Managing Global Management Teams in COVID and Post-Lockdown Period

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Abstract— With the massive boom in Technology, managing a Global Team has turned increasingly popular. Global Team is a team whose members are comprised of employees who work remotely across different countries and time zones. Such teams can work efficiently when it is built with a strong base of trust. Leading a global team has to be done by individuals with a strong sense of Cultural Relativism, so that there is a strong sense of empathy among team members. Being a part of global team has its merits of flexible work hours, less expenses with regards to office spaces of employees, more time with family and friends making the employee feel comfortable even while working, more time saved with respect to commute allowing the employees to use the time to get productive work done. With the risk of infection of COVID-19 virus restricting a number of employees from foregathering in high numbers in workplaces, having a global team can be advantageous for both the management and the employees. With the increase in most of the employees working from home, principles and practices have changed in order to suit employees while they work remotely, this has also given an opportunity for employers to hire prospective employees across continents. There might be a lot of challenges in managing a global team which includes cultural differences, language differences, the level of trust also varies from country to country among team members and a global team also runs the risk of developing lack of empathy which might lead to a team which is rigid and has a hostile work environment. These challenges have to be overcome in order to successfully run a Global Team and reap its benefits.

Index Terms— COVID-19 Virus, Culture, Empathy, Global Team

I. INTRODUCTION

A Global Team is a team whose members are comprised of employees who work remotely across different countries and time zones. Global virtual teams adopt the concept that team members can engage in and fulfil projects with little or no direct physical cooperation with other participants. One main advantage of this concept is that this allows multinational companies to get the best combination of talents from around the globe. For instance, Let's say a multinational pharmaceutical company is working on a new type of drug, and their project manager is in Singapore, their team coordinator can be in India and their project supervisor can be in London Unlike Regular Domestic teams managing a Global Virtual team can be a much more challenging task. Managing a global team is mainly based upon building a solid foundation of trust, fluency in communication among team members and regular co-ordination of the work done on a frequent basis. Having a Global team might be advantageous to both the employers and employees only if the advantages of having a global team overcomes the challenge of having one.

II. BUILDING STRONG GLOBAL TEAMS

In order for us to build a strong and efficient Global team which can deliver good results we have to base the global team on members whose countries follow similar trust patterns. Trust is of basically two types according to various studies done by researchers of Organizational Behavior; these are of two types (1) Cognitive Trust (2) Affective Trust. Cognitive trust occurs when a person makes a conscious decision to trust based upon the best knowledge he or she has, cognitive trust is often developed based on the proven reliability of an Individual. Basically, Cognitive Trust is based on the feelings of an individual from the brain, which is evident in countries like USA, Germany, Scandinavia, Netherlands. And, the next type of trust is the Affective Trust. Affective Trust is the confidence one places in a partner on the basis of feelings generated by the level of care and concern the partner demonstrates. This kind of a trust is based on the feeling of an individual from the heart, which is evident in countries with a developing workforce such as China, India, Brazil, Russia. Thus, building a workforce which has equal trust perceptions should be grouped in one team to prevent conflicts from the start. For example, In United States writing down the agenda of what is discussed in a meeting can be written down and is considered to be an effective way of recalling what has been discussed in a meeting. In contrast, writing down whatever that has been discussed by the leader can send a signal of distrust to the leader or the manager. Thus, the first and foremost rule to properly build a global team is through a base of trust and ideologies that are alike. Employees of a Global Team should also have the ability to adapt themselves to different working conditions and also the employees hired for a Global team must be ready for change and to learn about culture of fellow employees.

Also, another important factor in the development of an effective global team is the communication of the team members amongst each other. This cannot just happen with the use of e-mail, video calling etc. But by scheduling meetings once in a while and meeting the members

individually and facilitating the needs of the project, grievances of the members, difficulties in communicating results/messages across waters. These meetings are also effective to co-ordinate matters between members which would have been difficult to deal with otherwise (through electronic means). Through a good amount of experience faced by employers through the lockdown, management of the company cannot be very sure if the employees have exactly received the agenda that was passed in the company meeting. Thus, it is effective if the Planned Schedule is written down and passed on to the employees.

The Concept of Global Teams have emerged due to the increase in the technology that is adequate to manage team members from around the globe because of the Lockdown restrictions that has been imposed by various countries which have made the companies to adapt themselves by making themselves remotely available to work themselves while adapting to the organization's needs. Many employees do find working remotely in the comfort of their homes to be less stressful.

In order for one to have a successful global team running, one has to follow a functional system of incorporating ideas together and building up a structural relationship of the team. It's often a known fact that we people communicate lot more than needed but we understand a lot lesser than we're supposed to. Hence in order to prevent these discrepancies from creeping in, the decisions taken by a member should be passed on to the other members for the transparency in communication and for the approval of all the members, as it is always a good idea to get the opinions of others. And also, you have to be consistent in a global setting like this and you should always motivate your team members to achieve more. Don't always think that you're the best of the team always think that your team-mates are either equivalent to you or greater than you and also always keep an open mind about ideas that pour in, don't always try to defend your ideas unless your ideas are truly worthy and better than other's ideas in every aspect possible.

III. MERITS OF USING A GLOBAL TEAM

The physical presence of teams was the older concept when it came to the management of teams but with the recent change in work environment, advancement in technology [1] and the change in work culture, people from across the globe can now work together. Internet and cloud technology now allow for remote access to files stored in cyber space allowing individuals to access the projects remotely. For example, the project may be based in Delhi, the project manager can remotely operate from London.

Global teams are the best approach for companies to pool in talent and expertise from around the globe, this in turn reduces the budgetary requirements of the company by saving up the costs incurred in extra infrastructures to be done to the employees. Introduction of technology has proven that a physical office is not always necessary. In yesteryears moving in people from other countries has proven to be an expensive and time- consuming affair but with the introduction of global virtual teams the company can save itself from the hassles by making their employee teams global.

Modern generation now are looking forward to flexibility and empowerment in their work life, they want to work in organizations which are capable of providing these opportunities. Also, employees are hired from around the globe not just skill-set but high adaptability and positive regard for each other and the company itself. According to a survey conducted by PWC and published in KPCB's 2015 Internet Trends Report among global millennials across 75 countries reveals to us that 19% of millennials place flexible working hours on top of their wish list which is more than the 14% of millennials who were expecting cash bonuses when it came to their expectations in a workplace.

In the 2020 Global Employee Survey, Globalization Partners found that international teams are 12 percent less likely to report having problems than teams from single locations. They tend to be highly collaborative across borders, with fewer problems reported. This might be due to the fewer interaction with fellow employees in the workplace which might be advantageous, due to the fewer complaints employers might face and thus an overall productive environment can be observed.

Working Remotely through the use of technology before Lockdown wasn't an easy task because these technologies weren't much developed. But after the imposition of Lockdown there are quite a lot of applications that help in these remote communications for organizations namely Zoom, Google meet, Microsoft Teams etc. Thus, having a global team is not a far-fetched dream, either.

Each Member of a Global Team represent a different country along with it, a different culture altogether. Hence, these team members are much more familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the local market and the different opportunities these members have observed. Thus, if an organization has planned to establish themselves in a country or is looking forward to enter a market, they could deliberately hire employees in the particular country in order to do so. Using local connections, native language skills, having enough relevant information about the local market as well as the internal consumer, the company gets a real opportunity to become more dominant and privileged, thus achieving success by conducting comprehensive analysis [2].

An advantage for working for a global virtual team is that, the employee need not worry about the expenses incurred in commute to other countries and across borders, they can work from where they are located and deliver the results same as a regular office. Global team's help companies develop a good cross – cultural work relationship and increase the FDI (Foreign Direct Investments) of their home country. Since the employees are not restricted to kind of work, they get more experience and more opportunities to

improve the quality of their work life, helping them to flourish.

IV. RELEVANCY OF HANDLING A GLOBAL TEAM IN THE PRESENT-DAY SCENARIO

"One day, offices will be a thing of the past "– **Richard Branson.**

In the context of the Novel Coronavirus that attacked our Globe in 2020, Workspaces and organizations are reluctant in managing a physical workforce inside offices, fearing the spread of COVID-19 amongst employees. This also restricted organizations from having functional workspaces and thus communication between traditional teams has been greatly impeded but companies that have been managing Global teams before the spread of coronavirus have managed it pretty well due to the predefined practices of their team .The Option of Working from Home (WFH) has been incorporated ever since a lockdown has been imposed by various governments around the globe and thus companies can adopt various principles to strengthen the practice of **Handling a global team.**

To further strengthen our part of the argument, a study conducted by Robert half Talent Solution which surveyed more than 2800 Senior Manager in the US and was conducted from July 10, 2020 to August 9, 2020 have arrived at the following figures given below:

Table. 1

Size of the sample studied	2800 Senior Managers
Percentage of Senior Managers who hired new full time or temporary staff remotely during pandemic.	53%
Percentage of Senior Managers who conducted remote interviews and onboarding sessions	75%
Percentage of Senior Managers who advertised fully remote jobs	61%
Percentage of Senior Managers who expanded their search geographically to access a wider candidate pool	60%
Percentage of Senior Managers who shortened the hiring process	60%
Percentage of Senior Managers who increased the use of temporary professionals	57%

From the above survey we could clearly assess how workspaces smartly transitioned themselves to fit the

Lockdown ridden World to also serve their clients better and to work on their project efficiently [3].

The option of working from home was only sought after occasionally by many people who wished to work while they were sick or when they are unable to travel to workspaces when it was the time before Lockdown caused by COVID-19 [4]. But now, homes with a working Computer System and a Strong Internet connection are a necessity for workspaces which are present in Lockdown ridden countries. Thus, having a global team to function just like a normal team with Cultural and Moral Integrity isn't a far-fetched dream. And also, international projects can be handled much better by a global team as compared to a normal team because of the versatility of having different minds from different cultures work together.

V. CHALLENGES FACED BY GLOBAL TEAM

If there is weak base for the foundation of trust and communication companies can face the challenge of lack of clarity. To resolve this issue companies should employ clear and written communications of the outcomes of meetings, to avoid confusion and to clarify queries. Decisions made in a global team are comparatively slower than a physically present team, it may take up to week to even schedule meetings and establishing deadlines for projects [5].

Periodically scheduling corporal meetings can speed up the business and execution of policies to a much faster rate. But such meetings are subject to the feasibility of such meetings that are called because the company is under the obligation to bear the expenses that are necessary for employees who come from a long distance.

Employers and Employees both might feel difficult when it comes to organizing meetings in accordance with the sleep schedules of the team if there is an 8-hour time zone difference this could get very difficult but this can be solved if one of the employer or the employee decides to work the night shift while others work the day shift and this could go on on a rotational basis.

Conflicts may arise due to the difference in time zones and ideologies. This can be eradicated by building a strong bond among the team. In order to undertake a considerable amount of risk, the employer has to trust the employee. For example, in Japan there is a lot of respect for seniority and employees would hesitate to openly communicate with the upper management even though the team is open to feedback.; But in Scandinavian Countries it isn't the case, employees and employers engage in informal communication and they have an open word with the upper management.

To prevent conflict due to cultural differences, experts help can be called in, to create a culturally impartial environment for employees to work with. There might be many Limits, boundaries and Ground Rules that can be laid down by the Managers so that every employee can contribute to the work without feeling violated or interrupted.

VI. CONCLUSION

There are very clear advantages and challenges of global team collaboration, however the advantages do seem to outweigh the challenges, which can be quite easily rectified. Staying on top of communication, making efforts to garner trust in the workplace and, as the boss, making sacrifices to increase employee satisfaction are great ways to do so. Using collaboration software and hardware are also fantastic ways to make remote teams a resounding success!

For a functional global team, it has to undergo meticulous training, a strategic plan has to be formulated, for the team to function trust amongst them must be established, consistency and cohesiveness must be accompanied with transparency and perseverance. Communication is a key aspect of global virtual teams, motivating the employees is a vital aspect of a global virtual teams and has to be enforced effectively as employees are working across oceans.

To sum up global teams are the future of efficient work done but, global teams require proper planning and strategy to function.

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