**COIT11239 Mob Writing**

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**Summary**

“Communicate Through the Roof” is a case study analysis with the objective of trying to develop and test ways of overcoming the challenges due to differences between members in team settings.

Be it in the standard workforce, or in upcoming Global Virtual Teams, teamwork is invaluable. This case study covers both what makes an “effective” team, what is defined as an “ineffective” team and a variety of ways to combat differences that can be due to time differences, physical distance between participants, cultural differences and more. It is brought to the forefront that the use of ritualised actions is one of the methods to help bring people together as a team, and increase their connections and break past some of the communication challenges.

The study identified both advantages and challenges of global virtual teams by taking an in-depth look at a specific successful GVT to understand how the members communicated.

Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes following interviews with team members, observations and field notes. The team observed for the research was identified as Team “Amit”. Members from Team Amit are located in both the United States and India.

Team “Amit” uses the project management process “Scrum”. Scrum includes but is not limited to the use of Routinized meetings/Shared Rituals, Tasks and Collaborative planning.

It requires those involved to participate and be willing to communicate. An example of one of the rituals used by the team was the “Fist of Five Ritual”, which can be described as: “All members simultaneously raise from one to five fingers, indicating their level of commitment to their plan for the upcoming sprint”. Team member Ron explained, “The idea behind the Fist of Five is that everybody votes all at once so you aren’t colored by other peoples’ votes. You don’t want people who don't want to commit to be bullied by people who do.”

The author noted that while the study identified numerous methods to improve teamwork in GVT’s, there are limits to the application of the findings to all teams.

**Q. 1 Identify & explain the communication challenges that global virtual teams face**

There are numerous challenges faced by GVT including cultural differences as well as the inability to reflect on body language and inflections during interactions. Research has shown that these challenges can lead to mistrust and conflict within a team (Cramton, 2001; English-Leueck et al., 2002; Newell et al., 2007).

The ability to meet face to face can lead to a reduction in conflict; however the opposite often occurs in GVT. As discussed by the author “Distance adds time to decision

making”, and ‘‘when miscommunication and misunderstandings occur, stress and

conflicts among team members are heightened and less easily dispelled’’ (Zakaria

et al., 2004, p. 25).

GVTs are limited in their ability for spontaneous communication due to the geographical distance and time zone differences which can result in more conflict and less opportunity for team members to develop a strong team identity.

Not only the distance but the geographical distribution can lead to subgrouping. Subgrouping can create a negative mindset among peers and leads to poor communication and teamwork between groups “us versus them”.

**Q.2 Identify & discuss the benefits that diversity in teams offers for the development of ICT systems**

Benefits of diversity in GVT include but are not limited to the following; Task Allocation, Geographical Distribution, Availability, Perspectives, Access to resources and more.

To elaborate further as it was previously listed as a challenge, diversity and geographical distribution is also a positive. The author backs up this claim with, stating “the diversity offered by GVTs can also be an advantage. Varied backgrounds allow multiple perspectives to be brought to bear on problem solving, often leading to greater innovation and creativity” (Zakaria et al. 2004).

The geographical location of individuals increases availability and may assist during periods of religious, cultural or national holidays as not all team members will be offline at the same time.  Janssens and Brett (2006) suggest that such recognition and respect of cultural differences can contribute to more effective team dynamics.

Having team members around the world gives companies better access to and greater understanding of local markets enabling a better local response within the global market. The opposite is true for localised teams; there is significantly less understanding of non-local markets, which creates greater difficulty in attempting to respond` to those markets.

**Q.3 Provide one recommendation for global virtual team members to improve their communication *(evidence based from the author )***

A recommendation for global virtual team members to improve their communication is to establish and embrace team values.

The study found that the use of the SCRUM methodologies, with adaptations from the team members’ prior successful projects lead to a solid foundation for communication. First and foremost, the team established their set of values for the project, including “Communicate Through the Roof”, “We Are One Team”, and “Meeting Them Halfway”. These values were accompanied by rituals such as standup meetings and the “Fist of Five'' ritual to end meetings. This, together with the extensive use of video conferencing achieved a level of communication that supported successful project outcomes for the team.

The author points out that “ritualized structures alone would not likely achieve the level of trust and relationship needed” (Scott, 2013) but embracing the team values was key to the success of the team.

**References**

Scott, Muriel E. 2013, “Communicate Through the Roof”: A Case Study

Analysis of the Communicative Rules and Resources of an Effective Global Virtual Team,

*Communication Quarterly,* 61:3, 301-318pp, DOI: [10.1080/01463373.2013.776987](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01463373.2013.776987)