

Project Management for Hybrid Teams






October 2021

topic

Project Management for Hybrid Teams

Date : 22 Oct, 2021
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Guest Speaker	Panelists					Session Moderator
Global Board of Director - PMI	Asia	Latin America	North America	Africa	Europe	
 LuAnn Piccard	 Geetha Gopal	 Jorge Luis Castro Toribio	 Katelyn Bullock	 John Tseriwa	 Tomasz Grochowski	

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From the editor's desk



Yudha Pratama

PMI Puget Sound, USA

Hybrid teams, like it or hate it, is here to stay. At least for the next foreseeable futures. The question is now is how to ensure that hybrid team models will continue to be successful in helping organizations deliver values to their customers or user faster and better.

Our panelists zero on the fact that people or human centered approach will be the key drivers to success. Projects are, hybrid or not, completed by people.

Fostering trust among team members are more important than ever.

With diminishing chances of serendipitous face to face encounters, it has become very crucial for the leaders to engineers those opportunities to help the team members build bonds to ensure that the lack of face to face meeting impact innovations.

Some panelists also see this as an opportunity. Hybrid team removes geographical barriers therefore allowing organizations to tap into the supply of talents worldwide thus possibly help stoking to fire of innovations. The next few years will be very interesting years. We will see how this will eventually play out.



Geetha Gopal

Asia



Question:

What is the ultimate success factor of Hybrid teams?

Answer:

Building trust and exhibiting accountability are two things that will be ultimate success factors for hybrid teams. It should be across all levels, management to team, team to management



Question:

Do you think the hybrid team will have a negative long-term impact on the company's ability to innovate?

Answer:

One size doesn't fit all. Depends on nature of job and individual. I can name teams with no innovation while working full time in office and those who have created tremendous changes totally remotely, and vice versa. My only thought around this is, companies should not force their employees if they wish to innovate and progress! It should be organic and flexible with certain specific ground rules around companies core values.



Jorge Luis Castro Toribio

Latin America



Question:

What is the ultimate success factor of Hybrid teams?

Answer:

Human-centered approach, outcome-based planning, customer-centric, technical excellence and agile practices, psychological safety

Question:

Do you think the hybrid team will have a negative long-term impact on the company's ability to innovate?

Answer:

I do not think so, innovation is not a magic think, you can reach it through hard work, build psychological safety environments and support it (hackathons, budgets, etc). Leadership should guarantee that



Johan Tseriwa

Africa



Question:

What is the ultimate success factor of Hybrid teams?

Answer:

The ultimate success factors for hybrid teams are accountability, productivity, team collaboration, and effective communication. A Hybrid team must be able to communicate effectively and at the same time collaborate



Question:

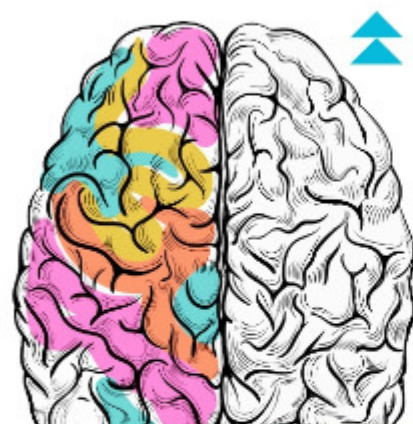
Do you think the hybrid team will have a negative long-term impact on the company's ability to innovate?

Answer:

I think hybrid teams can be more innovative given the diversity of talents and skills that are not confined to a specific geographical location. Although in an office set-up idea may come up spontaneously the advantage of hybrid teams is to be able to tap from different minds in unique environments that are sometimes conducive for innovation.

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topic

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Guest Speaker

Panelists

Chairman of the Board - PMI

Asia

Latin America

Europe

Africa

Session Moderator

North America



Tony Appleby



Rohit Chaudhary



Afranio Lamy Spolador Junior



Mustafa Hafizoglu



Eng. Tororiro Isaac Chaza



Steven M. Fullmer



Katelyn Bullock

North America



Question:

What is the ultimate success factor of Hybrid teams?

Answer:

Let me start with a question to get you thinking.... How were you measuring team success before? I have heard so many times in the project world that "project was a great success"... often meaning that it was done on time and on-budget. Oddly enough, no one asks if the team itself was a success. So before we can talk about the 'ultimate success factor' of a hybrid team we must first define "ultimate success". In my opinion, the ultimate success is a combination of Results + Engagement. That is, the project is successful by the usual metrics and the team is excited to work together again.

At ENTA, we have always been remote and have implemented many techniques to infuse our culture and engage our team members. For example, every Monday starts with 15min on how the weekend activities supported our mind, body and soul. It is a great opportunity to reflect and connect; But it had to be it's own scheduled time, otherwise work slips in and the meaning is lost. This took practice on everyone's part, and correcting each other when work conversation slipped in. Now everyone shows up Monday morning ready to hear about their colleagues' journeys.

So to have successful and engaged hybrid teams that are both in office and working remote we need to manufacture the opportunities that we take for granted when working person to person. Remember that person that cut you off isn't an evil emperor of doom here to ruin your day. It's another person, with emotions and passions

Question:

Do you think the hybrid team will have a negative long-term impact on the company's ability to innovate?

Answer:

I think this will depend on how mature the company innovation process is. Companies that have a defined innovation process already implemented will be the quickest to adapt this to a hybrid model. These companies that are so dedicated to innovation that they have built out their innovation process and ensure it is part of their business strategy and were most likely the first to succeed at hybrid teams in the first place; as it was just another innovation opportunity. The culture of innovation takes a mindset that see opportunities not problem, embraces the unknown and gives permission to fail. (or as we like to say "iterate to success"). But stating you're an innovative company as part of your culture won't do much unless it's backed up with action...consistent action.

Recently there have been amazing tools and tech solutions developed to help increase hybrid team's innovation process. These tools bridge the communication gap and add transparency needed to help hybrid or remote teams. Two of my favourite tools that I have come across are Miro.com and Output.co.

So will hybrid teams have a long-term impact on company innovation? I don't think so. Either the company believes in innovation so much they will find a way or they will fail to innovate and go the way of Blockbuster or Kodak.



Question:

Question - from Suchitra Chaudhary
I want to be a Collaborative leader. What are the steps/certifications that I should take to achieve that?

Answer:

Project management is a great place to start. In my personal experience, project management has helped me to be more open to other people's perspectives, contributions and value which in turn has positively impacted my collaborative spirit. I strongly recommend to be open to projects that involve multiple stakeholders/parties (vendors, stakeholders, etc.), managing them will help in strengthening collaborative leadership, in understanding the nuances of collaboration dynamics, etc. Shadowing leaders with strong collaborative skills is another approach that yields positive results, there is so much we can learn and adapt, by observing others. (Geetha)

Question:

Question - from Prasanna Kumar
How the working in hybrid teams changed from pandemic times to now.. What are key takeaways for going forward?

Answer:

Change is the new norm. For a long time from now, we will continue to have hybrid/dynamic team environments because the pandemic is far from over and its impact in some way or the other will continue to affect us. We may or may not be able to return to full-office structure due to this lasting impact. Hence the best thing to do is to setup our teams in a way that they can function efficiently wherever they are, to have processes and steps in place to facilitate this and also ensure quality of deliverable are met. This is going to be the next challenge for both leaders and team members. (Geetha)

Question:

Question from David Lewis
How have your sustained/developed/changed company culture within a hybrid model given the reduction in face to face engagement?

Answer:

In our organization, even before the pandemic we had the digital technologies and tools for remote work. However, the adoption rate was low. But during the pandemic, when need arose, it was very easy to ramp up the region and ensure our businesses function remotely as much as possible. It was a change in mindset and we ran a change program to influence and gain user confidence. Reflecting on this a year later, we see that our businesses wouldnt want to go back to pre-pandemic way of working. They appreciate and acknowledge the difference this digitalization has brought about not just to work remotely but also in terms of collaboration and team dynamics. So in our case, virtual working is the new culture and technology has played a big role in this. (Geetha)

I truly believe that company culture will be at the forefront for every successful business in the future. Reputation has become one of the biggest risks to businesses.

Companies must first define their culture. I recommend doing this with your people if you haven't already. It's very powerful to kick of engagement. But one grande statement does not make a culture. It needs to be built into what you do (processes) and what you say (social media/communications). As a leader we need to actively and ALWAYS live by and promote the culture and reinforcing behaviours that do.

Building culture cultivators in your company can be a great way to infuse your culture. Find your culture champions and empower them to help promote the culture. (Katelyn)

Question:

Question - from Mark Doidge
How does the panel think about how things will change as some companies ease into Return-to-Work (RTW)?

Answer:

The current set-up has brought in a lot of flexibility for certain individuals and for some they can't wait to return to the office. I foresee a situation whereby some employees will prefer working remotely and not want to come to the office. Employers on the other hand also have benefitted from the reduced operational cost of not having people in the office. These changes will need to be managed with great tact to ensure that there is a balance between productivity and convenience. (John)

Question:

Question - from Vibhor Singh
I think WFH is doing the same what Mobile did few years back with the advent of internet services on mobile. Are we heading into that trap? is returning to office the only choice to avoid this trap?

Answer:

Mobile based internet has simplified both business operations and consumer experience. Though we feel we spend more time on mobile, we have a choice to control the usage. Comparing that with work from home, I think the best way forward is to make the work environment flexible, so those who need to work from home due to personal circumstances may do so and those who feel they work best at office can return freely. (Geetha)

Question:

Question from Vinod Krishna
Considering the new ways of operating, what change do project leaders have to bring in with their communication with stakeholders?

Answer:

I think that Project Managers will have to be more systematic in the way they communicate. We can no longer rely on ad hoc communication that happened in office. We need to create and clearly define specific times and expectations around communicating. Where we may have had an unofficial process we may have to have a more defined process. Especially because all team members like to receive communications differently. Each team may need a project kickoff around communication to define the expectation and path to success.. (Katelyn)

Transparency is the most important aspect of communications, especially while working remotely. We must also enable data-driven processes through dashboards for visibility, regular proactive communications, etc. to give confidence to our stakeholders. With transparency, data-driven reporting, regular communications we increase trust! (Geetha)

Question:

Question from Patrick Khayumbi:
"How do you balance Company policies on
"new way of working and personalities" ?

Answer:

The HR team may need to revise the traditional approach of work from selection, onboarding, training and even termination. There is need for policy and cultural shift so that hybrid teams are not confined to the traditional onsite/face to face policies. (John)

Policies and procedures will need to be updated to address the new working scenario (hybrid or remote) new procedures or protocols will have to be built to help "manufacture" the new communication complexities that come with a hybrid/remote team. Or to integrate the new tools that have been introduced.

But in order to keep people companies need to engage their employees to be inspired and to feel part of something great. So as they are updating their most likely very dry policies and procedures... they should consider how to build their culture into them. How to make even their most boring policies engaging. No one ever said these things had to be boring... yet most of them unfortunately are. (Katelyn)

Question:

Question - from Munyaradzi Machededze
"Are we achieving the required level of quality when using Hybrid teams?"

Answer:

Quality work is as a result of deliberate actions carried out by the Project Manager and their team members. From my experience our quality of work has not diminished even though we are working with hybrid teams. Standard operating procedures and all quality checks must be followed when working with hybrid teams. The customer is now more informed in this era and quality must never be compromised. (John)

Question:

Question from Muyiwa Olagbaju
"Hybrid teams are a combination of remote and traditional team members..how do we ensure that the remote teams members don't feel isolated or neglected

Answer:

We need to assure them that out of sight does not mean out of mind. Project Managers must engage with team members at a personal level and show genuine interest about their personal matters. Company policies must also be crafted to ensure that remote team members benefit from staff welfare programs just like onsite team members.

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Have a suggestion?

Feel free to drop a note to the PMI Chapter Xchange team by sending email to:
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