**“Communicate Through the Roof”: A Case Study Analysis of the Communicative Rules and Resources of an Effective Global Virtual Team**

**Liam Elsum and Brandon Ah-Chee**

The type of communication between Global Virtual Team members is of great importance in producing teamwork. Despite there being multiple challenges in attempting to collaborate with fellow teammates, if rules and guidelines are followed, team members can overcome such challenges.

**Liam Elsum**

The characteristics that define remote collaborations are the same ones that can complicate working together.

Face-to-face communication is the richest and best form of communication for building relationships and trust, but remote collaborations lack that. Teams that are separated can have many issues, including issues of trust and conflict as well as potentially diverse groups. Since members are far from each other, a high level of trust is needed, and the distance in remote collaboration can add time to decision making and can make conflicts last longer and be harder to resolve. Sub-Groups can form in teams and become an “us versus them” situation.

However, remote collaboration can have positives. But team members need to work together and share a common goal. They must coordinate activities, share knowledge, and participate in joint decision making. But the benefit of putting the right people on the team is that they can be located anywhere in the world. They can also be closer to the local market and provide multiple perspectives. The cost of labour may also be cheaper for certain people if they are in a different country.

**Brandon Ah-Chee**

Members of a group that made up a part of an organisation were interviewed and expressed their shared values with other team members which they had never met in person. These shared values helped them with effectiveness as a whole and assisted in solidifying a one team type of relationship between them.

Additionally, a solid routine was used throughout the organisation ensuring teamwork such as team meetings, while using techniques to ensure effectiveness. Long distance can be a hinderance in team effectiveness when a technique such as SCRUM is applied because of feedback delays where feedback is imperative for producing wanted results. Despite this, it is considered one of the best strategies in teamwork.

Certain routines that were put in place were shown to be effective in helping team members work together because of such techniques like SCRUM, where communication between team members is constantly needed, which in turn aided in bringing team members together and keeping everyone updated on their roles within the organisation. Such constant meetings are recommended in teamwork and collaboration.

Another technique that was used was the Fist of Five, which is a voting system used by team members to voice their opinions about a project going forward.

**Jacinta Frizelle**

During the sprint planning portion of the meeting, the concepts of   
“Communicate through the roof”, “We are one team” and “Meeting them halfway” were discussed. Equal participation was a big expectation, with each member required to draw on previous information and personal experience. No matter the distance, communication was crucial. Video conferencing proved to be a great method, if not one of the best for distance teams.

In person, stand-up meetings were also a great tactic as they were short and effective at gathering insight quickly.

In reference to a strong team identity, equal collaboration was essential, with each member getting a chance to speak and share opinions. For this one-team concept to work the playing field needed to be level with each member feeling like their input was valued. Responsibility was prioritised as equally as commitment.

Another important resource was respect and accommodation, particularly around meeting times. It was important to consider time zones and compromise on scheduling if necessary to ensure fairness. Cultural sensitivity was also necessary in terms of language used to avoid unnecessary conflict.

Without these principles in place, a feeling of hierarchy and an ‘us’ vs ‘them’ mentality could develop. The skills discussed in this scenario helped to establish respect, trust and support within the team and maximised success within projects.

To summarise, when working with global virtual teams, communication, collaboration, and trust are the skills at the forefront of creating a positive team environment. Without team members feeling like they have the opportunity to share their opinion and participate on an even playing field, remote teams can struggle. Through the implementation of the various techniques discussed, these struggles can be mitigated and can ensure that everyone in the team has the ability to be heard and is being treated fairly. Global virtual teams can be a great strength for any project when managed effectively.

**Question 1: What are the communication challenges that global virtual teams face?**

* Difference in time zones can make communication difficult as it affects scheduling. Meetings could be happening in the morning in some countries and evening in others.
* Distance and remote collaboration can make decision making harder, because it is harder to obtain a high level of trust between co-workers.
* When trying to incorporate the SCRUM feedback technique, delays become a hindrance when teams are working in a long-distance situation.
* Language barriers can become a problem when teams operate globally. Cultural sensitivity can affect team relationships.

**Question 2: What are the benefits that diversity in teams offers for the development of ICT systems?**

* You can put a successful team together no matter where they are in the world, this means that you can always find the right people for the job.
* Another benefit is gaining multiple perspectives for a project and sharing knowledge.
* With a diverse team, the playing field is levelled because everyone is working at an equal level of knowledge

**Question 3: Provide one recommendation for global virtual team members to improve their communication.**

* Via video conferencing, the “Communicating through the roof” technique can improve communication by allowing all team members the time to speak and share their opinions no matter the distance.

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| Team Member | Participation % |
| Liam Elsum | 30% |
| Brandon Ah-Chee | 30% |
| Jacinta Frizelle | 40% |