How to Lead a Virtual Team

or

"New Ways of Working"

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The Knowledge, Information, and Networks-research group

WHAT WILL WE DO TODAY?

1) Introduction

2) Exercise: Insights from you on "what makes an effective virtual leader in your context?" Team up!

3) Insights from academia on possible solutions of dealing with the challenges of leading a virtual team

o Discussion & Conclusion
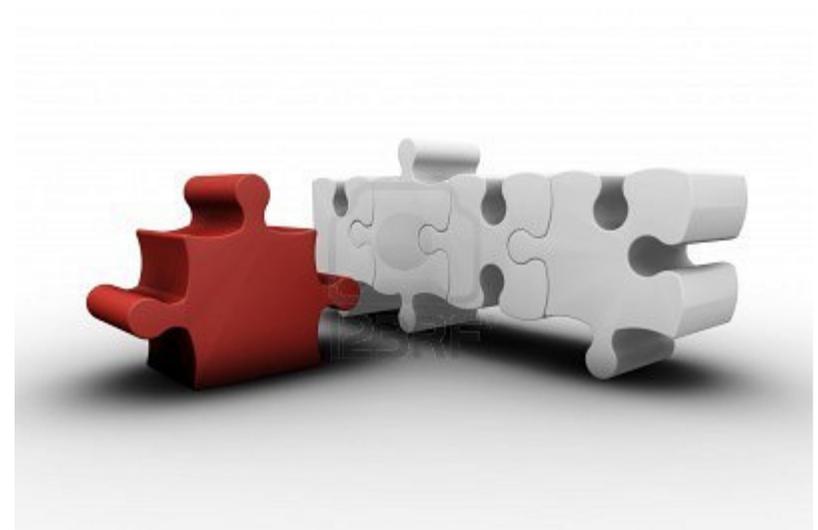
FILMFRAGMENT NTR INTERACTIVE LEADERSHIP (2010)

http://educatie.ntr.nl/leidersgezocht/2999112/aflevering-6-interactieve-leider/

WHAT IS A VIRTUAL TEAM?

"**Virtual teams are teams that work together on a common task, independent of temporal and geographical boundaries, supported by information technologies**"

(Lipnack & Stamps, 2000)

AND WHAT IS A SERVANT (VIRTUAL) LEADER?

"A servant leader facilitates
growth, development and general
well-being of individuals who
comprise the organization."
(Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004)

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WHAT GAVE RISE TO VIRTUAL TEAMS AND LEADERS?

Computers are wonderful. Whatever happens, no one is to blame.

WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF VIRTUAL TEAMS?

- Getting the best talents from the globe to be part of the team.

- Creating a healthy "work-life balance" (work from home)

- Reduce costs of travelling and minimize carbon footprint…

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF COLLABORATING VIA THE COMPUTER INSTEAD OF FACE-TO-FACE?

- Non-verbal cues are reduced

How does this impact the development of interpersonal relationships and trust?

What are the effects of New Ways of Working for different generations?

Web 2.0

	Traditionalist 61 - 84	Boomer 42 - 60	Gen X 26 - 41	Gen Y 18 - 25
Training	*The hard way*	*Too much and I'll leave*	*Required to keep me*	*Continuous & expected*
Learning style	*Classroom*	*Facilitated*	*Independent*	*Collaborative & networked*
Communication style	Top down	Guarded	Hub & Spoke	Collaborative
Problem-solving	Hierarchical	Horizontal	Independent	Collaborative
Decision-making	Seeks Approval	Team informed	Team included	Team decided
Leadership style	Command & control	Get out of the way	Coach	Partner
Feedback	No news is good news	Once per year	Weekly / Daily	On demand
Technology use	Uncomfortable	Unsure	Unable to work without it	Unfathomable if not provided
Job changing	Unwise	Sets me back	Necessary	Part of my daily routine

Lancaster & Stillman, 2003.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF INTERACTIVE LEADERS?

- Task related

- Social related

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Exercise: "What makes an effective virtual leader in your context?" Team up with 3/4 peers

1) Think about an inspirational leader that has once crossed your path and helped you grow.
   Can you describe these qualities and relate them to what it means to be a virtual leader?

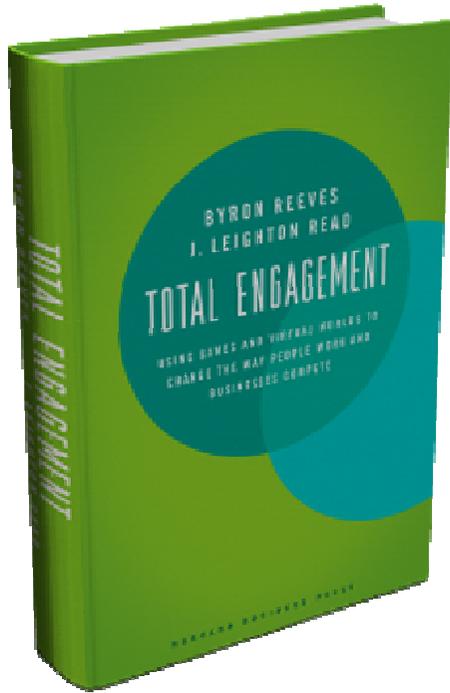2) What are possible solutions to the following challenges:
   * trust without touch
   * chitchat at the coffeemachine
   * getting the job done!

3a) How does technology help or hinder the way you work now? 3b) And how do you expect it to influence your future work?

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So, what was this like and what did we learn from this?

PUTTING THINGS UP A NOTCH…
THE GAMER DISPOSITION

Byron Reeves

On Leadership: How video games build leaders

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2010/04/07/VI2010040701157.html?referrer=emaillink
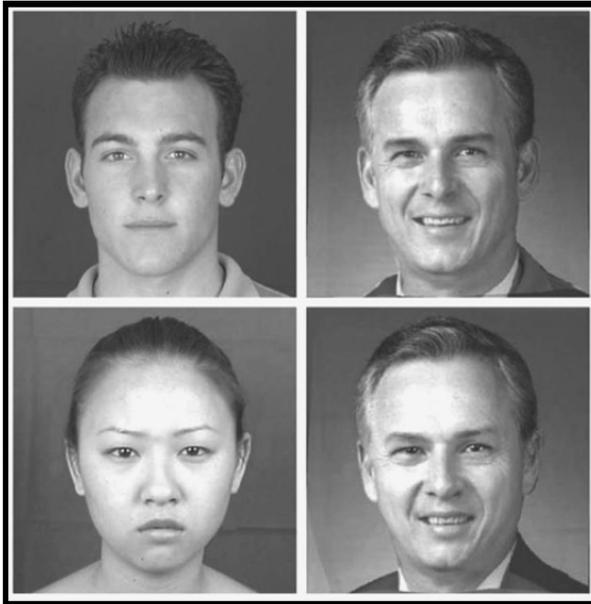
Figure 1-3. Pictures of the participants are on the left; the blend of 60% of an unfamiliar politician and 40% of the given participant is on the right.

To create trust:

Digital morphing (Donath, 2007; Bailenson & Yee, 2005)

Figure 1-4. Four participants (left four panels) and their team face (far right), a morph that includes 25% of each of them.

HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF VIRTUAL LEADERS ACCORDING TO ACADEMIA?

- Establishing trust and interpersonal relationships:

  Walther's (1996) Hyperpersonal theory
  - ✓ Meeting each other face to face
  - ✓ Ice-breaker exercises to get to know each other...

- Fit between the task and technology used:

  Goodhue and Thompson (1995)
  - ✓ Think of task characteristics
  - ✓ Less is often more.

HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF VIRTUAL LEADERS ACCORDING TO ACADEMIA?

- The role of a virtual leader:

  Kahai (2011), see http://leadingvirtually.com
  - ✓ Be proactive
  - ✓ Create a STRUCTURE that fosters teamwork
  - ✓ Help the team to regulate it self, learn and grow.
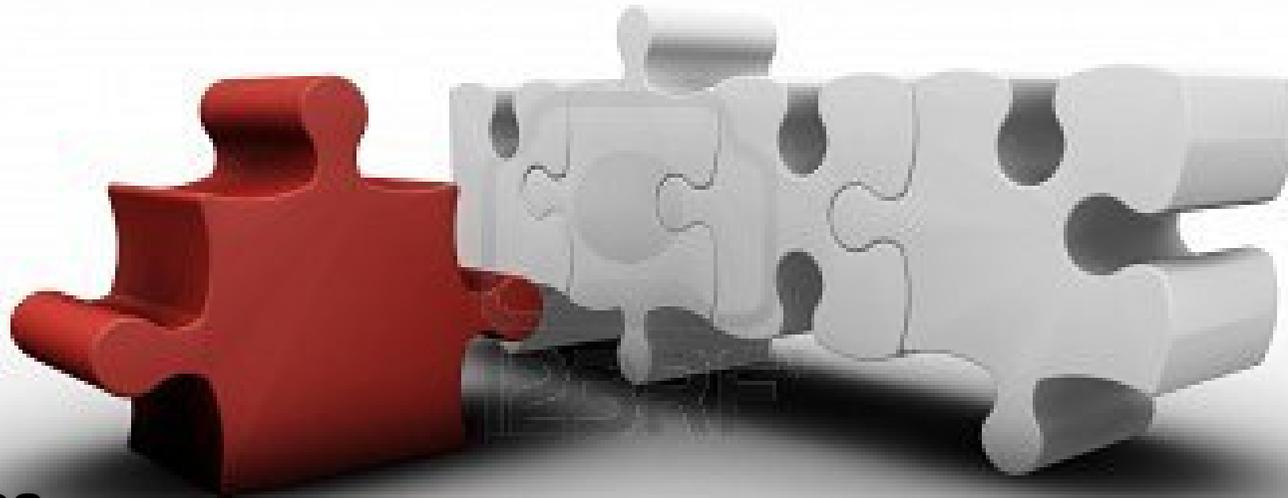
DISCUSSION, RECAP AND CONCLUSIONS...
HOW TO LEAD A VIRTUAL TEAM:
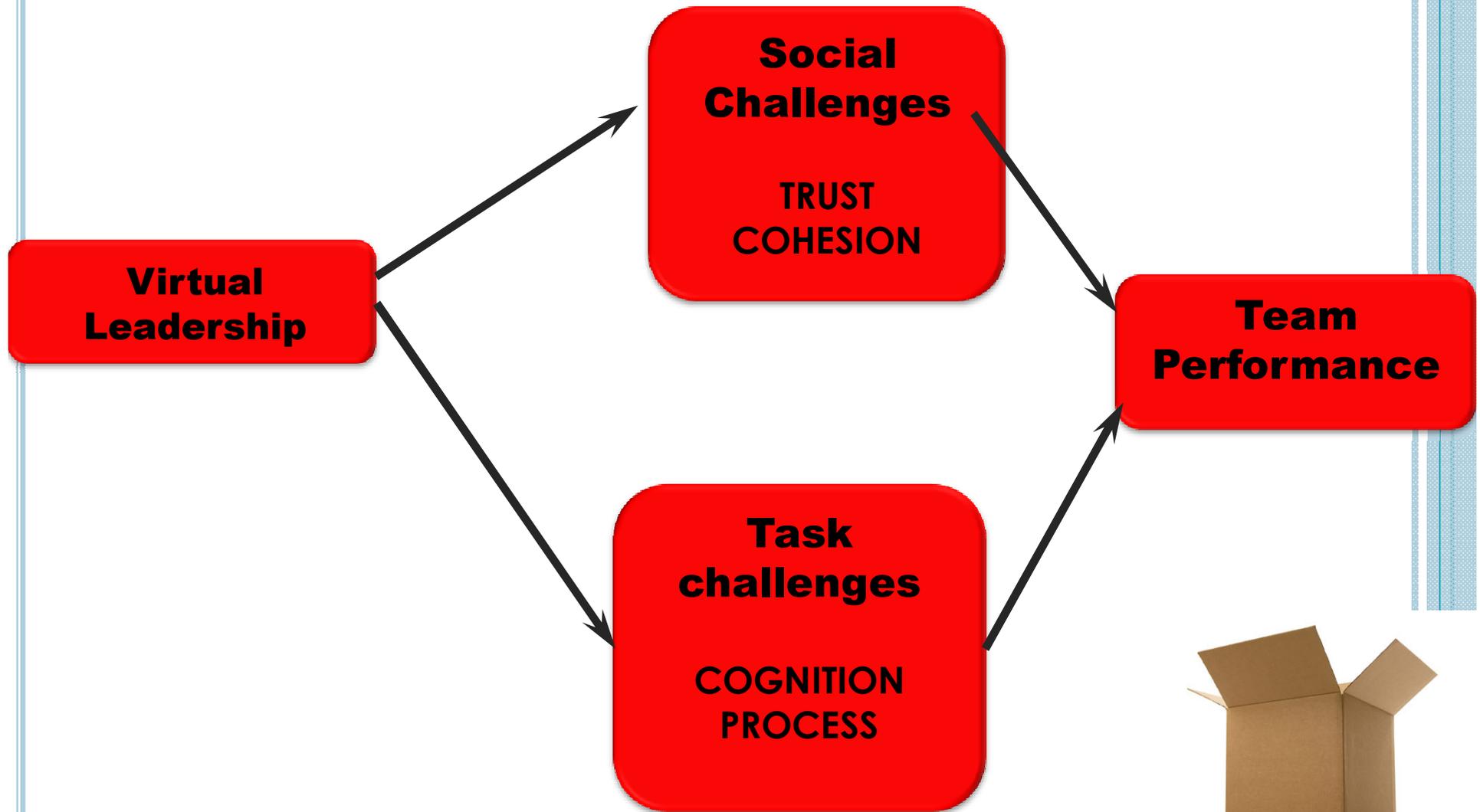
Social Challenges

Technology

TRUST COHESION

Task challenges

COGNITION PROCESS

Team Performance

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Social Challenges

TRUST COHESION

Virtual Leadership

Team Performance

Task challenges

COGNITION PROCESS

THANK YOU!

MORE QUESTIONS?

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