A FRAMEWORK OF FOSTERING TRUST IN VIRTUAL TEAMS

Project Management (ETM 545)
Dr. Timothy Anderson
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Outline

- Introduction
  - What is the Global Virtual team?
  - Challenges in Global Virtual team
  - How is trust significant to the achievements of virtual team?
- Trust
  - Types of trust (e.g., knowledge-based trust)
  - Trust case studies
  - Generic Challenges with Trust
- How do those challenges impact to the trust
- High Trust and Low Trust in Global Virtual Team
- A framework of creating and sustaining trust in virtual team
- Conclusions & Recommendations
- Further Research
What is a Global Virtual Team

- Group of people working together towards a common goal across boundaries of time and distance
- Can be intra-organizational or inter-organizational
- Members are selected for their expertise globally
Challenges in Global Virtual Teams

- Trust
- Communications
- Team Management
- Achieving goals
- Lack of shared understanding
- Lack of shared purpose and commitment
How is trust significant to the achievements of the virtual team?

- Helps mitigate opportunistic behavior
- Directs focus to the overall team development
- Adds to development of team cohesion:
  - shared positive and confident expectations and behavior;
  - joined effort for a common goal;
- Facilitates easy transfer of knowledge, assets and resources
- Aids in team efficiency and quality of outputs
- Reduces the need for monitoring among team members
- Enables people to work together despite cultural differences
Trust

**Behaviors that engender Trust**
- Social Communication
- Enthusiasm
- Responsiveness
- Individual initiative

**Behaviors that reinforce Trust**
- Predictable
- Consistent communication style
- Substantial responses
- Timely responses
Types of Trust

- Knowledge-based trust
- Characteristic-based trust
- Institutional-based trust
- Justice-based trust
- Swift trust
Trust Case Studies

- Study of relationship of trust to information, influence and control by Zand
  - Based on questionnaires to middle-level managers in a large electronics company
  - Concluded: groups that develop might trust solve problems more effectively, better locate relevant info and generate alternatives

- Exploratory study by Jarvenpaa and Leidner on trust in virtual teams (the existence of trust, trust development and communication, tested the concept of “swift trust”)

- Kanawattanachai and Yoo study (related trust to achievement of high performance)
## Trust Equation (TQ)

\[ TQ = \frac{C + R + I}{S} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility (C)</td>
<td>People who perform what they have said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability (R)</td>
<td>People who can complete their works on committed time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy (I)</td>
<td>People who have collaborative skills to work with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Orientation (S)</td>
<td>People who more focuses on his/her individually works instead of team tasks</td>
</tr>
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</table>

# Generic Challenges with Trust in Global Virtual Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The challenges</th>
<th>Impact to</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misunderstanding from poor communication</td>
<td>Credibility (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incompatible communication preferences</td>
<td>Reliability (R), Intimacy (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in work ethics</td>
<td>Self-Orientation (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clarity and direction</td>
<td>Credibility (C), Reliability (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent second-guessing</td>
<td>Credibility (C), Reliability (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deficient sense of ownership and commitment</td>
<td>Reliability (R), Self-Orientation (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to ask the right questions</td>
<td>Reliability (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatched skills/needs</td>
<td>Credibility (C), Reliability (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diminished productivity</td>
<td>Reliability (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of empathy and personal connection</td>
<td>Credibility (C), Reliability (R)</td>
</tr>
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## References:
A framework of creating and sustaining trust in global virtual teams

The type of stages in global virtual teams

Reference:
## A framework of creating and sustaining trust in global virtual teams (Cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Trust development</th>
<th>Project managers’ required actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing the team</td>
<td>- Foundation for the development of trust (i.e., dispositional trust or swift trust)&lt;br&gt;- Set up Credibility among team members</td>
<td>- Provide professional skills and past achievements&lt;br&gt;- Provide training program for “being virtual members” (e.g., communication skills and online collaborative tools)&lt;br&gt;- Cooperative reward structures are required to establish in early stage of the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing the team</td>
<td>- Trust based on team members’ abilities&lt;br&gt;- Build social bonds of cohesion among virtual members for the development of trust.&lt;br&gt;- Increase Credibility and Reliability of the team members</td>
<td>- Clearly identify the project’s goals and create team communication patterns precisely&lt;br&gt;- Monitor and provide feedback about the effectiveness of team communications&lt;br&gt;- Watch unsanctioned subgroup and prohibit dominated team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>- Trust moved from cognitive assessments of member’s abilities to benevolence of the team&lt;br&gt;- Reduce Self-Orientation</td>
<td>- Be available to provide guidance and supports when team members need helps from management levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishing the tasks</td>
<td>- Forster to team cohesion complete assigned tasks of the project&lt;br&gt;- Maintain trust and integrity for future virtual team projects as well.</td>
<td>- Support team members to focus on mainly working the tasks of virtual project instead of local tasks&lt;br&gt;- Encourage team members to express their appreciation of each other’s contributions&lt;br&gt;- Celebrate when the team can achieve the task of project</td>
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# High Trust and Low Trust in Global Virtual Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Trust Global virtual teams</th>
<th>Low-Trust Global virtual teams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors related to Shared Goals:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Awareness of shared goals</td>
<td>- Lack of awareness of shared goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Time given to build shared goals</td>
<td>- Lack of shared goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Early and open debate of goals</td>
<td>- Opinions of others not considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Primacy of team-based goals</td>
<td>- Primacy of individual goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors related to Power:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Factors related to Power:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Availability of facilitators</td>
<td>- Power battles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Facilitators’ focus on win-win situations</td>
<td>- Coercion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recognition of knowledge as power</td>
<td>- Misunderstanding and conflicts of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recognition that power moves; power in many places</td>
<td>- Use of hierarchical power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Power differentials minimized</td>
<td>- Perception of ‘I have power’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communication:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Face-to-Face where possible</td>
<td>- Asynchronous CMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Regular synchronous CMC (computer-mediated communication)</td>
<td>- Adverse effects of time difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social interaction</td>
<td>- Little or no social interest</td>
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</table>
The Conclusions of project managers’ actions

- PMs should create effective patterns of team communication at early stage of team building.
- PMs should clarify the project’s goals and the team mission.
- PMs should clearly define roles and assigned tasks of each member.
- PMs should consider the social aspects and the cultural difference of the team to develop trust among team members.
The Conclusions of virtual team members’ effective attributes

- Team members should be skilled with the technology and tools used by the team
- Team members should be well self-learning and self-starters
- Team member should be high proficiency of their functional area skills
- Team members should have high integrity to the team
- Team members should basically have a good communication and interpersonal skill
- Team members should be open to the ideas of other members in the team
- Team members should have considerations about cultural difference within the team and the social aspects of the team
- Team members who have high “propensity to trust” and accountability are more likely to improve the overall team trust environment
- Team members who have worked in virtual team before are likely to positively influence high trust levels.
Recommendations

- Effective Face to Face meetings are still significantly required to increase trust in virtual teams.
- Training programs for working in virtual projects are needed for new virtual team members.
- At the early stage of team, team goals and directions for virtual teams should be identified to develop trust among team members.
- Instead of competitive rewards, cooperative structures should be reward systems for virtual teams in order to increase trust of the team and team collaboration.
Further Research

- Correlation of communication and trust; can effective ways of communications enable virtual teams to build trust, which and how?
- Comparison of global virtual teams and non-virtual teams (virtual vs. face-to-face) that share similar cultural and social aspects; what are the trust levels and team performance?
- Do personal backgrounds, social norms and share experiences have significant impacts on the initial level of trust and further integration?
- Does swift trust actually exist? Is it a short-term or a longer phenomenon? How it’s perceived by a global virtual team members?
- Trust vs. control. Related or mutually exclusive?
- Evaluation of the Trust Equation.
- Value analysis/factor analysis of challenges with trust in a virtual team.
- Test of the framework of the four stages for building trust. Is it a useful tool? Was it beneficial in a virtual team case study? How?
References
