



**Att leda på distans**



# E-leadership for project managers

Alfred PARK

"The need for **leadership** in a **virtual** team environment has become increasingly relevant as businesses move toward more **non-traditional work.**"

– *Cascio & Shurygailo, 2003.*



To explore the leadership of project managers in a virtual working environment.

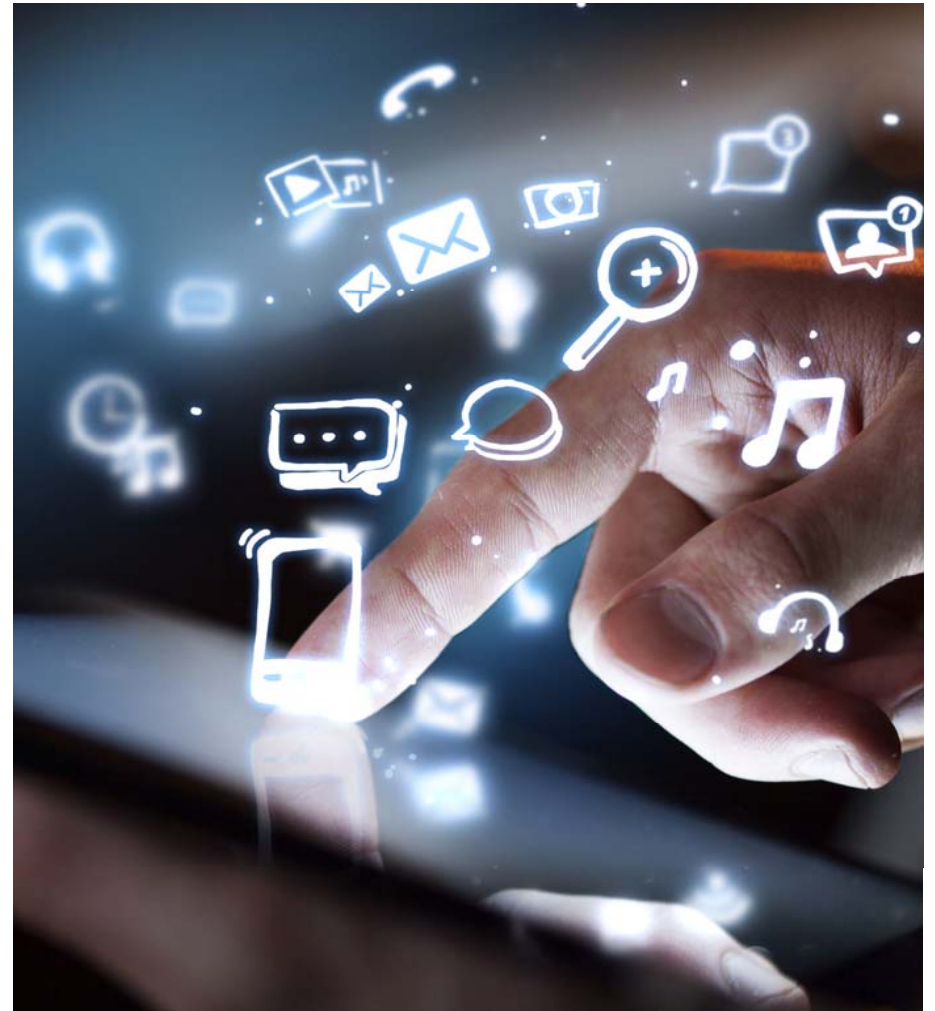
RQ1: How **challenges** affect project success

RQ2: How **trust** is accomplished

RQ3: Leadership **behavior**: *virtual vs. f2f*

# Challenges in virtual teams

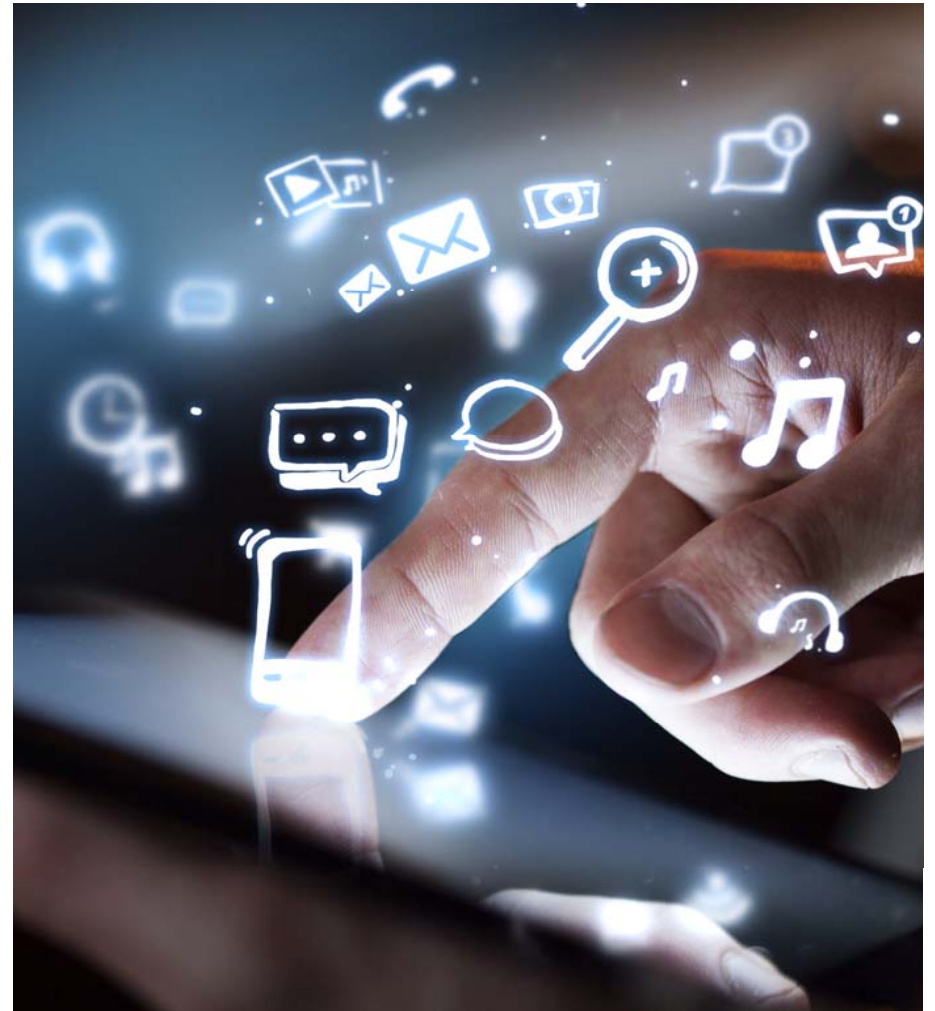
- Trust building
- Leadership Behaviour
- Technology and Communication
- Cultural differences
- Conflicts



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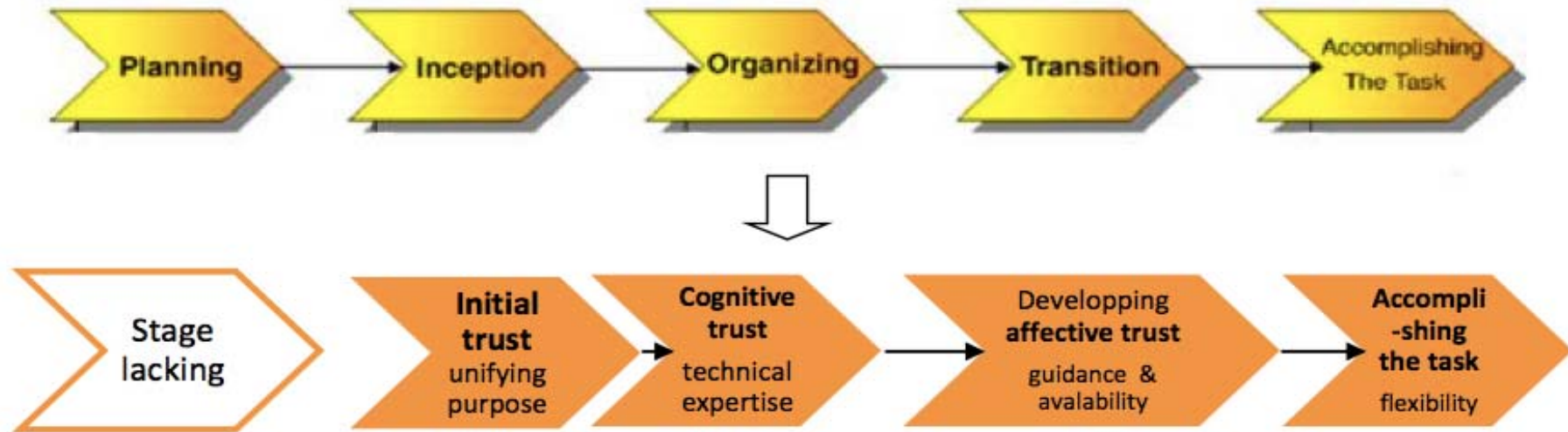
Känner ni igen utmaningarna?  
Ser ni några andra utmaningar?



# Greenberg et al. (2007) model: type of trust required in team stages



- Actions before the first interaction. Choose the right people, train them, competitive reward structure
- Introducing team members main achievements, initiating team building activities and create communication rules.
- Frequent communication, Non-task related communication and encouraging participation
- Change from cognitive to affective trust
- The outcome based on group performance plays a critical role.



- Project leaders do not participate in the planning stage
- Start building trust through a common purpose and team building activities
- Difficult to monitor how the communication was flowing. Ensured to be the link within the team to create an open culture. Non-task related communication is lacking.
- Available, being present and learn more about the individuals in the team
- Meeting deadline was a secondary factor. Celebration of interim deadlines was considered more important than the final deadline.



# Comments from Project Leaders

- *“Maybe the first two meetings should only be about getting to know each other, getting to know your motivation, getting to know who you actually have in the team”*
- *“Start with a physical meeting and close with a physical meeting, and also try to meet two or three times per year. It is more intense in the beginning because you need to find your plan and your schedule, so initially it is more frequent and then during the delivering phase it is more to follow up”*
- *“You get to learn the people, so you know who needs more support than others; you have to look at each person individually”.*

*TASK ORIENTED AND RELATIONSHIP ORIENTED*

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# LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

SHARED LEADERSHIP

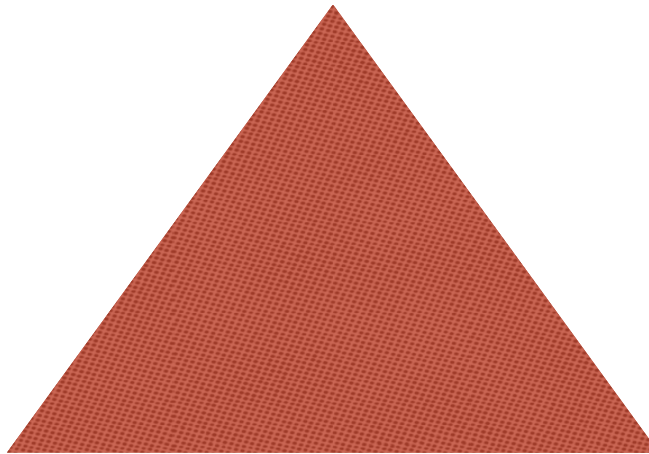
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# Leadership behavior

CLARITY

EXPLICITNESS

**Management of expectations**



**Change management**

**Ability to empower**

CAPTURE CHANGE

ALLOW INITIATIVE & FREEDOM

IMPLICIT MOTIVATION

# Comments from Project Leaders

- *“You depend more on your motivational skills – you should make people do something for the right reason, not because I ask them or push them, but because they feel with the goals and they accept the challenge. In a remote sense, it is about developing implicit motivation rather than explicitly pushing the team”.*
- *“When we had an update meeting, I brought the project star, so when someone really reached a milestone, they received it; all got one star”.*
- *“We try to split as much as possible and implement as many leadership and authority levels as possible because it is easier to solve problems but also to recognize problems when you have the right level of escalation”.*
- *“If you focus on tasks, you will get people behaving as tasks – they do exactly what you ask them to do and then they stop, which in a way you don’t want, you want them to think further than what you give them as a task”.*

# Findings- project managers' perspective-

- How **challenges** affect project success -

# Technology and communication

- Lack of trainings concerning how to use the technology.
- Misalignment of technology within organizations
- Low synchronicity and social presence technology
- Missunderstandings, loss of bright ideas and hinder to creativity

*“Everything within a virtual team needs to be arranged [...] which in a way hinders the input of creativity because not every bright idea comes at the moment you are having a meeting”*

# Cultural differences

- Impact how team members perceive the achievement of project goals and tasks
- Importance of being aware of the differences
- Be more explicit and also monitor more often
- Differences in background and experience > cultural differences



# Comments from Project Leaders

- *“If you ask someone to paint your wall white, some people will do it perfectly and it will be perfectly white and not spoil anything on the wall next to it and other people will make a mess out of it and still say that the wall is white; but in the end it is not the same”*
- *“You can read a bit about culture and you can listen to people who have been there [to the specific country] but in the end I think you need to be physically there for a while and get to know the culture”*
- *“If you have a situation when there is a gap in the language knowledge, you need to be in the same room because you need to draw pictures and show with hands to really understand each other”.*



# Conflicts

- Conflicts are common and mainly task-related
- Wrong management of expectations and high level of pressure
- Task-related - beneficial for project development



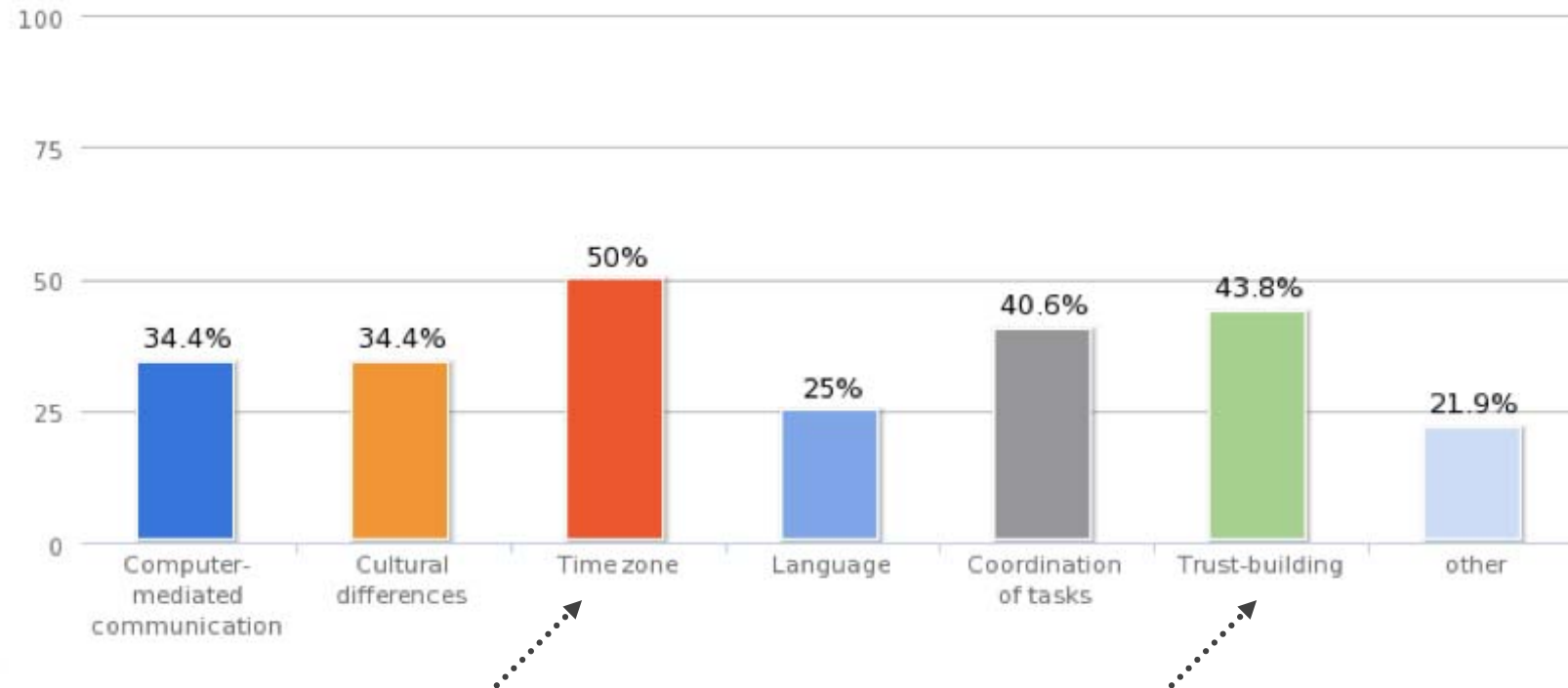
# Comments from Project Leaders

- *“When there is a conflict it is most likely coming from the fact there has not been an agreement of what the expectations are and there has not been a clear agreement of what we are doing and why”*
- *“One of the things I learned is that you need some friction to make things sharp. So in a way some frictions and conflicts are needed to really understand why he or she says no or why he or she says: I cannot do it, or: I’m frustrated. ”*

# Findings

- team perspective -

# Challenges



- Project leaders highlighted differences in language proficiency which did affect project effectiveness and created great barriers to communication.
- Hard to monitor team members, to know what the people do on the other side.

# Comments

- *“Sometimes you need to sacrifice by getting up early in the morning and staying late in the evening, but you have to do it to be able to keep up with the office hours in the different time zones”*
- *“The team members had very different backgrounds, experience and personalities, e.g. some were entrepreneurs while others were extremely focused on details (this was both a source of irritation and strength). Several members worked full time on other projects”.*
- *“Leadership by remote”, “follow-up and completion of tasks” and “working with cultural differences and strange atmosphere at the beginning of the project”.*
- *“Creativeness in virtual meetings”*

# Practical implications and recommendations

- Be aware of the challenges to leading virtual projects effectively
- Develop an appropriate infrastructure that includes alignment of technology and across members and organizations
- Trainings of virtual leadership to master techniques for informal and formal communication
- Capitalize more on the difference between the members
- Create a culture where people are not afraid to speak up, work with group and individual feedback and be open minded and have empathy for people.
- Create formal communication rules and make sure every one adheres to them
- Face-to-face meeting in the beginning och the virtual life cycle

“This is because virtual leadership is here to stay.”

*–Alfred Park & Luminita Popescu*



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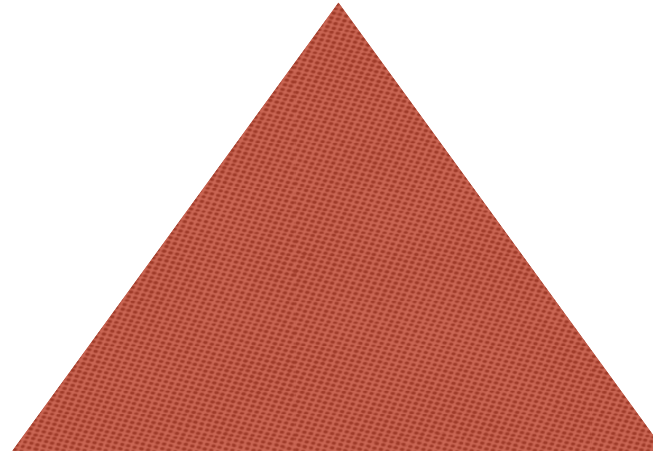
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**Change management**

**Ability to empower**

CAPTURE CHANGE

ALLOW INITIATIVE & FREEDOM

IMPLICIT MOTIVATION

Vilka delar av ledarskapet blir extra viktiga vid ledarskap på distans?

Vad fungerar av erfarenhet inte vid ledarskap på distans ?

Hur kan man jobba för att skapa och vidmakthålla ett förtroende vid ledarskap på distans?



*I virtuella projekt är det ännu viktigare med:*

- tydlig kommunikation och att man säkerställer att mottagaren har förstått uppgiften.*
- att alla har förstått sin uppgift i helheten och vad som händer om de inte levererar.*
- feedback och att se individerna, styra individuellt för att alla måste vara mer självgående. Virtuella projekt ställer stora krav på individen som jobbar i projektet.*

*Engagemang är alltid viktigt men ännu viktigare om du ska få personer att leverera som du inte träffar dagligen. Du måste du ha andra anledningar till att de vill leverera. I vårt fall incitament som det högre syftet med projektet och att det är roligt att jobba i projektet.*

*Man behöver inte börja med att bygga upp fräcka web-verktyg. Vi har använt mail, excel och telefon.*

Maria Forss projektledare för Plenadren, ett läkemedel mot Addisons sjukdom. Ett exempel på lyckat ledarskap på distans. Blev årets projektledare 2012



*Vi skojade lite om det. Vi hade en tjej som jag också jobbade med i mitt tidigare jobb som gjorde den finala touchen på t ex de bilder vi presenterade i möten med myndigheter och henne har jag jobbat med från och till i 10 år och aldrig träffat. Nu har jag dock träffat henne. En hel del av experterna i nätverket såg man aldrig utan de levererade bara sina delar.*

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Vad tar du med dig från kvällen?