Virtual leadership The challenges and strategies to overcome them

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Virtual Leadership

Overcoming the Challenges of Virtual leadership: Strategies for Effective Remote Team Management

Amberlee Smock

University of New Hampshire/ college of professional studies

LD: 850 Graduate Capstone

Dr. Kathy DesRoches

February 2024
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Acknowledgment

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their unwavering support throughout my schooling over the past several years. I am deeply grateful to my loving husband for his constant encouragement, understanding and patience. His belief in me has been a great source of inspiration.

I am also thankful to my children for their understanding and for giving me space and time I needed to focus on getting schoolwork done.

To my family I thank you for standing by me, for your love and for being my pillar of strength. Your support has been instrumental in my success and I am forever grateful.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Kathy DesRoches for their exceptional guidance and mentorship throughout this research endeavor. Your dedication to push us to do better, your passion for the subject matter and your unwavering commitment to my academic growth has been instrumental in shaping my journey. Dr DesRoches relentless pursuit of excellence has challenged me to go beyond my limits, to think critically and strive for better. Your valuable insights, constructive feedback and encouragement have motivated me to develop a deeper understanding of leadership. Thank you for pushing me to do better and for pushing me to reach my full potential.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to all those family members I have lost over the course of my journey to obtain my degree. I hope I make you proud.
Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to delve into the challenges faced by virtual leaders and provide recommendations for overcoming those challenges in order to enhance team performance and engagement in a remote work setting. I selected this research because I started a new job at the height of covid-19 and I was sent home to do a job I had no idea how to do. My research aims to contribute to the development of practical guidelines for virtual leaders and organizations. The challenges include communication and collaboration, trust, rapport and information sharing, managing conflicts, a sense of belonging and diversity (work time zones, cultures and work styles) as well as emotional intelligence, training, leadership styles, supervision and work life balance. For my research I sent out a survey to virtual leaders to see what they felt the challenges are and the strategies they use to overcome them. I will compare it to the research that has already been done and come up with strategies based off my research.

Keywords: Virtual leadership, challenges of virtual leadership, strategies for remote work settings, e-leadership, teleworking, virtual teams, remote work environments and Leadership styles for effective remote team management
Virtual Leadership

Virtual leadership is referred to as the ability to lead and manage a team remotely using technology-based communication. It involves guiding and motivating team members who are geographically dispersed, using virtual platforms such as Zoom, Teams and Skype to communicate, collaborate and work towards achieving common goals. The history of virtual work and leadership can be traced back to the early 20th century with the advent of telecommuting.

The concept of working remotely or virtually gained popularity in the 1970’s when technology advancements, such as fax machines and personal computers allowed people to work from home or other locations away from the traditional office setting (Reynolds, 2023). The 1990’s saw a significant increase in the use of virtual teams, this was driven by the widespread adoption of the internet and collaborative software tools (google docs, fax machines, zoom and many more tools) (Powell, 2004). Organizations started to recognize the potential benefits of virtual teams this included cost saving, access to more global talent, and increased levels of flexibility (Powell, 2004). This led to the emergence of virtual teams, where team members were located in different parts of the world, yet they worked together towards a common goal. With the evolution of virtual work, the concept of virtual leadership also emerged.

Virtual leaders are individuals who effectively manage and guide remote teams. They rely on digital communication tools, such as email, video conferencing and project management software to communicate and coordinate with their team members (Ganesan,Karthik, 2024). Virtual leaders must be able to foster trust and build relationships with each member of their team. Without face-to-face interactions. They need to be skilled in communicating effectively through the various digital channels and managing remote team dynamics (Ganesan,Karthik, 2024).
The purpose of this paper is to delve into the challenges faced by virtual leaders and to provide recommendations or strategies for overcoming those challenges in order to enhance team performance and engagement. The challenges include communication and collaboration, trust, rapport and information sharing, managing conflicts, a sense of belonging and diversity (work time zones, cultures and work styles) as well as emotional intelligence, training, leadership styles, supervision and work life balance. The research is aimed to answer two fundamental questions (a) what are the challenges of virtual leadership (b) what are the strategies used to overcome those challenges.

**Literature review**

The growth of virtual teams has been a constant since the end of the decade of the 90’s (Guinaliu & Jordan, 2016 ). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual work and it has highlighted the importance of virtual leadership. Organizations worldwide were forced to transition to remote work setups to ensure business continuity. A study done by the consulting firm OnPoint consulting (2013), affirms that more than 1.3 billion people work virtually and that 25% of the teams worldwide are virtual (Guinaliu & Jordan, 2016 ). The pandemic presented new challenges and opportunities for leaders in remote settings. Leaders had to adapt their leadership style and practice in order to effectively lead and manage virtual teams during an unprecedented time (Dwivedi, 2020). While virtual leadership offers many numerous benefits such as increased flexibility and access to a more global talent pool for your organization, it also has challenges that require certain strategies in order to be successful. Scholars researched the challenges faced by leaders in remote settings. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing strategies to enhance virtual leadership effectiveness.
Challenges of virtual leadership

Current research highlights many challenges of virtual leadership, including communication, trust, rapport and information sharing, conflict management and accountability.

According to Duarte and Snyder 2006, Effective communication is critical for virtual leaders in order to be able to overcome the limitation of distance and to help build and develop strong relationships with team members (Duarte & Snyder, 2006). Communication Challenges are mainly due to the lack of face to face interactions. In virtual settings, leaders and team members rely heavily on digital communication tools. Digital communication tools are tools that encompass a wide range or technologies and platforms that facilitate communication and collaboration in virtual settings. These tools play a crucial role in enabling team members to connect, share information and work together effectively. Common digital tools are email, video conferencing, instant messaging, project management software and file sharing platforms such as google docs.

The absence of non-verbal cues and contextual cues in virtual communication makes it challenging to convey emotions, intentions and nuances effectively, resulting in communication barriers that can hinder collaboration, decision making and relationship building among team members (Hertel et al., 2005). Addressing communication challenges is essential for virtual leaders in order to promote clarity, trust and engagement within their remote teams (Martins, 2004).

Virtual teams also experience difficulty in trust building, establishing a rapport and information sharing. Patterns of leadership must be adapted to a new environment where communication becomes a significant barrier in the development of relationships among the
members of a team. In fact, trust has been proposed as the primary challenge facing virtual teams today (Bullock & Tucker Klein, 2011).

Due to the lack of face to face interactions in virtual settings, the absence of physical proximity and visual cues makes it challenging for virtual leaders to establish personal connections, build rapport and foster trust among team members (Hertel, 2005). According to research done by (Martins, 2004) it indicates that building trust in virtual teams requires intentional efforts to promote transparency, open communication and mutual respect. Virtual leaders must proactively create opportunities for informal interactions, social bonding and relationship building activities to strengthen trust and rapport within a team (Powell, 2015).

Another Challenge faced by virtual leaders is effectively managing conflicts and being able to resolve issues. Integrating conflict management in the workplace can highlight the organizational levels at which conflict is managed and experienced (Avgar, 2020). Work conflict can foster innovation and mutual understanding but can result in negative consequences if ignored and unaddressed (Lawless & Trif, 2016). Several studies such as ones done by Powell & Azukas, highlight the importance of understanding the unique dynamics of virtual leadership such as establishing a sense of belonging. Virtual teams often consist of members from different cultural backgrounds, time zones and work styles, which can ultimately lead to misunderstandings and conflicts amongst members (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006).

Studies done by Azukas (2022) and Jarvenppa (1999) show that trust building may take longer in a virtual setting compared to that of a face to face setting. Jarvenppa and Leidner also discuss the impact of cultural differences on communication and trust. Trust is a key ingredient in social and economic relationships and it is also one of the most determinant factors of performance within an organization (Guinaliu & Jordan, 2016).
Previous literature has extensively addressed the study of organizational trust, yielding clear evidence that trust is vital within an organization (Guinaliu, M & Jordan, P. 2016). Being able to understand your team’s dynamics will help in building and maintaining a high level of trust.

Holding team members accountable can be a challenge for virtual leaders. Without regular face-to-face interactions, it can be harder to communicate and align everyone’s understanding of what needs to be done and by when. This lack of clarity can make it difficult to hold individuals accountable for their work.

**Models of virtual leadership**

Previous literature emphasizes that traditional leadership patterns cannot be used in the new virtual environment (Cascio, 200, Santos, 2013), therefore it is necessary to adapt the management of the teams to the new virtual reality, where team leadership plays a fundamental role in the team's success. In this paper I chose to discuss four main leadership styles. They are as follows:

**Transformational Leadership:** this style is characterized by leaders who inspire and motivate their followers to achieve exceptional performance and personal growth (Bass & Riggio, 2006). These leaders are typically known for their ability to create a vision, communicate it effectively and empower their followers to achieve the organization's goals. In a virtual setting, transformational leaders use communication tools and technology platforms to effectively convey their visions, values and expectations to remote team members. They prioritize open and transparent communication to ensure team members feel connected, engaged and motivated to contribute to the shared goals of the team. They provide mentorship and coaching to foster opportunities to grow and learn (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

**Transactional Leadership:** This style focuses on the exchange relationship between leaders and followers, where rewards and punishments are used to motivate performance of team members.
VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP

(Bass & Riggio, 2006). This style emphasizes clear expectations and goals. Transactional leadership in the context of virtual leadership focuses on a more task-oriented and directive approach to managing remote teams. Transactional leaders establish clear expectations, set goals and provide rewards and consequences based on performance of team members.

**Charismatic Leadership:** Characterized by leaders who possess charm, confidence and persuasive abilities to influence and inspire their teams. These leaders tend to create strong emotional connections to their followers, and they inspire loyalty and commitment (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). In a virtual setting charismatic leadership involves inspiring and influencing team members through the leaders personal qualities, vision and charisma. They have a strong presence of charm and they know how to use it to get what they want.

**Servant Leadership:** Focuses on the leaders commitment to serving the needs of their followers and the organization (Greenleaf, 1977) This type of leader tend to prioritize the well-being and development of followers. They tend to foster collaboration and strive to create an empowering environment. When it comes to virtual leadership this leadership style emphasizes serving the needs of remote team members and empowering them. They foster a sense of community and collaboration. They prioritize the well-being and development of their team. They focus on building trust, empathy and support within the virtual work environment. Servant leaders take the time and effort to provide mentorship and coaching to help team members grow and learn all while fostering a sense of accountability and ownership (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

**Emotional Intelligence:**

Lining et al. (2018) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize, understand and manage one’s own emotions as well as the emotions of others. Lining (2018) argues that emotional intelligence is crucial for effective leadership no matter the setting face to face or
virtual. Having this ability enables leaders to navigate the complex social interactions, build relationships, inspire and motivate teams (Lining, 2018). Emotional intelligence involves registering, attending to, and deciphering emotional messages expressed in facial expressions, voice tone, or cultural artifacts. A person who sees the fleeting expression of fear in the face of another understands much more about the other person’s emotions and thoughts than someone who misses such a signal (Salovey et al., 2007).

Lining et al. (2018) argues that emotional intelligence is more critical in a virtual setting than any other setting. Emotional intelligence helps leaders establish trust, communicate effectively and foster team collaboration. The study by Lining shows that leaders with higher emotional intelligence is better equipped to handle challenges and create a more positive virtual work environment. Self-awareness is one of the most recognized components of emotional intelligence. It entails knowing what one feels at any given time and understanding how those moods impact others (Graduate Studies, U. C. of P. S. (n.d.).

**Advantages of virtual leadership**

Virtual leadership offers several advantages, especially in today’s digital world. Some of those advantages are as follows. Increased flexibility and accessibility. Virtual leadership allows leaders to connect with their team members from anywhere and at any time. According to a study by O’Reilly and Tushman (2008), virtual leadership enables leaders to overcome geographical and time-based constraints, facilitating communication and collaboration across all boundaries. In theory, a virtual environment gives employers the chance to build a dream team without any boundaries. Virtual leadership enables organizations to tap into a diverse and global talent pool, leading to increased creativity and innovation. A study by Neeley and Leonardi (2018) highlights how virtual leadership allows organizations to leverage the expertise and
perspectives of team members from different cultural backgrounds and geographies. Virtual leadership can result in cost and time savings for organizations. A report by global workplace analytics (2020) states that organizations that embrace virtual leadership can save on office space, commuting costs and travel expenses. Companies found it be more cost effective to have employees work from home. Research published by Harvard Business Review shows that when you successfully identify and remedy remote workplace issues, you can build a strong team that collaborates from all over the world effectively (2022).

**Disadvantages of leading a virtual team**

While virtual leadership has its advantages, it also presents certain disadvantages. Limited personal connection, building rapport and fostering a sense of team spirit can be more challenging in a virtual setting (Harvard Division of Continuing Education, 2022). Without regular in person interactions, team members may feel disconnected and find it difficult to establish personal connections with their colleagues. Lack of supervision is also a disadvantage. It can be very challenging to hold employees accountable and monitor their progress and productivity. It is hard to ensure that everyone is actively contributing to the team goals Harvard Division of Continuing Education, 2022). While there are many disadvantages the one that is the most prevalent is isolation and burnout. Remote work can sometimes lead to feelings of isolation, as team members may miss the social interactions and support that comes from working in an office setting. Additionally, the flexibility of work blurs the boundaries between work and personal life potentially leading to burnout if not managed effectively.

**Research method**

This study involved looking at an evaluating quantitative information in order to provide a well-rounded approach to the research. The quantitative data for this research project was
obtained through peer reviewed articles, journals, websites, Surveys and questionnaires. The peer reviewed articles were obtained through the University of New Hampshire library. The methods used to acquire relevant sources were through searching for keywords such as virtual leadership, leading virtual teams, remote work leaders and challenges and rewards to virtual leadership. My method included a quantitative survey of current virtual leaders. The survey was used to collect data from leaders about the challenges of virtual leadership and their perception of effective strategies to overcome issues, the desired outcome of the survey is to be able to compare and identify common issues. I used social media platforms to promote my survey to virtual leaders. I also reached out to virtual leaders I know personally and asked them to take my survey. The survey consisted of fifteen questions that were multiple choice or short answer. Lastly literature reviews and numerous research articles have been used to analyze existing research on the challenges of virtual leadership and strategies to overcome them. By reviewing and summarizing previous findings I hope to be able to identify research gaps in knowledge, common themes and areas for future research. The survey consisted of fifteen questions ranging from multiple choice, short answer and ranking of importance from one to six.

**Data Analysis**

The survey had a total of 39 responses. For question number one I asked how long have you been a virtual leader, sixty-six percent of respondents have been a virtual leader for four to five years. Twelve percent of respondents have been a leader for six or more years. Twenty-two percent reported being a virtual for zero to two years. For questions number two I asked do you lead a team from multiple time zones. Majority responded with yes they lead a team in multiple time zones. When asked in question three is this was a challenge, most responded that it was not an issue unless urgent matter came up then the time difference could be a challenge. Question
four was about the time zones, the people on their team worked in blank times zones. Majority of respondents lead a team in one to two time zones. Ten virtual leaders stated they lead a team in three time zones and four leaders said they lead a team in 4 or more time zones.

In question number five I asked how do you characterize your leadership style. fifty-two percent of respondents said their leadership style was transformational. This means they felt as though they inspire and motivate their team by providing a clear vision of the desired goals. Twenty-nine percent said their leadership style leaned more towards servant style. This means they feel as though they prioritize building meaningful relationships, empathy and collaboration within their team. Each category for transactional and charismatic leadership tied for ten percent each.
For question number six I asked what barriers they have personally experienced as a virtual leader. When it came to identifying barriers in virtual leadership the survey showed that information sharing was the most challenging, followed by trust and relationship building, communication and holding people accountable.
Question number six was what strategies have you employed to help with effective communication among yourself and your team. Effective strategies for communication that leaders used varied from meetings notes sent after meetings to everyone to keep and look back at. Some leaders take notes and keep them in a shared folder. Follow ups in multiple formats including verbal and written are also good strategies used. Some virtual leaders reported they do weekly check in with staff to make sure they are up to speed with assignments and to discuss any issues they have personally and professionally. A true open-door approach. The most common theme was the use of multiple sources for communication. One respondent said “Using synchronous resources, like Google Docs, have allowed the team to stay connected while working remotely across different time zones. Also lean heavily on Zoom and Slack as connection and communication tools”.

Question number seven was about strategies used to build rapport and trust among team members. When asked about trust building and relationships on their team all respondents seemed to have the same common response “Trust: transparency and clarity surrounding goals, and achievable roadmaps to meet them. Relationships: this is a bit more tough! Clarity around goals and accountability helps with trust, and in turn this feeds a productive working relationship. It does, however, feel a bit sterile (vs. friendly) in a virtual environment”. Another virtual leader said that their team changes at least yearly, so it is very difficult to form any kind of relationship, but they do prioritize being transparent and open in every communication. They do their best to keep their team informed and engaged.

Question number eight I asked how do you hold people on your team accountable. Holding people accountable had a lot of varied answers. Majority of respondents said they use
Metrics to hold staff accountable. They set clear goals and expectations and provide feedback. Majority also have a tracking system for various projects and set reminders before big projects are due to stay on top of any issues.

Question number nine I asked how they as virtual leaders encourage Information sharing among team members. Information sharing seems to be a big challenge in virtual leadership. Most leaders reported that they use a document management platform such as google docs and shared files. They encourage open and honest communication. They try to show the team the win-win in all the situations to encourage more information sharing.

For question ten I asked what supervision techniques they used to ensure everyone on the team contributes. Supervision techniques included weekly meetings, assignment of roles, team check in’s and tailoring things to a way that works best for each team member. Four respondents had. Similar answer “Set expectations on roles and collaboration. Ensuring that everyone has a voice and seat at the table. But also, not going to hold the team back if someone is not doing their part”.

For question number eleven I asked how do you ensure that your team maintains a healthy work life balance. When it came to work life balance majority of leaders stated they encourage flexible schedules, they encourage breaks and time off. One virtual leader had this to say “I provide my team with the space to work remotely from other locations (e.g. one team member is currently working on the West Coast due to a family emergency), I allow them the flexibility to take personal time throughout the day and trust that they are getting their work done without micromanaging them”. Most leaders also reported the try to stick to a normal work schedule as much as possible.
For my last two questions I asked virtual leaders to rank training they thought would be beneficial to them and to their team members. The questions were two part one for leader and one for team members. They were both ranking questions. When it came to training for a virtual leader the rank was as follows.

- Technology training
- Team building
- Emotional intelligence training
- Healthy work life balance
- Communication
- General leadership training.

Training for employees or team members that virtual leaders thought would be beneficial are as follows.

- Emotional intelligence
- Communication style
- Healthy work life balance
- Team building
- Technology training
- General leadership training.

The last question was open-ended to ask if participants had anything else to share that was not mentioned in my survey. Things not mentioned in the survey only had one response and that response was “Managing a team in a remote setting is very difficult. It takes time and skill to get to know your team and your communication style. What may work for some on the team may not work for others. Know your audience and your tone at all times”.

**Conclusion**

The 1990’s saw a significant increase in the use of virtual teams, this was driven by the widespread adoption of the internet and collaborative software tools (google docs, fax machines, zoom and many more tools) (Powell, 2004). Organizations started to recognize the potential benefits of virtual teams this included cost saving, access to more global talent, and increased
levels of flexibility (Powell, 2004). This led to the emergence of virtual teams, where team members were located in different parts of the world, yet they worked together towards a common goal. With the evolution of virtual work, the concept of virtual leadership also emerged.

Virtual leaders are individuals who effectively manage and guide remote teams. I was shocked to learn that some people had been a virtual leader for over six years and just a small percentage had been a virtual leader since the pandemic started. My research showed that information sharing was the number one issue while my literature review showed that communication was the number one issue. It makes me wonder if further research needs to be done on the studies conducted, perhaps when the research for the literature review was conducted information sharing files were not prevalent at that time. New technology allows us to share data more easily through the use of Google docs, Drop box and just File sharing on a computer in a shared file drive. The strategies used for effective communication were like what my literature review showed. They all used open forms of communication and encourage open and honest feedback.

My survey also showed that teams lead in multiple time zones was not an issue. I would think that multiple time may have been an issue. All the virtual leaders had good strategies in place for communication, holding people accountable, information and just general responsibilities.

My search also showed that two categories tied at twenty percent each for leadership style. Transactional and charismatic. I was taken back by the charismatic because these leaders use their skill and charm to encourage their team and get them to all work towards a common goal. I do believe there is room for further studies to be done around virtual leadership in the future, especially as we progress in technology.
References


Harvard Division of Continuing Education. (n.d.) Challenges to Managing virtual teams and how to overcome them retrieved from professional.dce.harvard.edu


Mandzuk, C. (2014). Challenges of leading a virtual team: more than meets the eye: offering training for virtual leaders is viewed as an important strategy. T+D (Alexandria, Va.), 68(1), 20-.


Appendix A

Times zones

- One time zone
- 2 time zones
- 3 time zones
- 4 or more time zones
Appendix B
Leadership style

- Transformational: Inspire and motivate your team by providing a clear vision of your goals.
- Servant: you prioritize building meaningful relationships, empathy, and collaboration.
- Transactional: provide clear expectations, reward when goals are met and impose consequences when they are not.
- Charismatic: skilled communicator and you can rally your team around a common goal by using your personal charm.

Other, please explain:
**Appendix D**

**Survey**

The use of human participants in this project has been approved in compliance with the College of Professional Studies--Online, University of New Hampshire's Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to answer the questions presented in a QualtricsTM survey in the following few pages. The survey should take no more than ten minutes.

There are no known potential risks for participating in the survey. Benefits may include an opportunity to reflect on your leadership style in a virtual environment and to reflect on what supports you and your team may need to become more successful. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw or be withdrawn at any time without consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don’t want to answer and still remain in the study. No coercion of any kind is used in seeking your participation. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as is required by law.

All answers are confidential and no names or other identifiers will be published.

The primary investigator for this research study is: Amberlee Smock. If you have questions about this research, you may contact Dr. Kathy DesRoches at 603-553-1349 or kdesroches@unh.edu. Dr. DesRoches is Amberlee’s research mentor.

By clicking yes, you consent to participate and may exit at any time. By clicking no, you are not consenting, and we thank you for your time.
Appendix E

Amberlee Smock
Survey questions

Title of Capstone....Virtual leadership
The purpose of this survey is to collect self-reported data from individuals who have been a virtual leader or lead a virtual team. Thank you for your voluntary participation.

Consent Form
The use of human participants in this project has been approved in compliance with the College of Professional Studies--Online, University of New Hampshire's Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to answer the questions presented in a Qualtrics™ survey in the following few pages. The survey should take no more than ten minutes.
There are no known potential risks for participating in the survey. Benefits may include an opportunity to reflect on your leadership style in a virtual environment and to reflect on what supports you and your team may need to become more successful.
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw or be withdrawn at any time without consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don’t want to answer and still remain in the study. No coercion of any kind is used in seeking your participation.
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as is required by law. All answers are confidential and no names or other identifiers will be published.
The primary investigator for this research study is: Amberlee Smock.
If you have questions about this research, you may contact Dr. Kathy DesRoches at 603-553-1349 or kdesroches@unh.edu. Dr. DesRoches is Amberlee’s research mentor.
By clicking yes, you consent to participate and may exit at any time.
By clicking no, you are not consenting, and we thank you for your time.

1.) How long have you been a virtual leader?
2.) Do you lead a team from multiple time zones?
3.) Is this a challenge?
4.) The people on my team work in ______ time zones.
   a.) One time zone
   b.) 2 time zones
   c.) 3 times zones
   d.) 4 or more time zones
5.) How would you characterize your leadership style?
   a.) Transformational: inspire and motivate your team by providing a clear vision of your goals.
   b.) Servant: you prioritize building meaningful relationships, empathy and collaboration.
   c.) Transactional: provide clear expectation-reward when goals are met and impose consequences when they are not.
d.) Charismatic: skilled communicator and you can rally your team around a common goal by using your personal charm.
e.) Other, please explain:

4.) What barriers have you experienced (select all that apply)?
a.) Communication 
b.) trust and relationship building 
c.) holding people accountable 
d.) information sharing 
e.) none

5) What strategies have you employed to help with communication among yourself and your team?

6.) How do you build trust and relationships on your team?

7.) How do you hold team members accountable (e.g. metrics and meetings)?

8.) How do you encourage information sharing?

9) What supervision techniques do you use to ensure everyone contributes?

10.) How do you ensure that your team maintains a healthy work-life balance?

11.) When it comes to training for yourself as a virtual leader, which do you feel is the most important? please rank the following in order from 1 to 6. 1 being the most important to 6 being the least important. Rank order in Qualtrics

Healthy work life balance, Emotional Intelligence, Team building, Communication styles, General Leadership training and Technology training.

12.) When it comes to training for your employees, which do you feel are the most important? please rank the following in order from 1 to 6. 1 being the most important to 6 being the least important. Rank order in Qualtrics

Healthy work life balance, Emotional Intelligence, Team building, Communication styles, General Leadership training and Technology training.

13.) Would you like to share anything not mentioned in this survey?
Appendix F
IRB certificate

Certificate of Completion

University of New Hampshire acknowledges that

Amberlee Smock

has successfully completed

Human Subjects

on December 16th, 2023

Certificate #173998
expires on 12/16/2026

Appendix G

Human Research Checklist
Use this checklist to determine if your project is “Human Subjects Research” requiring IRB approval.

Name: Amberlee M Smock          Email: AMBERLEE.SMOCK@USNH.EDU
Instructor: Kathy DesRochers     Instructor Email: Kathy.desrochers@unh.edu

Course Number, Title: LD850.01 leadership capstone

Project Title: Capstone research the challenges of virtual leadership and how to overcome them

Read “Does Your Activity Need IRB Review at UNH?” (https://www.unh.edu/research/does-your-activity-need-irb-review-unh) and then refer to it while answering the questions below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NOT SURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does your project involve human subjects?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is data being collected from or about identifiable living individuals?</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is interaction or intervention being used to collect data?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is data being collected or analyzed that contains identifiable private information? (can the researcher identify the individual directly or is there a key to an identifying code)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If “No” to all these questions, your project is not research. 
Attach this form to your proposal and submit it to your instructor.

If “Yes” or “Not sure” to any of the questions, continue to Section 2a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2a. Is it activity that is specifically deemed not to be research? (45 CFR 46.102 (l))</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Scholarly and journalistic activities (e.g., oral history, journalism, biography, literary criticism, legal research, historical scholarship) that focus directly on the specific individual(s) about whom the information is collected</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Public health surveillance activities conducted by a public health authority (e.g., CDC, NH Health Dept.) to investigate conditions of public health importance</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Collection and analysis of information for a criminal justice agency solely for criminal justice or criminal investigative purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Authorized operational activities in support of intelligence, homeland security, defense, or other national security matters</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If “Yes” to any of these questions, the project is not research. 
Attach this form to your proposal and submit it to your instructor.

If “No” or “not sure” to all of them, continue to Section 2b.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2b. Does it involve any of these? (45 CFR 46.107 (a) and 45 CFR 46 Subpart B)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Vulnerable population:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under the age of 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women and fetuses</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons with diminished or impaired mental capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educationally or economically disadvantaged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons whose primary language is not English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ii. Questions that could present physical, psychological, emotional, legal or social |     | x  |         |
Capstone Human Subjects Proposal Screener

**Purpose:** To find out what if any challenges exist in the remote setting and what strategies are best to use to overcome those challenges.

**How will you recruit the participants for your study? How many?** (Note that if you are surveying people in an organization, company, or online membership group/forum, you must have the written permission of the manager and attach it to this document.) I know some virtual leaders personally that will take my survey. They all work for different companies. Will also post my survey on linkden for leaders to take at their own free will.

**How will data be collected?** Survey based questions to identify challenges if any present in remote team.

---

If “yes” to either of these questions the project will not be allowed.

If “no” to both questions, continue to Section 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Evaluation/Assessment/Service/Reporting - the purpose of these activities is, upon request, to gather data to measure the current situation regarding a specific phenomenon or set of factors. Data gathered may be shared only with the sponsor/client/requesting party and where appropriate, the faculty advisor, or used for internal decision making or informational purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Classroom Assignments/Educational Inquiry/Practice - the purpose of these activities is the education of an individual student through an inquiry or experiential approach to discover known principles or phenomena. Data gathered may be shared only with the course instructor or faculty advisor, presented in class, or in the case of an internship/practicum, the collaborating party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>Research - the purpose of the activity is to contribute to generalizable knowledge and data gathered may be shared with a research community or the public at large.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Submit the following “Capstone Human Subjects Proposal Screener” to your instructor for approval and signature, and then send it to gsc.irb@granite.edu.

Complete this screener and give it to your instructor for approval and signature. You will then receive guidance about submitting an IRB proposal to UNH.
settings.

**How will confidentiality and privacy of data be ensured as they are collected and retained? When will records be destroyed?** The survey will be deleted at the end of my research. Survey is private no name needed when taking the survey. No company information will be used.

**How will informed consent be obtained?** (It should appear at the beginning of your survey or interview and inform the participant of the study purpose, risks and benefits, how you will maintain confidentiality, that participation is voluntary, and your name and email). I will write up a consent form letting participants know the reason for my survey and that the survey is 100% confidential no personal information about name or where they work will be necessary.

**Risks and Benefits to Participants:** There is only risk if they provide personal information about their self or where they work. otherwise it is confidential.

**Attach survey questions with informed consent, or provide a link to the online survey.** ok

**Attach your UNH Human Subjects Training Certificate** sent in

**Student Signature:** Amberlee M Smock  
**Date:** January 28, 2023

**Faculty Signature:** Click here to enter text.

*Once your instructor has approved and signed the screener, send this screener to gsc.irb@granite.edu for review and approval.*