

Ask the Expert: Virtual Teams



“How does a team build trust and confidence among its members while working virtually?”

Encourage Collective Leadership & Limit Top-Down Leadership



What the Research Says...

- Top-down leadership is consistently less effective in virtual teams ([Hoch & Kozlowski, 2014](#)).
- Within virtual teams, leaders have fewer opportunities to directly oversee team members work ([Ford et al., 2017](#)).
- Leaders also have fewer opportunities to influence team members in virtual teams ([Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017](#)).

A Conversation Guide for Leaders and Team-Members



Leader

It can be helpful to consider ways in which you might **empower** your team members.

- When can you cede the discussion to others?
- What tasks can others in the group be responsible for completing?

What **resources** can you secure on behalf of your team?

- What information do team members need to succeed?
- What tools does your team need to perform in a virtual space?



Team Members

Virtual teams tend to trust one another more if they can "see" each other's **contributions**.

- How can we document our contributions?
- What are appropriate ways for checking in on one another's progress?

Teams can create **norms** for **technology** use.

- Can we create repositories for our work?
- What tools would we prefer to use to communicate?



Next Steps

- Surprisingly, trust develops rapidly. So, when possible, think through issues related to team trust early in the team's lifespan.
- Trust is dynamic. So, virtual teams should periodically revisit and re-evaluate the level of trust in their group.



Additional Resources

- Recent research from CCL demonstrates the value of virtual teams embracing tensions and paradoxes.
- [Learn more here!](#)