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**Short Paper #2**

I think that moving all work to a virtual environment is bad for the workforce in general. It is easier to form opinions about someone through meeting them in person, and therefore ones ability to accurately form a perception of other team members is harder. This hurts the leader of the group because he can’t accurately see the dynamics of the group as well, and therefore hinders his ability to correctly delegate tasks. Managers also struggle to manage effectively because they cant reinforce their employees as easy. I think that moving meetings to be all over the web is a very negative decision because of the natural things that occur when forming a team that can only occur in person. However, virtual meetings positively influence person-to-person work.

It is hard to enforce positive or negative reinforcement because of the distance of the other people. In the office, after a meeting is over, you can still see the person, and therefore punish them. However in the global meeting scenario, once they hang up the teleconference, you have lost all contact with them. One of the main guidelines of punishment is to deliver the punishment as quickly as possible following the undesirable behavior, and this is near impossible over telecommunications. It is hard to maintain a consistent schedule of reinforcement as well, because of the potential time differences, and inconsistent meeting times.

In an office, a manager can also observe how each team member interacts with each other outside the meeting, and this helps him to see who the leader is within the team. It also helps him to form perceptions of people on a deeper level than just through a virtual medium, and see past the surface level impression that someone makes. The manager can also enforce punishment or give reward within the office because he can walk over to that employee’s desk.

When a team does it’s forming, the social norms that are established within the team are through nonverbal communication, which requires the use of body language. Through a virtual meeting, its nearly impossible to capture all of the informal body language that occurs instantaneously because you cant see the whole group together as one in one setting. Instead, you see each individual group member within their own box on the computer screen, which limits your perception of each member’s respective personalities.

In the storming phase, members have to establish their position in the group as wells as establish a leader. This is even harder over the web because the perception of people weren’t accurately established in the forming stage, and therefore, when someone that comes off as shy jockeys for a leadership position, the other group members are thrown off their perception. However, in a non-virtual setting, this same person may be perceived as humble, and waiting for the right time to assert his leadership qualities. This then has affects on the rest of the steps of performing and norming, because it delays the first two steps, and never fully establishes the norms that need to be set to move onto these steps.

I think that virtual meetings negatively effect group work and group meetings by delaying the norming and storming process and negatively influencing each member’s perspective on one another. Even though virtual meetings hinder groups they still have a positive effect on one on one meetings.

Individual work, or person-to-person work is substantially beneficial in a virtual environment. Commuting to and from work to meet one on one is a big hassle, and people from across the globe can collaborate and do work. It is less critical to form a perception of the other person because group structures such as delegating work and managers having to enforce reinforcement don’t occur. Collaboration without these factors listed above just needs people talking to each other, and viewing the same document together.

Brainstorming requires the use of multiple people talking with each other, and is performed in less formal atmospheres than a team working for a specific goal on a specific task. Virtual meetings are good for brainstorming as the members can talk with each other, and bounce ideas off of one another just as they would do at the office.

My opinion surrounding virtual work can easily be summed up by saying that anything you could do over the phone with your fellow employees is just as effective through virtual meetings. Everything else such as meeting your teammates, forming perceptions, managing effectively and delegating task, cannot be performed effectively though. That is why virtual meetings should not be the primary method of communication from team member to team member, but is acceptable for one on one conversation.

Overall, I think that virtual meetings should only be used if necessary, and offices should stick to the methods of actually going into the workplace that exist today. Virtual meetings should not replace physical meetings when needed, and virtual work should be kept to a minimum.

The statement that “after adoption [of virtual workplaces] has hit a critical mass, I believe technology will have improved so much that online work becomes a seamless, integrated part of everyday life — a life where hiring someone online for a task is as natural and intuitive as “Googling” information you wish to know.” This statement is biased because he is the CEO of an online workplace, and therefore obviously wants to see it penetrate as a main method for communication. However, for the reason listed above that I am opposed to online teamwork are the same reasons I am opposed to hiring online. In an interview, the resumes gets you a foot in the door, and through virtually hiring someone, you can’t accurately form a perception of them. 90 % of all communication is nonverbal, and through a virtual meeting, about 80% of it is lost. Managers are looking for certain traits past than what’s on a piece of paper in their hiring process, and this extra bit that each employee brings is not well represented through an online meeting.

Before you even get a call from an organization, they look at your resume. This document is just like a filter, and is similar to a Google search. The aspect of using Google to filter out prospective employees is reasonable, and saves managers time. For actually filling the position though, it takes that extra level of understanding of each individual, and this cannot be assessed in a virtual environment.