

## **Virtual Communication Experience Student Instructions**

As you know, many companies operate globally, putting together teams of individuals that are required to complete projects and solve business problems while never meeting face to face. Virtual communication is the norm for these teams, despite differences in language, culture and time zone.

You are being asked to work in a team to solve a business problem using only virtual communication. Each member of your team will be in a different location, and you communicate only digitally. Teams will have a couple of minutes before you leave the classroom to choose a communication channel. Team leaders will remain in the classroom and be given the problem that is to be solved once the team members have left the classroom.

Remember it is important to get everyone's input to ensure an optimal solution. You probably have a lot of experience communicating digitally, so this exercise may seem like a piece of cake to you. Good. Use all your skills to get the job done.

## **Stimulus and Exercise Materials**

Instructors can use any problem they like, including short case studies, end of chapter materials, financial analysis discussions, etc. The most important consideration is that the problem selected requires discussion and analysis.

## **Sample Student Work Products**

In addition to requiring each team to provide a solution to the assigned problem, students complete a short reflection on the experience. The prompt I use is, "Describe your experience with the virtual team exercise. What were your challenges and what went well? How did you feel?" The following are samples of student reflections.

- Overall I believe that the exercise went over well. We included everyone in our group and everyone had a say. I felt as though most were just going along with whatever ideas came about. It took a while to get connected but once we were it was smooth sailing. We listed out what we needed to know and it blossomed from there. Once we had one part the rest seemed to come together quickly. In the beginning I felt really stressed out. This happened because we were not connected yet and it was making me anxious. I had no control over it and no matter how hard I wanted it someone else took the names. I watched the time tick away and the more time I spent not talking it made me more stressed. Eventually we got connected and all my stress faded away.
- For me the Virtual Team Exercise absolutely stunk because I didn't even get into the group chat because one of the people who made the chat couldn't tell if my number started with a 4 or a 9 due to my hand writing not being the prettiest. But he never even attempted to try either number. Nothing went well for me and I felt pretty left out. I didn't even get a say of my ideas.
- In the virtual task, communication was essential. We had to find a way that we could all speak quickly and efficiently. My group chose to use snapchat because we felt having a group chat on that would be easier than waiting for messages to

deliver on text or iMessage. At first it was difficult because everybody was having ideas and putting them all in the chat at once, so it was a bit hectic but after the initial few ideas, we chose one and then the group chat really helped. We were all able to see everybody's input clearly and it helped us get the information required very quickly and easily. I feel like there could have been a big chance for social loafing in the task because there is nobody there to a person from doing it but the team I had were all very efficient and pulled their weight. Leadership wasn't a problem for our group because we all threw ideas out there and then we selected one very quickly and then we each had our own say. The only thing that we maybe struggled with was the start when everybody had ideas and it was all just a big rush. To avoid this, we could have each had our own time to speak rather than all at once.