team members.

4. I know each of my virtual team members' communication preferences and their work habits.

5. I ask for frequent input and feedback on my leadership from those I lead.

6. I hold weekly One on One meetings with my virtual team members where they control the agenda.

7. I am intentional in my communication—purpose, wording, presence.

8. I share personal feedback privately using live voice or voice-and-video communications.

Be Present

> **Survey Questions:**
>
> 1. I am fully present with my virtual team members while on calls and in virtual meetings.
>
> 2. I pay close attention to what's being said and how it's being said to monitor how people are feeling.

What does it mean to be present?

What is the impact when we are *not* present?

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What are some of your best practices for being present and helping others be present in team meetings and phone calls?

For You	For Others

Working Preferences

In your breakout groups:

1. Discuss your preferences for each item on the list.
   - What do you notice about your responses compared to your teammates'?
   - How could knowing these things help increase your effectiveness as a leader?
2. Be prepared to summarize your discussion with the main group.

Communicating	Talk on the phone	⟷	Send Emails
Energy	Morning	Midday	Afternoon
Attention	Work on many projects at once	⟷	Focus on one project at a time
I remember	What I see	What I hear	What I try
Scheduling	Just call me whenever	⟷	Plan ahead using shared calendars
I learn best	Reading	Talking it out	Trying it
Work–life balance	Separate work and life	⟷	Merge work and life
I consider myself	Extrovert	⟷	Introvert
I like	Messy desk	⟷	Neat desk
I prefer	Email up all day	⟷	Email a few times per day

Provide Technology Support

Survey Questions:

11. I ensure that virtual team members have the tools and technical support they need.

12. I model good usage of technology tools and offer personal help when needed.

Since many individuals (particularly those working from home) do not have easy access to the organization's resources, ensure they have support with their logistical needs such as computer equipment and network access.

How competent are you at using the tools you need to lead remotely?

Competent	Moderately Competent	Somewhat Competent	Not Competent

What is the impact when you are not competent in the technology?

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INVEST TIME IN LEARNING THE TECHNOLOGY YOURSELF

IDENTIFY EXPERTS ON THE TEAM AS MENTORS

INVEST IN TRAINING FOR THE TEAM

Leading Virtually Essential Practices

Accelerate Performance and Development

- Focus on output
- Encourage self-reliance
- Facilitate networking
- Assist with career development

Practice 3—Accelerate Performance and Development

17. I measure people's performance by their output and success, not by their visible level of activity.

18. My virtual team members have access to information about their performance and can evaluate their own results.

19. I hold regular conversations with virtual team members about their learning, development, and career goals.

20. I deliberately ask coaching questions to stimulate new thinking.

21. I make connections between my team members and colleagues inside and outside of my organization.

22. Each of my virtual team members has a mentor who supports their long-term development.

23. I know each of my team members' career goals and take them into account when assigning work.

24. I have frequent professional development conversations with each of my people.

How to Conduct a Virtual Coaching Conversation

Establish the goals and setting

- What do you want your employee to get out of the conversation? Is it about sharing information, providing advice, setting goals, solving problems? What would be most helpful?

- Make sure that you connect in a quiet place at a convenient time for an important conversation.

Start with intention

- Open the conversation by discussing the topic you want to cover. Do they agree this is an important topic? Is there something else more pressing to discuss?

- Ask for status information so you are both current.

Dive in

- Take one to two minutes to describe the situation and frame its importance. Use observational phrases such as " I noticed …" or "My perception is …" and avoid judgmental phrases such as "You did not …" or "You made a mistake."

- Ask for reactions to what you shared. Does it fit with their understanding of the situation or issue? Are there any other factors you are not considering?

- Listen deeply and openly to their response.

- Ask continued questions.

Action Plan—Improving My Virtual Leadership Skills

Next Steps

How will I be attentive and mindful? What do I need to provide more attention to?

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How will I foster community? What do I need to do to reduce the sense of isolation?

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How will I accelerate my virtual team members' performance and development?

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What will I do within the next week to improve my effectiveness as a virtual leader?

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Implementing the Three Essential Practices

Practice 1—Be Attentive and Mindful

1. Keep personal information about each team member in your contact notes, such as hobbies, family interests, vacation plans, and names and ages of children.

2. Add team members' significant events to your calendar so you can call or email a Happy Birthday message to them.

3. In your One on One meetings, talk about team relationships, professional development, and individual goals. Show that you are interested in each individual as a person.

4. Schedule your One on One calls at the same time each week.

5. Start meetings with a quick personal check-in from each person. You can start with a question, "How are you, and how do you feel about what we are here to accomplish today?" Really listen to the answers. If you sense hesitation or withdrawal, follow up with additional questions privately.

6. Break up your normal correspondence routine. Consider sending an audio message or a photo.

7. Buy a series of small clocks for your desk or wall. Set the time and label each clock with the names of your team members so you will immediately know their time zone whenever you think of them. (Software is also available for this.)

8. Be conscious of time zones when scheduling meetings. Make sure that the same person is not always being asked to flex his or her schedule or to work late.

9. Demonstrate your willingness to stay up late or get up early to participate in a call. This models commitment and builds trust.

10. Visit your direct reports at their office. This helps you understand their situation.

11. In One on One meetings and conference calls, routinely ask about rumors that are circulating so you can address or investigate them. Ensure that your team hears organization information from you instead of the rumor mill.

12. Use an instant messaging program to ask about their availability to take a call.

13. When you hire new associates, let them know how best to work with you. Let them know your communication preferences, needs, personality style, and quirks. Find out how they work best.

Practice 3—Accelerate Performance and Development

1. Get to know the strengths of each team member and work to align his or her strengths to job tasks and career development.

2. Use project portals or network drives to share team status, track progress, edit documents, etc.

3. Rotate the facilitation of your team meeting to add variety and build skills.

4. Instead of presenting information during a call (where all but one person is inactive), send the documents ahead of time and ask everyone to come to the meeting with one or two comments or questions.

5. Recognize that development and innovation require unstructured thought. Build in time for brainstorming and spontaneous sharing.

6. Make feedback on performance (yours and theirs) part of every call. This keeps everyone aligned and makes feedback a routine occurrence.

7. Foster an environment where you can be challenged. This allows growth and development for you as well as the team.