Foreword

The rapid pace of globalization and the development of a variety of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have led to a proliferation of new organizational and work arrangements that seek to leverage the potential of resources, technologies, and talent from the far corners of the globe. Virtual teaming is an important component of these new work arrangements, and is now used by a majority of large organizations as well as by small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Mature organizations use virtual teaming as a means to connect operations spread across distance and time zones. Small- and medium-sized enterprises are able to increase their reach through virtual teaming. Despite an increase in the prevalence of virtual teaming, there remains considerable uncertainty about how to make virtual teams work effectively and efficiently. Whereas the promise of virtual teams is great, they also create new challenges for employees, managers, and organizations, which can undermine their effectiveness. Indeed, organizations are often surprised by the complexity and nuances involved in managing virtual teams well. How can organizations leverage the benefits and mitigate the challenges of virtual teaming?

This book Managing Virtual Teams explores the critical elements that must be considered in managing virtual teams in organizations—from the structural, managerial, and process points of view. Based on solid research and encompassing a wide coverage of the research and managerial literature on virtual teams, the book provides an in-depth look at the nature of virtual teams and the factors that enable their success. It lays out in clear detail the key characteristics of virtual teams and traces their emergence within organizations and the research literature. Delving into the critical inputs necessary for setting up virtual teams for success, the book elaborates on the organizational arrangements and team characteristics that facilitate the functioning and effectiveness of virtual teams. It further discusses key processes—socio-emotional, technological, and managerial—that must be actively managed within virtual teams.

Finally, the book examines key affective and performance outcomes in virtual teams, along with ways to assess and monitor them. Throughout, the authors illustrate their points with case studies and anecdotes of issues
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confronted by virtual team members and managers. Furthermore, they present compelling primary data on the scope of the literature on virtual teams along with the issues that the literature has highlighted.

Based on scholarly research and analysis of a wide range of managerial and organizational experiences Managing Virtual Teams makes a valuable contribution with clear practical guidelines—both to researchers interested in learning about virtual teams, and to managers and organizations dealing with the challenges of managing virtual teams.

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