

Overcoming barriers to information sharing in virtual teams

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Catherine Durnell Cramton
George Mason University

Kara L. Orvis
George Mason University

Abstract

Teams are created in work settings on the expectation that the group product will be improved as a result of the merging of the unique information and expertise of the group's members. However, recent research has suggested that virtual teams may have difficulty realizing this advantage. This chapter describes how working under virtual conditions impacts the distribution and sharing of task, social and contextual information in teams, with consequences for team effectiveness. In particular, virtual conditions tend to increase the amount and the distribution of information that a team must manage, while restricting the means by which team members communicate. Implications for practice are drawn, with emphasis on the team leader's role in facilitating effective information sharing.