

Leading virtual teams - How competent am I

Self assessment

You can use this self-assessment instrument to determine how competent you are on several areas that are important when leading virtual teams. In the box on the right you can rate yourself on each competence area from a scale of 1 to 3 (3=strength, 2=sufficient, 1=needs development).

Skill level: 3 = strength, 2 = good enough, 1 = needs development

Competence Area	The behaviour	<i>Skill level</i>
Using communication technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is comfortable with a variety of communication technologies • Can select the appropriate type of technology, given the team’s task and type, the backgrounds of team members, and the sophistication of the organization • Is skilled in planning agendas and facilitating virtual work meetings 	
Cross cultural communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands that different business approaches work in different places • Relates well to a wide spectrum of people and is not judgmental about differences • Adapts communication style to the situation; is an excellent listener • Is transparent in communication and able to expose her/his intentions • Gets things done across varied and complex conditions 	
Networking and political savvy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows how and when to play the political system to advocate for her/his virtual team • Teaches team members and Headquarters about each other’s perspectives • Is able to influence over time and distance. 	

Skill level scale: 3 = strength, 2 = good enough, 1 = needs development

Competence Area	The behaviour	Skill level
Developing a team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows how to build a team charter, including purpose and goals, in a participatory way • Is able to create a bond between team members • Is able to work with team members to plan careers and transition processes • Is able to act as an advocate for team members' careers and transitions to new assignments 	
Performance management and coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to develop a strategy that makes sense to team members • Can set performance objectives and measure these • Can establish measures for team effectiveness • Is able to give and receive feedback in a culturally sensitive manner • Knows how and when to use a coaching approach 	
Building trust and handling conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is seen as a role model for competence and integrity • Is generally seen as optimistic and likeable • Knows the different aspects of trust in a virtual team (competence, integrity and benevolence) and how to actively influence them 	
Dealing with ambiguity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is willing to trust reports who are working in distant time zones • Operates effectively under ambiguous, uncertain conditions • Is willing to start something and make adjustments along the way • Rebounds quickly after setbacks and disappointments • Has a spirit of adventure: not afraid to try something never done before. 	

Interpreting your scores

If you have scored yourself 2's and 3's on all competencies, you see yourself as having a solid understanding of virtual team leadership. Ask team members and stakeholders for feedback to see if they agree with your view. You can expand your experience by actively developing one or more behaviours in competence areas where you scored relatively lower.

If you have scored yourself a 1 on some competencies, check with others if they agree. With your self-assessment. Decide if this competency is relevant and worth the effort to develop. If so, select one of the development suggestions mentioned below.

If you have scored a 1 on most competencies, check with key people around you if they agree with your self assessment. Prioritize competencies and make sure to invest your time and energy in developing the most important one(s).

Development suggestions

- Solicit feedback from reports, peers, bosses and/or stakeholders on how they see you as a (virtual) team manager. If you have recently taken a 360 feedback assessment, the report will give you some clues.
- Prioritize development actions, maximum three.
- Find a role model inside or outside the organisation.
- Find a mentor who can give you advice and feedback.
- Seek a low risk assignment, leading a low complex virtual team.
- Find training, books, films on the topic; look for materials in Nomadic's Cybrary.