



Align Virtual Teams and Employees with Your Organization's Mission, Vision, Strategy, and Values to Optimize Performance

John Barker
JD, CCEP, CHC, CHPC, CHRC
September 08, 2020

Idea: Remote employees and virtual teams need continual alignment with your organization's values, vision, mission, and strategy (VVMS) to optimize performance. Employee alignment with your VVMS mitigates some of the inherent performance challenges facing individual remote workers and virtual teams. The Bonar Institute offers a wide range of VVMS, diagnostic, coaching, and mentoring solutions that optimize remote work and virtual team performance.

Remote Work and Virtual Teams Are the New Reality

A review of major business publications and peer-reviewed literature confirms that during the COVID-19 pandemic, except for front-line workers, work occurs digitally and remotely, usually at employees' homes, and teams are now virtual. Meetings occur in virtual meeting environments in applications such as Google Meet, GoToMeeting, Skype, WebEx, or Zoom. Pre-pandemic, many organizations with activities in multiple cities and countries, including in an offshoring context, already had experience with virtual meetings. However, the pandemic has made it necessary for employees and teams unaccustomed to remote work to work remotely. CFOs and CEOs look forward to reduced real-estate costs post-pandemic based on the success of remote work and virtual teams. The world of work has permanently **changed** for everyone. More analysis follows about the challenges of this new paradigm.

Individual Employee Dysfunction Affects Virtual Team Performance

Surveys and studies reveal that many remote employees experience decreases in performance, which can threaten virtual team success. Individuals who typically dominate in face-to-face (F2F) meetings have less influence in virtual meetings. Peer pressure in F2F meetings that maintains a minimal level of employee engagement in a F2F discussion is less influential in virtual meetings, even when participants' faces appear in video. Some employees disengage from the meeting by engaging in side conversations via instant messaging. Participants' inability to see facial micro-expressions leads to misinterpretation of sarcasm and humor. Meeting participants' physical environment pose challenges. Cats walk across keyboards, dogs bark in the background, and babies cry.

Five Team Dysfunctions Degrade Virtual Team Performance

In his 2002 book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, expert author Patrick Lencioni noted that organizations must address the following common dysfunctions which tend to reduce or eliminate team-based competitive advantages: (1) absence of trust between team members; (2) fear of conflict; (3) lack of commitment; (4) avoidance of accountability; and (5) inattention to results. These dysfunctions can impede performance even when all team members have good intentions, want to be trustworthy, and are committed to achieving team and organizational goals. These dysfunctions are especially challenging to solve in a virtual team environment versus a F2F environment.

Part of the Solution: Remote Employee Alignment with Optimized VVMS

Scientific studies published in peer-reviewed journals show that employees who perceive a broader, meaningful context for their work are happier and more engaged and productive employees. Organizations can mitigate virtual work performance problems by ensuring that all employees align with the

organization's mission, vision, strategy, and values (VVMS). The VVMS provides the context and meaning for all activities.

After ensuring that your organization has followed VVMS best practices, it is helpful to do the following:

1. Regularly train employees on your organization's VVMS;
2. Provide a permanent presence of the VVMS in the virtual meeting software;
3. Begin each meeting with a review of the VVMS that is relevant to the team's tasks;
4. Hold meetings that focus on discussing team tasks in light of the VVMS; and
5. Ensure that your organization truly executes its VVMS.

The Bonar Institute Offers Remote Work Optimization Solutions

The Bonar Institute offers several solutions that can help optimize remote individual employees' and virtual teams' performance. Associates at the Bonar Institute, who represent multiple cultures, have deep domain expertise in mitigating the five dysfunctions of teams in any setting. They have diagnostic tools for identifying leadership and management challenges for individual leaders and teams as a whole. The Bonar Institute team has deep expertise in assisting organizations with creating or optimizing their missions, visions, and strategies in the context of their values. Finally, associates at the Institute can suggest ways to align remote workers with your organization's VVMS in physical and digital meeting environments.

To schedule an initial consultation, contact John Barker, JD, CCEP, CHC, CHRC, CHPC at jbarker@bonarinstitute.com or +1-847-331-4810.