

# efios virtual teamworking

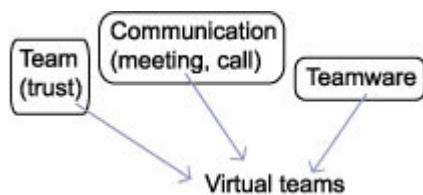
*Virtual Teams are teams of people who primarily interact electronically in addition to occasional face to face meetings.*

Examples of virtual teams can be a group of people at a company working together on a deliverable project from different locations, or a team of staff members from the same department that needs a common platform to enable commuting and remote access to team information.

## Reasons for having virtual teams may include:

- Team members may be geographically disperse
- Regular face to face meetings could be impractical
- Team members may work in different time (zones)
- Teams members may be coming from different organizations, and need a common work platform
- Team members may want to link up with the team from different locations

Virtual teams do not replace regular teams (face to face meetings, even incidental, have unique benefits that are important to the success of the team). Virtual teams are built on common trust and the drive within the project, just like in normal teams, but this may not reveal to be as apparent in the virtual team environment. Therefore supplementing virtual team working over the internet, it is recommended to have face to face meetings or telephone meetings (conference calls) and the common trust relationship that should part of any team.



## Typical ingredients for setting up virtual teams are:

- Create a kickoff meeting (face to face) or create a session if the team is built around a seminar or larger project.
- Create common sense of virtual working across the team members, make sure that everyone knows



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how to use the teamware tool to be used.

- Define a schedule of regular recurring face to face or telephone (conference call) meetings to complement the virtual team working.
- Make sure that all team members are aware of what information should be shared and what information should not be shared - this is typically different from non-virtual team working. Educate people on the value of the 'virtual' aspect and give indications on responsiveness.
- Create a requirement for the team members to collaborate virtually in the team and to build trust amongst the members.
- Assign a team leader - if he/she does not exist already - and go through the 'rules of engagement' including how to facilitate and promote the virtual team working concept.
- Value successful teams.

Once the virtual team has been set up and the team members, the facilitator and the sponsor feel comfortable with the way of working, there are some **benefits** that can come out of the virtual team, which can come forward already in the very first stage of the team's lifecycle.

- Web (and therefore perhaps near-ubiquitous) access
- Work across different time zones.
- Reduction of meeting times, travel cost etc.
- Project cycles can be reduced because work is performed in a more efficient way.
- Members can be selected on skills to complement team, contrary to the location for non-virtual teams.
- Introduction of new team members is easier because project history is recorded in teamware.

*Please contact efios for more details on products and services*

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