

Virtual work...reality

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Session outcomes

- Learn the benefits and challenges associated with having a virtual workforce from a safety and engagement standpoint
- Discuss how to balance employee satisfaction, engagement and performance
- Identify how to reduce and manage risk factors for virtual workers

What is a virtual team

- A group of people who work together to achieve defined goals, with some or all team members separated by physical distance.
- Global Virtual Teams are separated by language, culture, time zones and competing local priorities.

Benefits and challenges



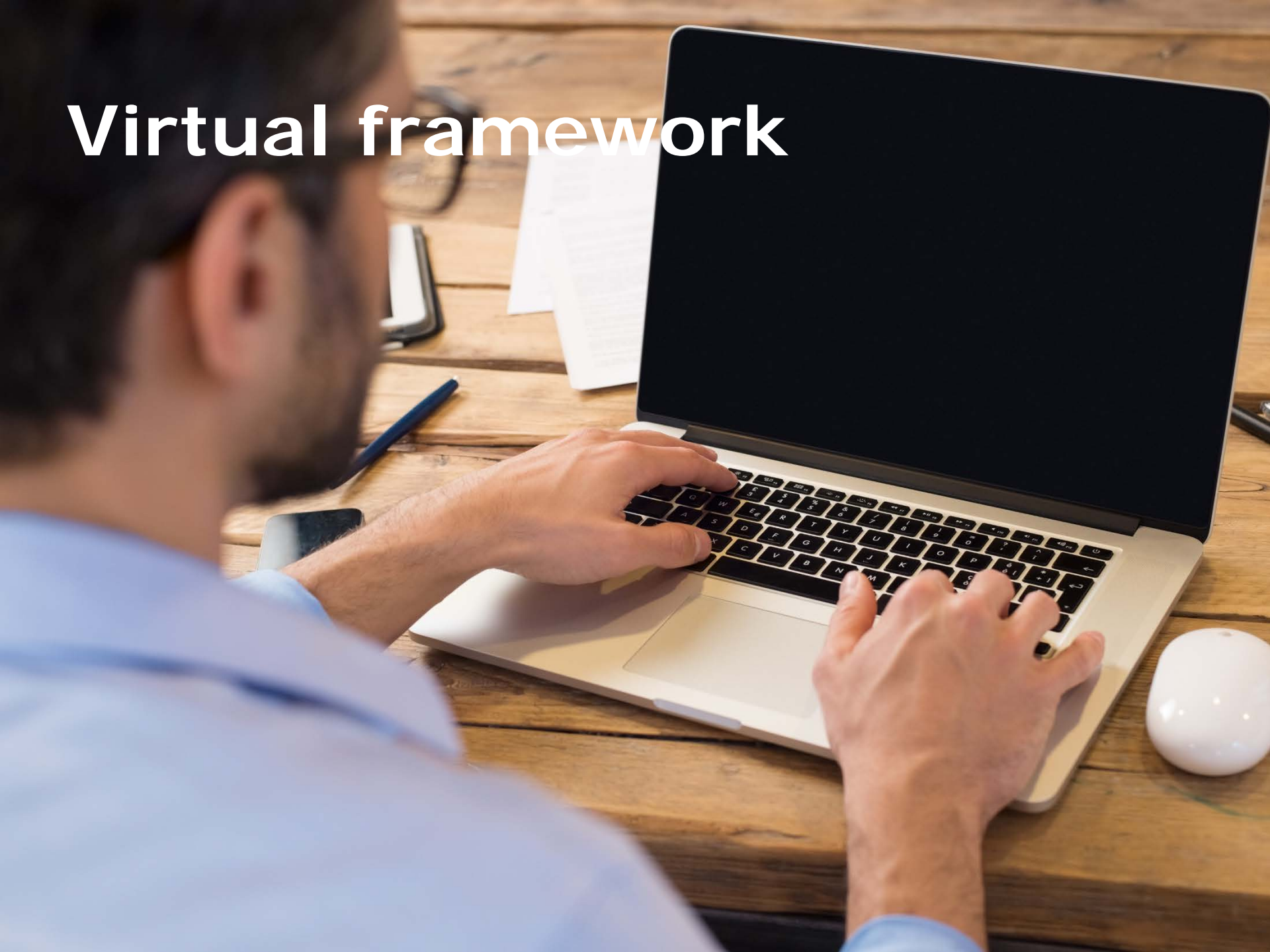
Benefits

- Harness the best talent
- Gather diverse input for better innovation and problem solving
- Promote work/life balance
- Leverage resources for cost-effectiveness
- Develop a learning culture

Challenges

- Complexity
- Cross-cultural Misunderstandings
- Communication & Conflict
- Slower Decisions
- Time Zone Differences
- Competing priorities and resources
- Lack of Team Skills
- Conflicting Roles and Responsibilities

Virtual framework



Pick the right people!

- Self-motivated
- Results-oriented
- Able to work independently
- Communicate effectively with the team lead and his or her team colleagues
- Learn the strengths and weaknesses of each team member

Proceed with purpose

- Share the vision, mission and goals for the team
- Establishing team ground rules
- Discuss what success looks like as their team
- Clarify expectations of team members – with some detail

Proceed with purpose, cont.

- Ensuring team members understand one another's roles
- Discuss effective methods for feedback, measurement & how to celebrate success
- Establish communication and meeting protocols (phone, email, video, etc.)
- Discuss decision making strategies
- Discuss resources and tools

Engagement



Virtual work can increase
employee satisfaction and
decrease employee engagement.

Emphasize the “us” in trust

- Increase the level of communication and amount of communication
- Take time to get to know one another
- Establish accountability and follow-through protocols

Build stronger bridges

- Skype, Yammer, Drop Box, Google Drive, Evernote, IM
- Weekly catch-up Calls
- Monthly or quarterly meetings
- Celebrate successes
- Create a “virtual water cooler” to build connections
- Use technology to overcome barriers

Crystal clear on communication

- Try team meetings by teleconference
- Be absolutely clear in your email communication
- Create regular team newsletter that include: updates, conversations, birthdays, and any cool happenings going on at the office
- Use a variety of technology tools
- Send something fun inter-office to the virtual team members – notes and even a chocolate bar!

Risks



Risk Factors

- Culture
- Productivity and accountability
- Environment, tools and resources
- Presenteeism - engagement
- People – collaboration, conflict, communication

Culture

- Supervisor support and acceptance
- Generational factors

Productivity and Accountability

- At times, you may wonder if your virtual team members are more or less productive as compared to your “headquarters” staff.
- What are some current methods that you track employee performance, progress and work productivity?
- How would tracking a virtual team differ?

Environment, tools and resources

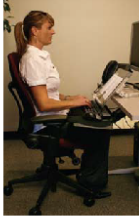
- Designated work space or office
- Employee or employer provided equipment
- Ergonomic risk factors
- Getting help
- Visitors

Office ergonomics: Self assessment worksheet

NAME: _____ DEPARTMENT: _____ DATE: _____

NEUTRAL POSTURES

To set up a workstation for optimal comfort and performance, it's helpful to understand the concept of neutral body posture. Neutral body posture is a comfortable working position in which your joints are naturally aligned. Working with the body in a neutral position reduces stress and strain on the muscles, tendons, nerves and joints - which can reduce your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD). After watching the Workstation Comfort video series, use this checklist to review key areas of your workplace. Discuss your completed worksheet with your supervisor or manager to determine the best solutions for your workplace.

	CHAIR	KEYBOARD	MOUSE	Yes	No
	<p>CHAIR <i>Is your chair properly adjusted?</i></p> <p>Adjust your seat height so that your feet are positioned flat on the floor and fully supported.</p> <p>Your knees should be at the same height as your hips.</p> <p>Thighs and hips should be parallel to the floor or angled slightly down.</p> <p>The lumbar support should make contact with the small curve in your lower back.</p> <p>Hands, wrists and forearms should be straight, in-line and roughly parallel to the floor.</p> <p>Place shoulders in a relaxed position with upper arms hanging at the side of the body.</p> <p>Make sure that you maintain a distance of one to two inches (or two finger widths) between the front edge of the seat pan and the backside of your knees. If the seat pan is too deep, you may need a lumbar wedge or pillow.</p> <p>Verify that the seat pan width is adequate by making sure that there are 1-2 inches (or two finger widths) of space between the thigh and the chair edge.</p>				
	<p>KEYBOARD <i>Is your keyboard properly positioned?</i></p> <p>Place the keyboard in a flat position directly in front of and aligned with the monitor.</p> <p>Check to make sure the legs on the underside of the keyboard remain in a flat position.</p> <p>Your keyboard should be positioned at a height that allows your wrists to be in a straight line with your arms.</p> <p>Your elbows should rest comfortably at your sides and be at about a 90 degree angle.</p> <p>Once the height is adjusted, make sure the keyboard tray is level or in a downward tilt. This also helps your wrists stay straight and in line with your forearms.</p> <p>If you are not using a keyboard tray, you may need to adjust your chair and/or desk height in order to work in a neutral posture.</p> <p>Use a soft palm rest to minimize contact pressure with hard surfaces on the desk. It is important to use these pads for periodic "micro breaks" and not as a means of support while typing.</p>				
	<p>MOUSE <i>Is your mouse properly positioned?</i></p> <p>The mouse should be placed at the same level as and in close proximity to the keyboard.</p> <p>Use a mouse that fits your hand comfortably and keeps your fingers relaxed and slightly curved.</p> <p>A wrist rest or mouse pad will allow your wrist to rest on a soft surface and help avoid contact pressure.</p>				

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Engagement

- Team engagement
- Personal engagement

Diagnosing Virtual Team Problems

WHAT	POSSIBLE CAUSES
Lack of Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountabilities may be unclear (Process)• Team members may not feel respected (D&I, People)• Time zones or language barriers (D&I, Process)
Missing Deadlines or Key Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizational barriers (Process)• Deadlines may be unrealistic/Conflicting priorities (Purpose)• Poor motivation (People)
Recurring Conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of trust (D&I, People)• Cultural misunderstandings (D&I)• Personality issues (People)• Lack of a “path forward” (Process)
Team Members “Missing In Action”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflicting signals about priorities (Purpose)• Low accountability (Purpose, Process)• Lack of engagement (People)

