

СЕКЦІЯ 16. СУЧАСНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ В ЕКОНОМІЦІ ТА МЕНЕДЖМЕНТІ

LEADING VIRTUAL TEAMS

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Globalization and telecommuting, empowered by advances in information technologies, are two overlapping trends that have created a new environment in which leaders need to learn to function, and while in the Western hemisphere virtual environment has become rather standard context for work, in Ukraine and other Eastern European countries this trend is only beginning to gain momentum.

Leading virtual teams is quite different from co-located team leadership. There are number of unique challenges that are connected to this dynamic. They include:

Lack of information richness, which comes with face-to-face interactions

Difficulties in developing trust among team members

Greater complexity: expanded geography, multiple time zones, different cultures, laws, regulations and business practices (diversity)

Protecting personal life of a leader as s/he tries to function in multiple time zones.

Telecommuting adds to the challenge by working from home

These and other challenges require new sets of competencies from a leader to ensure the successful functioning and performance of the team. However, actual issue of leadership over virtual teams has been neglected compared to the discussion of other issues pertaining to virtual environment. Initially, the focus was on using the right technology, later, as the research in this field evolved, the primary focus was on setting the right processes in place, finally, the discussion shifted to building trust and managing and leading virtual teams (Powell & Piccoli, 2004; Caultat, 2010).

Ukraine has chosen its vector of development, and as a country it is striving to have westward orientation. This implies opening more opportunities of global partnerships as well as integrating western organizational practices, one of which may be telecommuting. Therefore, the issues of leading in virtual environment are becoming more pertinent to organizational context in the country. Businesses in Ukraine may have a better chance of success if they understand and integrate the best practices developed for virtual teams. As stated above, the solution is not only in getting the right technology, or setting up the right processes. The most crucial component of success in virtual environment are leaders who know how to lead in this particular context.

The presentation will consider the challenges the virtual environment presents to the leaders and will provide possible solutions to them. Best practices highlighted in Western research literature will be presented and analyzed in the context of Ukrainian culture and technological advancements.