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Abstract

The key in keeping a company's competitive advantage has to do with ensuring that effective communication and co-operation happens in teams operating in a multinational company (MNC). Different cultural backgrounds often influence the communication needed for the maintenance of a common corporate culture, as the communication has to be adapted to be culturally relevant.

The dispersion of team members adds to the challenge of making communication and co-operation effective. Virtual teams or virtual teaming has gained popularity increasingly since the 1990's, as a new way for people to work together although dispersed. The construction of a common "reality" a multi-cultural virtual team agrees upon and works in, often falls on the manager of such a team. In a strictly virtual team, this reality has to be constructed through computer mediated communication channels.

This research examines what different aspects a manager needs to consider, to effectively manage the communication and co-operation in multi-cultural co-located or virtual teams. The main research question is "*What different aspects does a manager in a MNC need to consider to effectively manage a multi-cultural co-located or virtual team?*" The sub-objectives define the question further and are the following: 1)What cultural differences does a manager need to overcome to effectively manage multi-cultural teams?; and 2)How does virtuality relate and/or add to challenges already faced by multi-cultural teams?

As a conclusion, it can be stated that the biggest challenges by far with multi-cultural teams are those of cultural differences and how to resolve them. To achieve effective communication and co-operation in multi-cultural co-located or virtual teams a manager needs to be able to communicate in a way that is culturally relative, as well as show concern for the values of others. Also, virtual working environments and communication channels can be seen as mediums making multi-cultural teams a feasible and effective solutions for companies for the first time ever.

Key words	virtual team, multi-cultural, cultural differences, communication, co-operation
Further information	