Achieving Success in Virtual Teams

Organizational Behavior
Introduction

This case explores the dynamics of virtual teams and the factors that may affect their success or demise. The case explores issues such as diversity, factors and attributes that affect virtual teams, especially at a global level. The case uses Volvo as an example of how companies that are active in the global market can effectively utilize communication and virtual teams to effectively achieve the goals of the organization.

1. Attributes contributing to the success or failure of virtual teams

According to the case, people are the primary attributes of the success or failure of a virtual team. In other words, the success and failure of a virtual team depend on the human factors of that team. Some of these factors include communication effectiveness and stimulating work (Nelson & Quick, 2013). Communication effectiveness is the ability to communicate clearly, concisely and without ambiguity. According to Bill Leonard (2011), effective communication within a virtual team, "may be more important for virtual workers" (p. 2).

Effective communication reduces or eliminates ambiguity in messages and the comprehension of the messages sent. Ambiguity may cause unnecessary frustration or misunderstanding amongst team members. Stimulating work includes encouraging, supporting and setting goals for members. According to Steven MacGregor and Teresa Coronas (2007), these attributes are "enhanced creativity and engagement" (p. 41). Without work that is stimulating, team members will quickly lose interest and become less engaged. This lethargy eventually contributes to the failure of the team.