How to Lead a Virtual Team
or
“New Ways of Working”
WHAT WILL WE DO TODAY?

1) Introduction

2) Exercise: Insights from you on “what makes an effective virtual leader in your context?” Team up!

3) Insights from academia on possible solutions of dealing with the challenges of leading a virtual team

o Discussion & Conclusion
Does distance matter?

http://educatie.ntr.nl/leidersgezocht/2999112/aflevering-6-interactieve-leider/
WHAT IS A VIRTUAL TEAM?

“Virtual teams are teams that work together on a common task, independent of temporal and geographical boundaries, supported by information technologies”
(Lipnack & Stamps, 2000)
AND WHAT IS A SERVANT (VIRTUAL) LEADER?

“A servant leader facilitates growth, development and general well-being of individuals who comprise the organization.”
(Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004)
WHAT GAVE RISE TO VIRTUAL TEAMS AND LEADERS?

Computers are wonderful. Whatever happens, no one is to blame.
WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF VIRTUAL TEAMS?

• Getting the best talents from the globe to be part of the team.

• Creating a healthy “work-life balance” (work from home)

• Reduce costs of travelling and minimize carbon footprint…
WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF COLLABORATING VIA THE COMPUTER INSTEAD OF FACE-TO-FACE?

• Non-verbal cues are reduced

How does this impact the development of interpersonal relationships and trust?
## What are the effects of New Ways of Working for different generations?


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditionalist 61 - 84</th>
<th>Boomer 42 - 60</th>
<th>Gen X 26 - 41</th>
<th>Gen Y 18 - 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>The hard way</td>
<td>Too much and I’ll leave</td>
<td>Required to keep me</td>
<td>Continuous &amp; expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning style</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Facilitated</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Collaborative &amp; networked</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication style</td>
<td>Top down</td>
<td>Guarded</td>
<td>Hub &amp; Spoke</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem-solving</td>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>Horizontal</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>Seeks Approval</td>
<td>Team informed</td>
<td>Team included</td>
<td>Team decided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership style</td>
<td>Command &amp; control</td>
<td>Get out of the way</td>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>Partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>No news is good news</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>Weekly / Daily</td>
<td>On demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology use</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Unable to work without it</td>
<td>Unfathomable if not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job changing</td>
<td>Unwise</td>
<td>Sets me back</td>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>Part of my daily routine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF INTERACTIVE LEADERS?

- Task related
- Social related
Exercise: “What makes an effective virtual leader in your context?” Team up with 3/4 peers

1) Think about an inspirational leader that has once crossed your path and helped you grow. Can you describe these qualities and relate them to what it means to be a virtual leader?

2) What are possible solutions to the following challenges:
   * trust without touch
   * chitchat at the coffeemachine
   * getting the job done!

3a) How does technology help or hinder the way you work now? 3b) And how do you expect it to influence your future work?
So, what was this like and what did we learn from this?
PUTTING THINGS UP A NOTCH...
THE GAMER DISPOSITION

Byron Reeves

On Leadership: How video games build leaders

To create trust:

Digital morphing (Donath, 2007; Bailenson & Yee, 2005)

Figure 1-3. Pictures of the participants are on the left; the blend of 60% of an unfamiliar politician and 40% of the given participant is on the right.

Figure 1-4. Four participants (left four panels) and their team face (far right), a morph that includes 25% of each of them.
HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF VIRTUAL LEADERS ACCORDING TO ACADEMIA?

- Establishing trust and interpersonal relationships:
  - Walther’s (1996) Hyperpersonal theory
    - Meeting each other face to face
    - Ice-breaker exercises to get to know each other...

- Fit between the task and technology used:
  - Goodhue and Thompson (1995)
    - Think of task characteristics
    - Less is often more.
HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF VIRTUAL LEADERS ACCORDING TO ACADEMIA?

- The role of a virtual leader:
  - Be proactive
  - Create a STRUCTURE that fosters teamwork
  - Help the team to regulate itself, learn and grow.

Kahai (2011), see http://leadingvirtually.com
DISCUSSION, RECAP AND CONCLUSIONS... HOW TO LEAD A VIRTUAL TEAM:

- **Social Challenges**
- **Trust Cohesion**
- **Team Performance**
- **Technology**
- **Task Challenges**
- **Cognition Process**
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:

- Virtual Leadership
- Social Challenges
  - Trust Cohesion
- Task Challenges
  - Cognition Process
- Team Performance
THANK YOU!

MORE QUESTIONS?

Contact information:
Sarah van der Land (Phd Candidate)
e-mail:  s.f.vander.land@vu.nl
website:  www.kinresearch.nl

KIN RESEARCH
The Knowledge, Information, and Networks-research group