



Making virtual teams real: perspectives and approaches on the set-up & operation of virtual teams

"Putting you into a virtual world really allows you to think differently."

Lisa Su, CEO of AMD

"I don't know the future. I didn't come here to tell you how this is going to end. I came here to tell you how it's going to begin. I'll hang up this phone. And then I'll show these people what you don't want them to see. I'm going to show them a world without you. A world without rules and controls, without borders or boundaries. A world where anything is possible. Where we go from there is a choice I leave to you."

Neo, The Matrix

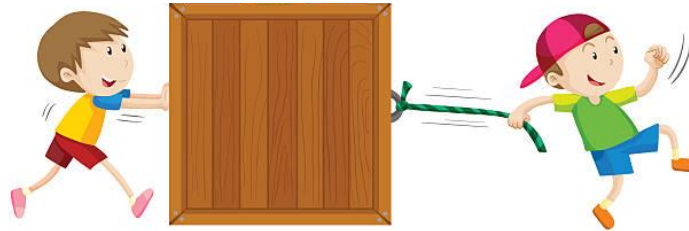
April 20

Virtual teams – a wider context

Virtual team/organisation = shift in working practices e.g. remote working, distributed teams, no central office, networks of specialists, digital workflows, shared resources...

Pushes

- Covid19
- Energy transition
- De-centralisation
- Digital transformation:
 - data collection, storage, analysis
 - machine learning
 - human/machine interfaces
 - “uberisation” of marketplace

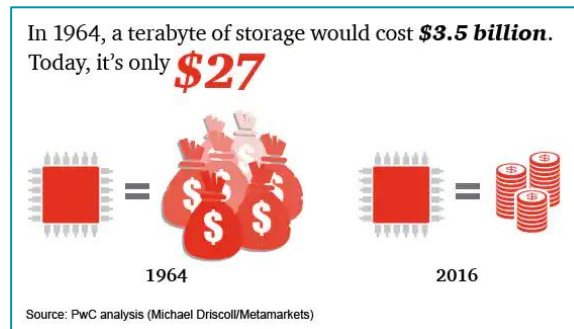
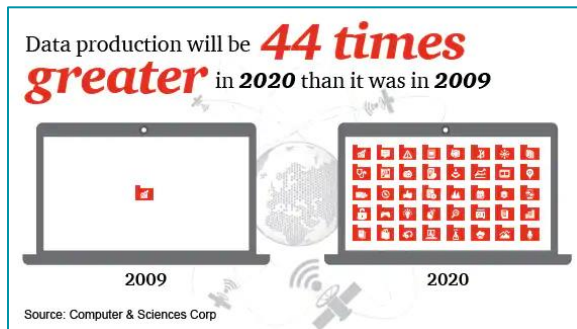


Pulls

- Distributed teams enable:
 - Reduced travel
 - Flexibility
 - Working more efficiently and productively
- Data driven insights offer:
 - Reduced OPEX & downtime
 - Increased production
- Changing market place enables tailored solutions
- Better decision making enabled through improved collaboration and data sharing

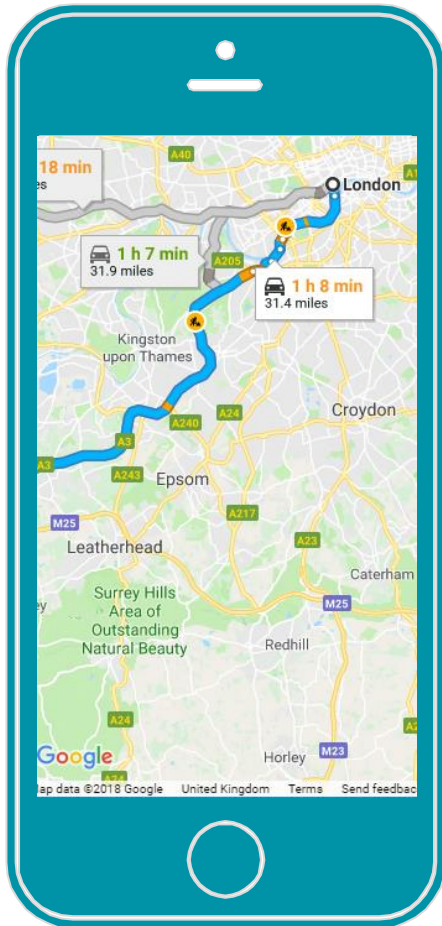
Digital transformation as a global megatrend

- The digital revolution was already well underway, changing behaviour and expectations.
- 4th industrial revolution: disruptive technologies and trends such as the Internet of Things, robotics, virtual reality and artificial intelligence are changing the way we live and work.
- Change is exponential & unpredictable.
- This isn't temporary!



Technology, process, people

The continuous adoption of new technology is part of everyday life.



Smartphone.

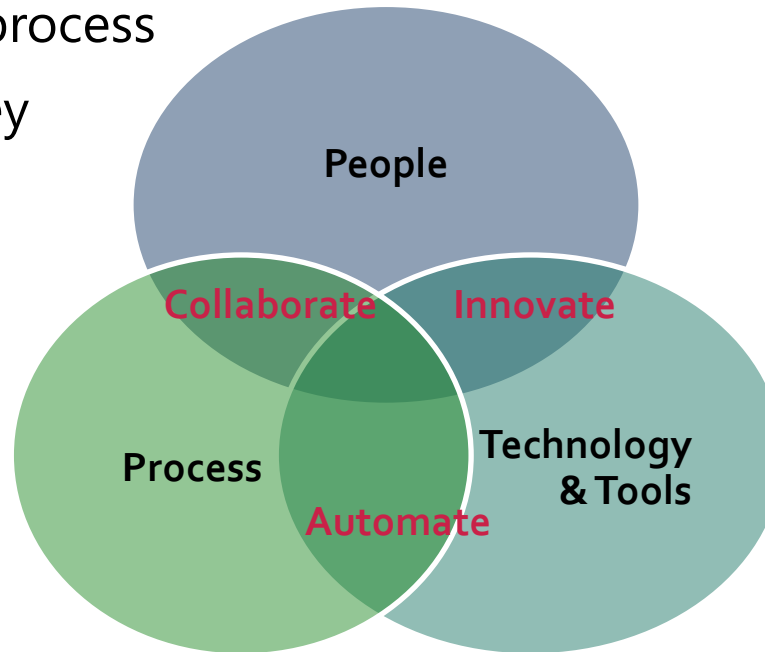
Web browsing &
email on the go.

Apps that use location
Payment apps

Transformation=
changing the way we do things

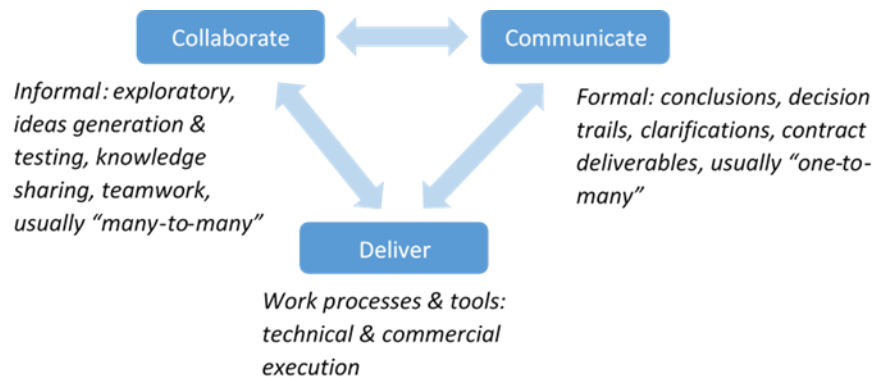
What does this mean – what next?

- Making changes to people, processes and systems in a purposeful and planned way
- Recognise balance of pushes/pulls
- Identify opportunities that add value
- Iterative learning process
- Collaboration is key

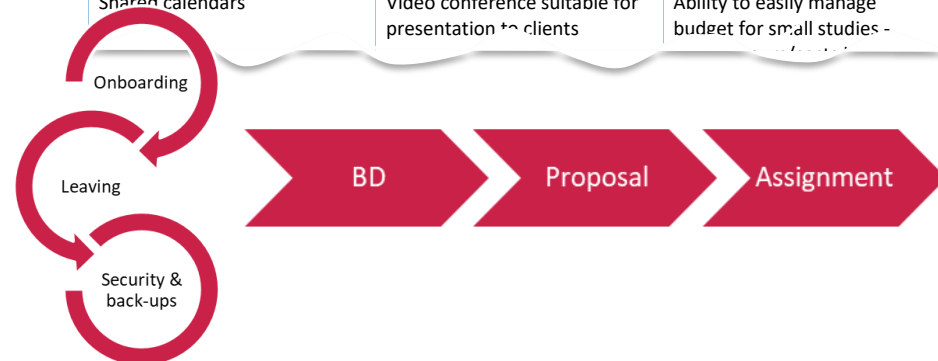


Identifying set-up to suit needs

- How do you work together? How would you like to work together?
- What are your unique selling points? What are your value drivers?
- What areas are you planning to grow?
- What are your minimum conditions of satisfaction for any solutions?
- Consider issues/risks/opportunities
- Pick suite of tools that best meets needs – don't be sold at



Collaborate	Communicate	Deliver
Shared working areas & shared documents for easier review and comment	Email: better management of email trails and archive of assignment emails (not dependent on personnel)	Clear workflow and task management for assignments and proposals
Shared calendars	Video conference suitable for presentation to clients	Ability to easily manage budget for small studies -



Think big, start small, adopt progressively.

How do you deliver an uncertain/undefined workscope in a rapidly changing environment?

Agile is an umbrella term for a range of “lightweight” development frameworks based on agile values:

- Individuals and interactions
- Incremental delivery continuously adding value
- Collaboration across the participants
- Responding to change

Agile approaches are ideally suited to an environment where requirements are uncertain and subject to change, and new and emerging technologies make implementation strategies unpredictable.

How do you make it stick?

EAST framework to encourage people to adopt new behaviours and ways of working:

- **Easy:** set as default option, make it hassle-free, keep it simple
- **Attractive:** attract attention, use incentives
- **Social:** “most people do this”, make use of social networks to promote change, encourage people to make a commitment to others
- **Timely:** prompt people at most receptive time, consider immediate benefits and costs (these are more influential), help people plan their response (identify barriers to action and plan to overcome them)

Challenges in implementation

- Buzzword bingo: language can alienate, antagonise or confuse
- Kid in a sweetshop: just because you can, doesn't mean you should – build business case
- Emperor's new clothes: show me what you've done, not just what you could do
- Wading through treacle: change needs top-down commitment and bottom-up enthusiasts
- Tug of war: systems need to work for people who provide services to multiple clients
- Over the waterfall: agile iterative approaches do not fit with traditional project execution
- Herding cats: business processes and governance still need to apply to new technologies
- When I were a lad/lass... : getting by/getting away with versus getting better
- Personality: extroverts, introverts, ambiverts have different working/interaction preferences
- Who cares?: benefits need to be clearly articulated & fairly distributed (contractual model)
- Betamax: need to make pragmatic decisions to "future enable" assets (can't "future proof")
- Somewhere over the rainbow: turning beautiful visions into nuts & bolts of delivery

Making it work: operation

- How would you like to work together?
- What are your unique selling points? What are your value drivers?
- Use the Agile framework to prompt new ways of working e.g. sprints
- Use the EAST framework to encourage adoption e.g. brief daily call
- Seek and listen to feedback
- Fail fast, learn faster!

Think big, start small, adopt progressively.

Challenges in operation

- Face to face is key (can be difficult across time zones and working styles/habits)
- BUT don't assume you've fully picked up the feeling in the room – use pre/follow-up calls
- Fit communication method to purpose e.g. coffee chat, check-in/update, sharing, action
- Consider whether comms needs to be one to many, one to one, many to one, collaborative, consultative or directive
- Ensure communication methods remain focussed e.g. use channels or tags in chat
- Mix of regular versus ad hoc – set good habits
- Induction/onboarding needs to include people in, everyday working habits need to keep people included.
- Openness – no exclusive side chat, keep it professional
- Keep clear lines between personal/work time, respect boundaries
- Decision making processes need clear and ideally automated workflows
- Clarity on what needs recording and how: explore new ways of doing this
- Infrastructure needs to support ambition, may need to tailor ambitions to infrastructure
- Virtual meetings/workshops: ALWAYS do a trial run for 1st time, if possible have a co-driver
- Focus on what needs delivering: what's the best way to do this?
- IRL – regular get togethers help

The path ahead – new ways of working

Agility

- Closer collaboration with vendors – co-creation of solutions
- Earlier start, iterative approach to develop requirements
- Flexibility – function focussed, not one solution for all, responsive to changing needs

New market models

- Broad not narrow focus – each equipment package operates in a wider system context
- Marketplace for apps: functional requirements may be met by suite of products/providers, move away from one size fits all

Learning and sharing

- Ownership/integration of data
- Collaborative data platforms
- Use of pilots/trials
- Data science: clients want understandable explainable insights grounded in data

Future proof / future enable

- Vendor agnostic infrastructure
- Availability of data
- Portability of data
- Ability to change platform