

Nice to See You, But Send Me an Email



Leveraging Technology, Communication and Social Networks
to Improve Individual Performance in Distributed Teams

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Dave's Dilemma

- Dave, IT Manager
 - 20 person team
 - Part of large IT department
- Distributed Teams Research
 - Team members work in different physical locations
 - Dave's Team: Some colocated with others, some not colocated
- Asked to do more with the same number of staff



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Dave's Dilemma

- How work gets done must change
 - Each team member has more task variety
 - Become more physically distributed
 - Place staff at client sites
 - Allow staff to work at home at times
 - Retain staff that moves out of area
 - Leverage outsourced staff
- Other managers insist that all IT staff needs to be physically together
- Resource implications of not being together
 - Need to see each other; performance may suffer

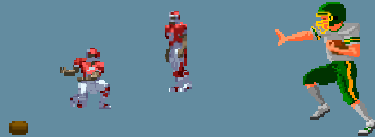
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Game Change

- Field of Play has Changed



- New Field / New Resources / New Rules



- What are the new 'rules' for top performance?

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Top Performers Resource Use

- **Leverage location and communication mode**
 - Face-to-face vs. electronic interactions
 - When to focus on face-to-face /electronic
 - With who, when, where
- **Two different patterns of interaction**
 - Face-to-face resource network
 - Electronic resource network



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Research Project and Method

- **Social Network Survey and Analysis**
 - Who do you communicate with on the team
 - Two types of networks:
 - Face-to-face vs. electronic communication
- **Analyze Patterns of Communication**
 - Patterns → Resource access → performance
- **Questions**
 - How does colocation with team members relate to these two types of networks?
 - Does more technology use make any difference?
 - How do the two networks relate to individual performance?
- **Tool for Managers to Use**




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Research Sample

- 254 people
 - 18 distributed teams
 - 9 organizations
- Technology and Human Service teams
- 7 global teams, 11 wholly based in U.S.
- Individual resource access & performance
 - Not group performance

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Findings – Bad News / Good News

- Colocation with team members 
 - Resource access goes up – prominence, visibility
 - Even resource access in electronic networks is affected
- As the number of colocated team members 
 - Resource access goes down
- As communication technology use 
 - Prominence, visibility goes up

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Key Finding



- Electronic networks were related to Individual Performance
 - No relation between Individual Performance & face-to-face networks
- Being Visible in the Electronic Network is key to individual performance

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Insights

- How to Play on the New Field
 - Value Electronic interactions as you would Face-to-face interactions
 - Respond in timely manner
 - Judicious use of electronic interactions
 - Balance:
 - A smaller set of close knit contacts you keep in touch with regularly
 - Larger set of less frequent contacts
 - Increase range and cross boundaries – physical, functional, status
 - Culture of working electronically
 - Agree upon electronic expectations

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Insights

- Access to relational resources and performance does not have to degrade in distributed teams
- Electronic interactions
 - Can be (HAVE TO BE?!) used to access resources that are associated with higher performance

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Making it Work for You

- What patterns are related to higher performance in YOUR organization?
- Do-it-Yourself Network Analysis
 - 5-10 minute questionnaire
 - Intrateam, interteam, interdepartment
- Software for analysis is readily available

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Nice to Meet You.....
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