HIGH PERFORMANCE VIRTUAL TEAM BEST PRACTICES

Background

The best practices described in this document are gathered from “high performing” virtual teams within our Smith programs as well as teams I’ve worked with outside of Queen’s over the past 25 years. A virtual team has two characteristics that make it different from other teams --its members are physically dispersed and they must interact primarily through electronic means.

The best practices of virtual teams fall into six areas:

1. An Extremely High (Obsessive) Level of Organization
2. Clear Leadership Roles for Assignments
3. A Structured Approach to Assignments
4. Virtual Team Meeting Practices
5. Commitment to Technological Protocols
6. Virtual Team Relationship Best Practices

1. An Extremely High (Obsessive) Level of Organization

All high performance teams are disciplined and organized yet high performance virtual teams have what could be described as an “obsessive” level of organization. This can be seen in the following areas:

Early and Ongoing Discipline

- High performance team members are committed to spending as much time together as they can during the opening session to get to know each other’s strengths and weaknesses; align around a clear set of norms; and to organize the team around specific roles and responsibilities (including upcoming projects and assignments).

- High performance virtual teams meet during the opening session to set up their biweekly meeting schedule, their list of Chairs and Scribes for the year, and to assign Leads and Seconds for all foreseeable upcoming projects. One team member is assigned to produce a set of summary documents of all team decisions and share these in a common area with the whole team. For the team assignment summary, the assignment weight, due date and who is assigned Lead and Second is included.

- High performance virtual teams meet every time a new set of courses is released to agree on Leads and Seconds. One member of the team updates the summary document and posts it to the team area.

- High performance virtual teams make use of project management tools to send alerts and reminders to team members of what needs to be done, by who, and when.

- High performance virtual teams schedule meetings at the same time on the same day each week or bi-weekly period.

Additional Structure

- High performance virtual teams commit to additional structure to make their teams function effectively. For example, the Chair of a virtual team must act in a much more structured manner, taking the lead in calling upon members to provide input and ensuring an organized flow of information on the agenda. To get the team off to a great start, it's ideal to choose early Chairs who have had experience within a virtual environment. Others can then emulate their leadership. Please see the role of Chair on the course portal.

- Similarly, it's best practice for any Lead on a team project to "check-in" with the other team members and to incorporate various "milestones" into the assignment planning process to ensure the most successful project completion. Please review the role of the Lead later in this document as well as the Assignment Planning document on the course portal for your use.

- The Chairs for May and October have an additional responsibility to plan the team's time together outside of formal classes during "opening session" and during the "electives week". This involves presenting options to the team for meeting content and methodology, helping to bring the team to consensus around how the team will spend its valuable time together, and scheduling the time on the agenda. The Chair may bring this up as a discussion item during an administrative meeting or put it out on email or other type of sharing tool to get input from the team's members. The Chair may also recommend alternate ways that the team could meet that suit the task at hand to maximize individual preparation time and team productivity (i.e. one-on-one check-ins by phone, text, group chats, telephone calls, conference calls, etc.).

- The role of Scheduler plays a particularly important role in virtual teams where written communication and organization are critical to the team's success. The Scheduler is responsible for preparing a set of summary documents of all team decisions related to roles and assignments, including each course assignment, its weight, due date, and who is assigned Lead and Second. The document(s) must be kept up-to-date and in an area accessible to all team members. It's not the Schedulers role to make the allocation decisions; only to keep the team organized and sharing its decisions in a timely way.

Preparation

- High performance virtual team members exhibit a higher level of preparation than face-to-face (FTF) teams to ensure that their team meetings are productive. Part of effective preparation is having the work completed. The other part is ensuring comfort with the technology the team has agreed to use. User adoption is an important issue. A best practice is for technology to support the virtual team vs drive it.

Debriefing

- Debriefing is a best practice of all teams. In virtual teams there is a greater tendency for the members who have worked on a project to debrief the project together and for the lessons learned to never make it back to the broader team. Similarly, virtual team members who are co-located may be more likely to discuss a meeting or project if they meet up for another reason. Therefore, a best practice of virtual teams is to schedule the debriefing of team projects and team meetings as part of the "administrative meeting" to ensure the whole team is involved. Tools for effective debriefing can be found on the portal under the section "Debriefing and Evaluation Tools".

2. Clear Leadership Roles for Projects/Assignments

High performance teams recognize that team projects/assignments require effective leadership. It's important to include the inputs and ideas of all team members in every team project while ensuring the projects are managed effectively. Therefore, two project roles have developed into best practices for completing the work in our programs.

a) Project Lead

The Project Lead has the following responsibilities:

- Does some advance thinking and planning of the project/assignment before arriving at the team's administrative planning meeting

- Completes an assignment plan that:

    - Lays out a process for the team assignment which is appropriate to the nature of the assignment (i.e. qualitative or quantitative);

    - provides a time-frame (with the input of the team) including deadlines for the assignments;

    - includes check-points for when team members should complete various classes before each team assignment;

    - provides timelines for submitting individual inputs;

    - manages the logistics of completing the assignment, including the methodology the team should use to complete the assignment or project and timelines for doing so.

- Sets up time on the agenda with the Chair in an upcoming administrative meeting/collaboration to discuss and gain agreement from the team members to the assignment plan (and sends the assignment plan in writing in advance of this meeting to the team's members)

- Sets up time on the agenda with the Chair in an upcoming working session/collaboration to discuss the team project being led

- Facilitates the discussion of the project/assignment he/she is leading so that he/she can produce an 80% draft of the team project/assignment following the working session (as per the direction provided by the team). This includes "checking in" with team members where appropriate. Note: Checking in does not remove individual team member responsibility to be prepared or to meet any agreed upon deliverables.

- Produces a first draft that follows the direction provided by the team during the team working session, that answers the question asked, that is of the quality expected by the team, and that flows (i.e. is written appropriately with an introduction, middle, ending, with headings, convincing argument, etc.)

- Provides a first draft that is workable to the Second (the draft should not have to be completely restructured or substantially rewritten by the Second) – the first draft should be at least 80% complete by the time it reaches the Second

- Communicates with the Second, as well as to the rest of the team, about the status of the project/assignment

- Is accessible to the Second, as well as the rest of the team, when the assignment is moving back and forth for feedback

- Works with the Second to bring the project from 80% complete to at least 95% complete (the number of times the project moves back and forth between the Lead and the Second is agreed to by the Lead and Second and may change depending upon the team members involved and the type of project they are working on)

- Submits the draft agreed to by the Lead and Second to the rest of the team for feedback – this draft should be 95% complete when it is sent to the rest of the team for feedback

- Incorporates the feedback of the team into an end-product, and completes a spell and grammar check on the document

- Produces an end-product which is acceptable to the team, as representative of the quality of their work, and which the team agrees to submit for grading

- Sends the final draft into the appropriate place at the University on time and provides a copy to all team members

b) Project Second

The Project Second has the following responsibilities:

- Helps clarify the team's working session discussion (related to the team project) so that the Lead is absolutely clear on the direction the team wants the project to take and produce a first draft

- Reviews the Lead’s 80% draft to ensure that the draft produced by the Lead answers the question being asked

- Plays devil's advocate or offers a critical eye to find potential weaknesses in the content of the first draft and suggestions for improvement

- Provides a check and balance role – makes sure the Lead has included what the team agreed to

- Provides specific feedback as to how to improve the draft before it is sent out by the Lead to the rest of the team for feedback

- Edits the draft (from a content perspective)

- Delivers feedback to the Lead according to the timeline laid out by the Lead or the team

If a third person agrees to take on assigned duties for an assignment, this person is expected to complete what they agreed to do on time and to the level of quality expected by the Lead and Second.

There should always be at least two people (Lead and Second) assigned to a *team* project (note: this is defined as one that requires the team’s collective input to complete more effectively than an individual can complete alone). Otherwise, the Lead may get off track and have no one to turn to for advice or help in remembering the direction set by the team in the team meeting when the project/assignment was discussed.

Providing Feedback to the Lead

In high performance teams, all members of the team provide feedback to the Lead on a draft, even if it is to state that the project/assignment is fine and that they have no feedback for improvement.

Assignment of Leads and Seconds

- The key criterion used by high performance teams to assign work is the "Learning Criterion". The person who would like to learn about a subject the most is assigned to Lead the project in that subject/course. The Second is usually assigned as the person with the most knowledge or experience in the subject area and they act as a resource to the Lead when required. Of course, negotiation may take place if two people are vying for Lead on the same project. Teams that place the team member with the most knowledge in the area on the assignment or project miss out on the valuable learning experience the program has to offer. Remember that the whole team (including the person with the most knowledge) participates in setting the direction on a project, so the team will always benefit from the most knowledgeable person's input. The main role of the Lead is to organize the team's discussions into a first draft with the help of the Second. Therefore, marks are not negatively affected following this best practice.

Scheduling Leads and Seconds

- High performance teams set out their schedule of roles and responsibilities for each team project/assignment as soon as a set of courses changes and the assignments become available. This ensures that everyone knows what their schedule looks like. During the scheduling meeting, each person should arrive with their schedule and know their commitments so that they can pick and choose projects for which they would prefer a lead or second role. A best practice is to ensure equity on the team. By keeping track of who has completed which assignments, how much they are worth, and the workload that was involved, the team is able to ensure equity.

3. A Structured Approach to Assignments

All team projects are assigned the roles of a Lead and a Second during an Administrative meeting to lead the project. The Lead for any team project is based on team members' interest in a subject area and equalizing the work load across the team. The first Administrative meeting to organize and plan ahead, including assigning Leads and Seconds is held during the opening session. Leads and Seconds are assigned for as many course projects available at the time. It's a best practice of virtual teams to accomplish as much as it can together early to set up clear expectations and while the team members have allocated time to the opening session.

High performing virtual teams follow a structured approach to team assignments that everyone on the team is aligned to. The approach varies slightly depending upon whether the assignment is qualitative or quantitative in nature because this affects the type of collaboration required among the team members. The approach used for each type of assignment is explained below.

Qualitative Assignments

Qualitative team assignments generally require more collaboration from the team's members early in the process. Therefore, the following approach is used for each team project or assignment:

- For each team project, the Lead "takes the lead" with some advance work reviewing the expectations of the assignment and preparing a draft Assignment Plan for presentation to the team. The Lead requests time during an ***administrative meeting*** for an assignment planning session. In this assignment planning session, the Lead discusses the timeline of the assignment and the requirements for it to be managed effectively (for example, the Lead may identify the need for one or more other team members to become involved as "Resource Persons"). A written summary of the Assignment Plan is provided to all team members prior to the meeting. During the meeting the Lead gains the agreement of the team with the plan before moving forward. The time spent during the administrative meeting per "Assignment Plan" is approximately 10-15 minutes. Please see the Assignment Planning document to help you understand this process.

- All team members meet (i.e. the technology used to meet is the team's choice but ought to match the degree of collaboration required) during a ***working session*** to discuss and set the direction of the team project. Once the direction is set, the Lead takes the electronic notes from the working session and any other inputs from the team members that may be helpful and produces a first written draft of the project or assignment. Sometimes the Lead and the Second meet briefly following the working session (using a technology where they can share documents and discuss them) to structure the document into section headings with key bullet points under each heading. Then, the Lead independently produces a first draft of the team project/assignment so that it is written in ***one consistent writing style***. If there is more than one writer, the document is disjointed.

- The first draft produced by the Lead should be 80% complete before sending it to the Second. This is a subjective assessment but means that the Second does not need to rewrite it. The Second reviews it and provides comments to the Lead to improve it. The Lead receives the feedback and makes the changes. This back and forth process continues until the document is 95% complete.

- The Lead and Second work very closely together to ensure that they produce the best possible draft they can before sending it to the other team members for feedback.

- The Lead sends the 95% complete team project to the remaining team members according to a pre-determined timeline (discussed in the assignment plan). The other team members provide feedback to the Lead.

- The Lead incorporates the team members' feedback into the draft and submits it to Queen's Smith School of Business on time.

In high performance teams, team members trust each member of the team to be able to lead a project. Without this trust, the team cannot function effectively.

Quantitative Assignments

Quantitative courses often have final exams so team members want to complete all of the questions themselves so they understand the technical material at exam time. The collaborative aspect of the team assignment comes later when the team is helpful in interpreting and discussing what the "answers" to the questions mean. Therefore, the following approach is used:

The Lead looks at the requirements of the assignment and prepares an Assignment Plan. The Lead then requests time during an Administrative meeting to gain alignment to it. Prior to the team getting together for a team meeting, the Lead usually recommends that individual team members complete the problems or questions individually even though they are part of a team assignment. All team members then send their answers to a common area to be reviewed and compared.

- For the virtual team meeting to be effective, the Lead establishes a timeline in the assignment plan where all individual responses must be submitted to a common area for review by the team. This allows the Lead and other team members to process each other's responses prior to the team meeting. The key to success is ensuring everyone is well prepared for the meeting and using the meeting time for collaborative work.

- The team meeting or working session is used to ask questions, discuss, and prepare the team's response regarding the interpretation of the assignment answers and any insights the team members may have. The Lead's role involves pulling together the team discussion and the agreed upon direction for each of the questions asked (usually there is a qualitative portion that requires some thinking and interpreting) and then writing up the final draft of the assignment. The Second assists with this role. The Lead and Second may take time following the meeting (perhaps by document sharing and/or email or other preferred method) to summarize the team's "insights" or qualitative analysis in bullet points and/or section headings with the main bullets under each to help the Lead when writing the assignment draft.

- A best practice of virtual teams is for the Lead of an assignment to "check-in" with individual team members ***before or during a team meeting*** to gain valuable inputs for a project he or she is leading. Individual team members remain responsible for providing the input they are responsible for in a timely and reliable manner according to the Assignment Plan. However, "checking in" provides an additional way to enhance the success of your virtual team. It has been found that there is a greater chance for individuals to become isolated and lose contact in virtual teams so adding any layer of "checking in" is very helpful. For example, if the Lead suggests that all team members work individually on team assignment questions prior to a team meeting, the Lead may "check in" with each team member by text, phone, email or other means to find out about their progress. Once all individual inputs have been received, the Lead may share some challenges or questions in a team chat and, if certain team members do not respond, reach out to them to check in on whether they are okay or not or in need of any help. This practice of "checking in" ensures that team members feel others have their back, and is more likely to prevent anyone from falling behind. During the meeting to discuss the project, a best practice is also for the Lead to "check in" by asking questions, seeking specific inputs and feedback from individual members through "checking in" as well versus asking open ended questions.

- In courses where the team assignments are worth a very small percentage (i.e. 3%), a best practice of high performance teams is to assign a Lead to complete the assignment on his or her own, making the most efficient use of team resources. The completed assignment is shared with all team members electronically.

4. Virtual Team Meeting Practices

It's important that the team meets and collaborates on a regular basis. The best practices around meeting and collaborating are:

- High performance teams require a total of four to six hours in "working session" time every two-week period to complete team projects and assignments. Virtual team meetings shouldn't extend beyond two hours at any one time so more than one meeting will be required during each two-week period.

- High performance teams also require one hour of "administrative meeting" time every two weeks. During this meeting time, the team completes assignment planning (see the "Assignment Planning" document prepared for your use); debriefs assignments, and discusses relationship issues and improving team processes.

- High performance virtual teams choose video calls over email or chatting for their team meetings. While it's easier and often more convenient to send an email or chat, this more often leads to misunderstandings and feelings of isolation on virtual teams. Video calls help teams avoid misunderstandings and build connection.

- A best practice of virtual teams is to choose the technology to match the level of collaboration required. Virtual teams have multiple communication tools and ought to clarify the tool they will use for different types of collaboration. In addition to videoconferencing, teams use many other technologies successfully such as conference calling, direct calling and text messaging, virtual team rooms, and discussion forums.

- In virtual teams, taking time to deliberately build the social component of the team is a best practice and this takes some of both the administrative and working session meeting time.

- Team meetings can be held at any time agreeable to all team members and using the technology agreed to by the team's members. However, a best practice is to choose the same time(s), same day(s), each two-week period to meet so that people can minimize time organizing and commit to more elsewhere.

- In high performance teams, team members view team meetings as mandatory and favourable to the performance of the team.

- High performance virtual team members arrive at team meetings very prepared. In order to achieve this, the Chair must send a detailed agenda in advance of the meeting stating exactly what items will be discussed and what is expected of team members for each item.

- High performance virtual team members become comfortable with the technologies the team is using. All members of the team should be up-to-speed on the technologies chosen. The team's willingness to "float" between technologies is a key success factor. Choosing the technology that best meets the objective of the project is a best practice of virtual teams.

- High performance teams follow an agenda for each meeting and set time limits for each item.

- High performance teams take approximately two minutes per person at the beginning of each meeting to conduct a "check-in"—a check-in on how they are coping emotionally with the program and its unique impact on their lives. This check-in is very important because it helps team members to understand where each member is coming from during the meeting. For example, if a team member is struggling with the burden of studying for an exam and, at the same time, is tired from being up with a sick child, this could affect his/her outlook or performance on the team. Understanding this at the beginning of the meeting is much better than wondering why someone seems less focused than normal or attributing negative motives to the person. This type of communication is particularly helpful on a virtual team where team members cannot see each other as clearly or monitor social cues as effectively.

- In high performance team meetings, the body of the meeting is used to learn more about each others' perspectives, make decisions and align around the direction of the project(s), discuss answers to questions and provide insights from data, and then to lay out the specifics of the project(s).

- In high performance teams, team members are prepared for team meetings. This means having read the case if there is one, having considered the questions being asked, and having jotted down a few ideas/insights related to the case, etc. Prior to each virtual meeting, each Lead pre-plans what is required in terms of pre-work for the meeting and lets the Chair know so it is written on the Agenda and sent to each team member in advance of the meeting. Each Lead also structures the meeting time to ensure it produces an effective outcome. Some teams expect that members have all of the required readings done in advance of the meeting. In these teams, they usually split the readings and each member provides a one-page summary of the key points in the assigned reading. Note that it is important that each summary follow the same format to be useful to every member on the team.

- The tone of meetings is relaxed but business-like (although high performance teams report having a great deal of fun).

- In high performance teams, if a team member misses a meeting, it is the team member's responsibility to contact the Chair to find out what was missed and about any responsibilities to the team.

The Role of Chair

- A Chair facilitates each meeting. The Chair ensures that everyone speaks, that all items on the agenda are addressed and that action responsibilities are recorded (by the assigned Scribe) and emailed to team members. The Chair manages the process of the meeting, helps the team to follow its norms and procedures, acts as timekeeper (this may also be assigned to the Scribe), and conducts a debrief at the end of the meeting to evaluate its effectiveness.

- Project Leads direct the content discussion during the meeting for projects they are leading. The Chair passes the leadership of the discussion over to the Project Lead during the time on the Agenda devoted to discussing their project or assignment. During this time, the Chair still ensures that the process aspects of the meeting are adhered to (i.e. no domination of the meeting by one or two people; ensures everyone speaks, etc.). The Project Lead pre-plans the meeting time to ensure inputs are gathered effectively and that the team makes the decisions required so that a draft can be written that is representative.

- Most high performance teams rotate their Chair of team meetings monthly.

- High performance teams end each meeting with a review of the action items and a debrief of how effective the meeting was. The Chair should ensure that each action item has a date and person assigned and that there is a high level of confidence that the items will be completed on time. Next, the Chair facilitates a discussion of whether or not the team's norms and agreed upon procedures were followed, what worked well in the meeting, what did not work well, and what they would like to improve for next time. Honest feedback is provided (i.e. We are no longer following our norm of "Arrive on time". Do we want to keep this norm? If so, how will we get back on track?)

- A best practice is for the Chair to "check in" with team members during the month he/she is Chair to ensure success. For example, the Chair may notice the absence of a team member on the Watercooler. When he texts the member, he finds out that the team member has been away for a few days and extra busy but is really glad to hear from the Chair.

The Role of Scribe

- Each meeting ends with a set of action responsibilities outlining who is doing what on key decisions made by the team. These action responsibilities are recorded by the Scribe and circulated electronically to all members of the team within 24-48 hours. This ensures that everyone knows exactly what they are supposed to do before the next meeting. Most teams appoint a monthly Chair and Scribe. At the end of the month the Scribe becomes the next Chair and another Scribe is assigned. A list of Chairs and Scribes can be planned during the first two-hour planning meeting for the year.

- Scribes also record the "lessons learned" from meeting and project debriefs. The first Scribe creates a "Lessons Learned" document that is stored electronically in an area where all team members can access it. Each time a Lead and Second work on a new project or assignment, they review it to make sure they benefit from the learnings of the team. And, each time the team debriefs a team meeting, the Scribe from one month can pull up the previous meeting's "lessons learned" to ensure the team is clear about its progress. "Lessons learned" documents are reviewed project to project and meeting to meeting in high performance teams.

- High performance teams conduct a meeting every month to six weeks to evaluate the team's functioning. Taking time to meet to discuss process issues and team member performance is necessary to become high performing. A coach should follow-up to help ensure that this happens.

Timelines

- In high performance teams, action responsibilities are posted within 24 hours of the team meeting.

- Project deadlines are set out in the Assignment Plan (a draft is prepared by the Lead, presented in the Administrative Meeting and agreed to by the Team).

- The Lead and Second have their own internal timeline to pass each team project back and forth to each other before the final 95% document is sent to the team.

- Generally, all high performance teams agree to a ***standardized set of final timelines*** for the ***95% draft*** to be sent by the Lead to the team. Typically, the 95% draft should be sent to team members for their feedback four days before it is due at Smith. The team can decide on the specific hour (i.e. 6 p.m.) that works for them (choosing the same time for assignments is a best practice to minimize the number of items team members need to remember). Feedback is expected from each team member two days later to allow the Lead time to input the changes before the Project is due. The Lead would have two days to make the final changes and submit it to Smith on time. This four-day (two and two) timeline has been a best practice of teams for many years.

Reaching Consensus

- High performance teams always discuss issues before voting on them. Through team discussion, team members have always been amazed at how much they learn and how often they change their initial position on an item.

- High performance teams continue to debate and discuss a topic until most or all members are aligned with the direction being put forward. At times during the discussion, the Chair of the meeting will assess the degree of alignment on the team. For example, he/she might conduct a straw vote (that is not binding); ask people to indicate how aligned they are with the direction being discussed by a thumbs up or thumbs down approach; or other pre-agreed approach to establish the degree of alignment when participating in a virtual collaboration.

- Once a team agrees to pursue a certain direction (even if some members are only 70% in agreement that the direction is the right one) high performance team members each show 100% commitment to the decision.

- Only after a great deal of debate and discussion is it acceptable to vote (and only if the team has absolutely run out of time). Most high performance teams require a higher percentage of agreement than a simple majority. For example, they require five of seven people to support a decision or direction before they will move forward instead of only four of seven.

5. Commitment to Technological Protocols

- High performance virtual team members set and follow a set of technological protocols that increase their effectiveness. Some examples are:

  - We will identify the subject of the message in the subject line in all emails
  - We will not use Voice Mail to resolve conflicts
  - On teleconference, preface all you say with your name to avoid confusion
  - Respect boundaries re: work/home life balance; (Pat prefers e-mails, Karim prefers IM and not after 10 pm; etc.).

- High performance teams also establish a set of document protocols to enhance their effectiveness and avoid problems (i.e. drafts for assignments are often labelled by version such as .draft80, .draft 95 and .final)

- High performance teams incorporate their protocols into their team norms or establish them as a set of operating guidelines that they follow and check back against

Email

- High performance virtual teams communicate in an explicit, direct and professional manner via e-mail. Virtual team members understand that others cannot know what they mean in a virtual environment through nonverbal communication so they have to do more to make up for that fact.

- High performance virtual team members adopt respectful and proper email etiquette, taking care to think about what they are communicating in writing and that it (or its tone) can easily be misinterpreted.

- High performance team members check their email at least once every 24 hours and respond.

- High performance virtual teams create a protocol for the watercooler and personal email that keeps communication on both positive. A protocol of “no insults, swearing or rudeness” or something similar is common.

6. Virtual Team Relationship Issues

- A best practice is for virtual team members to use as much face-to-face communication as possible for interaction and productivity. High performance teams spend as much time as they can together during the opening and elective sessions. During the regular class weeks, it’s equally important for team members to choose technologies that allow the team’s members to continue to “see” each other’s faces and gestures, hear each other’s “tone of voice”, and feel a sense of proximity to each other. This will help the team work more effectively and continue to build trust. It also helps the team members to prevent conflicts from escalating. This, combined with other technologies will continue to build a positive culture on the team. By relying solely (or increasingly) on technologies where teams cannot “see” each other, the team puts itself at risk of the relationship deteriorating.

- A best practice of high performance virtual teams is to establish a “Virtual Watercooler” where the team can share fun, personal updates and “chat” together. High performance virtual teams create a protocol for their watercooler (see above).

- High performance virtual teams attach their pictures to their virtual communications with their team members to enhance the personal connection others feel when interacting with them.

- Virtual teams take advantage of team member diversity (i.e. virtual sub-teaming) to mix team members from all of the locations (even if they have many or some team members co-located) on projects and work assignments to ensure they get the most out of their experience.

- High performance virtual teams post their completed Skills Inventory (you can find the Inventory in the Organization Tools section of the course portal) in a virtual workspace so they can continue to build off each other.

- High performance virtual team members recognize that trust in a virtual team is largely based on actions not goodwill so they clearly assign project work and action items in writing with due dates in the team work space where everyone has access.

- High performance virtual teams take time to celebrate – team or individual achievements, personal milestones, fun events, etc. Celebrating keeps the team members motivated and contributes to a sense of community on the team.

Conflict Management

- High performance teams deal openly, honestly and quickly with team conflicts.

- High performance teams are not afraid to ask for assistance from their Team Coach. They recognize it is strength to be able to ask for professional help when needed, as opposed to letting the issue get out of hand, or letting it fester.

Confidentiality within the Team

- High performance teams establish etiquette for what is shared outside the team. A best practice is not to discuss unresolved team conflicts with other teams. In fact, all issues remain confidential to the team and the team's Coach. Team best practices and conflict resolution approaches (no names or confidential details) are shared for continuous learning purposes.