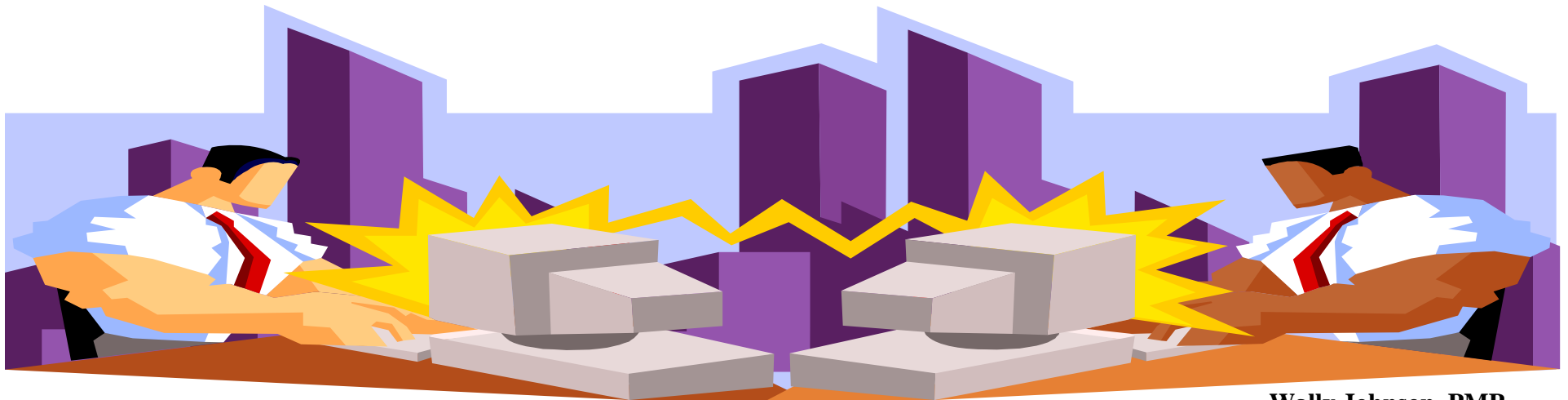


# Creating & Managing Virtual Teams

Tyson's Corner monthly PMI Luncheon Meeting  
Tuesday, October 28, 2008



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# Snapshot



Introduction



Benefits



Virtual Teams



Managing Virtual Teams



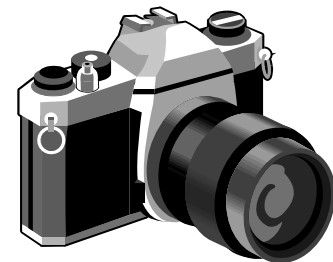
Lessons Learned



Q & A



References





## **\*Geographically Distributed Collaboration is not New**

<b>Project Span:</b>	70 years
<b>Project Scope:</b>	Editor James Murray wanted to include every English word ever written in a book
<b>Project Description:</b>	In 1878, he asks the public for help (just like LINUX ) in creating his dictionary.
<b>Project Resource:</b>	One volunteer, Dr. William Minor, proves to be an abundant contributor, by mail. The two corresponded for 20 years. Dr. Minor helped out on nearly 10,000 definitions but never any face-time or a live interaction.
<b>Project Issue:</b>	After some investigation, the editor finds that Dr. Minor is not only one of the most literate men ever but he is confined for life at the Broadmoor Asylum for criminally insane, convicted for murder.

Source: NorthWest Airline World Traveler, August 2000

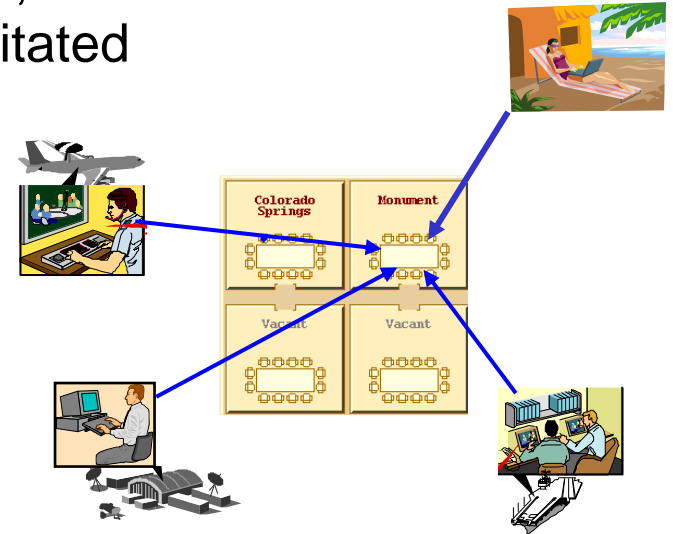
\*Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, Joan of Arc, Jesus Christ – their leadership spanned space, time, culture and even death



## Sample VPO (PMO with Virtual Members)

The Virtual Project Office (VPO) provides web-based, on-line, virtual environments for collaborative work, facilitated by project management experts.

- **Users have access to integrated audio, video, text-chat, whiteboard, and virtual conference room features**
- **The team held virtual meetings to brainstorm, share ideas, or analyze data**
- **VPO provided remote sites easy access to a virtual world to hold status meetings, training sessions, seminars, or briefings**
- **VPO create a virtual workplace (similar to a war room), ready for you to use, web-access, document storage and multi-media tools.**





## **Some Virtual Collaboration Benefits**

### **Time**

- **Jumping**
  - Time (email) – Distance (phone) – Boundaries (chat, IM)
- **Drastically reduce travel time between meetings, responsiveness in real-time**
- **24/7 knowledge access without regard to geography**
- **Reduce decision making time**

### **Cost**

- **Reduce on-site facility costs**
- **Reduce overhead expenditures (Net-sourcing) and travel costs**
- **PM are able to work on multiple projects for same cost**
- **Increase revenue by improving throughput**

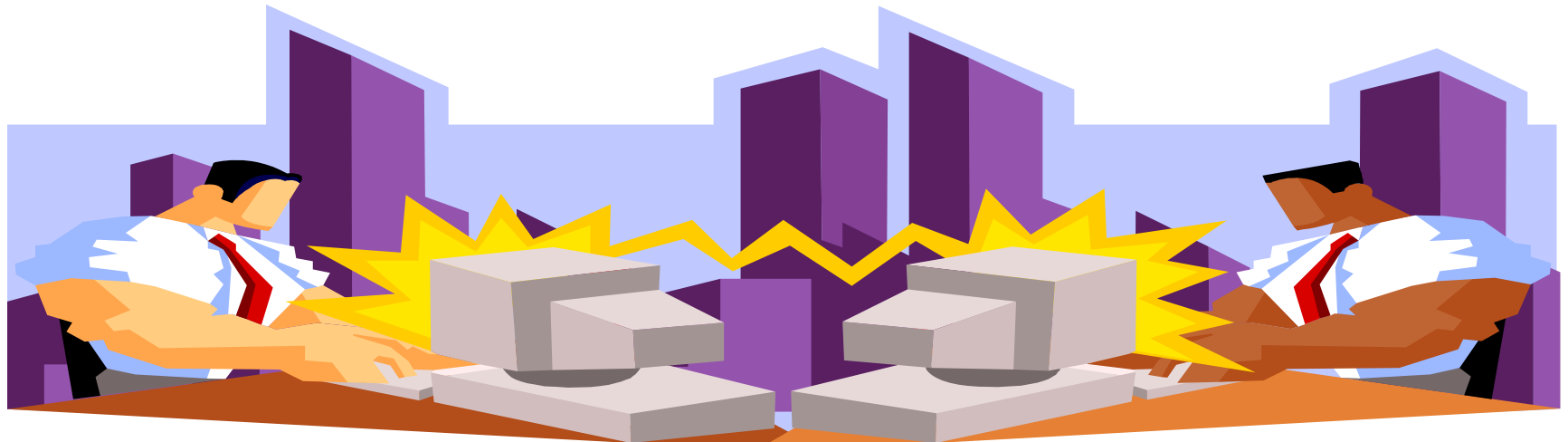
### **Quality**

- **Project artifacts in central repository – eliminate redundancy, reduce rework**
- **On-line documentation makes latest information available**
- **Support/Improve both internal and external communications**



## Virtual Teams

[typically cross time, space, & organization (culture)]





- Communication -

the key to all team dynamics



# \*Success of a Team Depends on...

- **Communication, Communication, ...**
- **Communication** breathes the first spark of life into teaming, and communication keeps teaming alive
- The most common cause for project failures is a **lack of communication** (Source: [Akademic fur Fuhrungskrafte, 2002](#))
- What is the cost of bringing the “team” together (travel, out of office time, coordination of schedules)?
- Meet Virtually! Save time, money and come to decisions faster!

***\*Trust: the foundation of COMMUNICATION***



# Benefits to Team

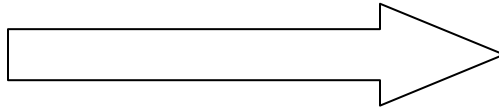
Virtual teaming allows employees :

- **To work on multiple projects**
- **Experience with state-of-the-art concepts**
- **Access to leading edge technology**
- **To broaden work experience**
- **To enhance and diversify skills**
- **Access to best practices**



# Environment Transition

## Collocated:



- Touchspace – face-to-face, physicality
- STSP – same time, same place
- Visual cues – “got to see your eyes” (body language)

## Virtual Collaboration:

- Cyberspace – sensory perceptions off
- ATAP – any time, any place
  - STDP
  - ATDP
- Interactivity – involvement, contribution



# Challenges in Engaging the Team

## Environment Interaction

- 83 % Through Sight
- 11 % Through Hearing
- 3.5 % Through Smell
- 1.5 % Through Touch
- 1.0 % Through Taste

## How we retain information

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we see and hear
- 70% of what we say as we talk
- 90% of what we say as we do

*“A known enemy can be defeated easier than a hidden one...”*

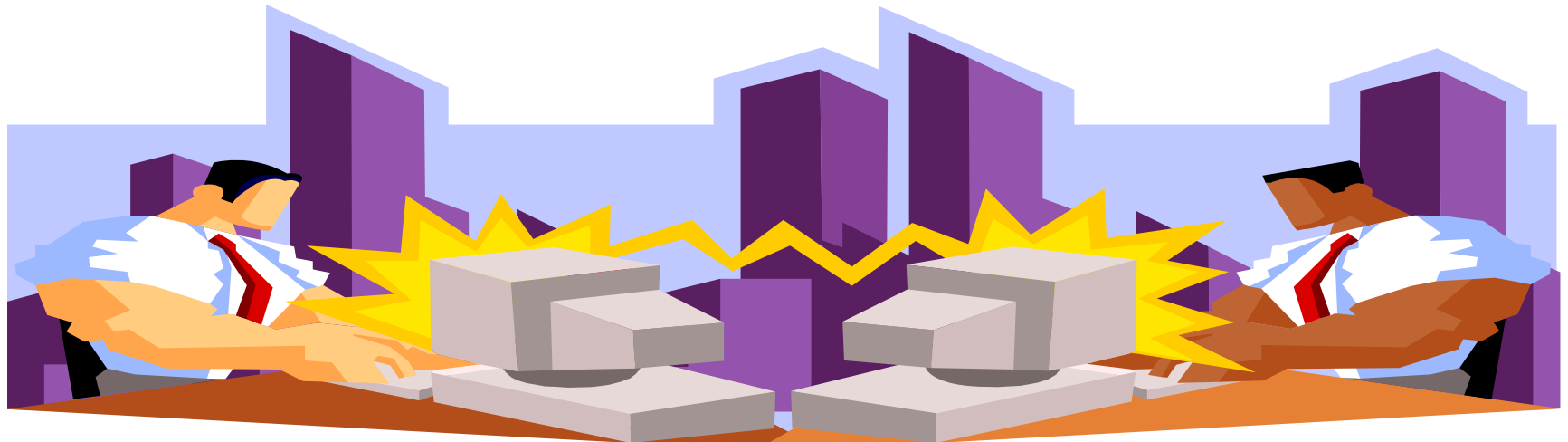


# Desired Qualities of Virtual Team Members

- Teachable
- “Plays well with others”
  - Good interpersonal skills
- Tactile free (Cyber functional)
- High connectivity quotient
  - responsive in perceived manner
  - Speed
  - Quantity
- Functional Vocabulary
- Shared leadership
  - responsible
  - accountable
- High flame tolerance
- Good judgment
- Technology competence

# Managing Virtual Teams

(managing is not a synonym for controlling – key for leader to teach team to control themselves)





# Getting Started

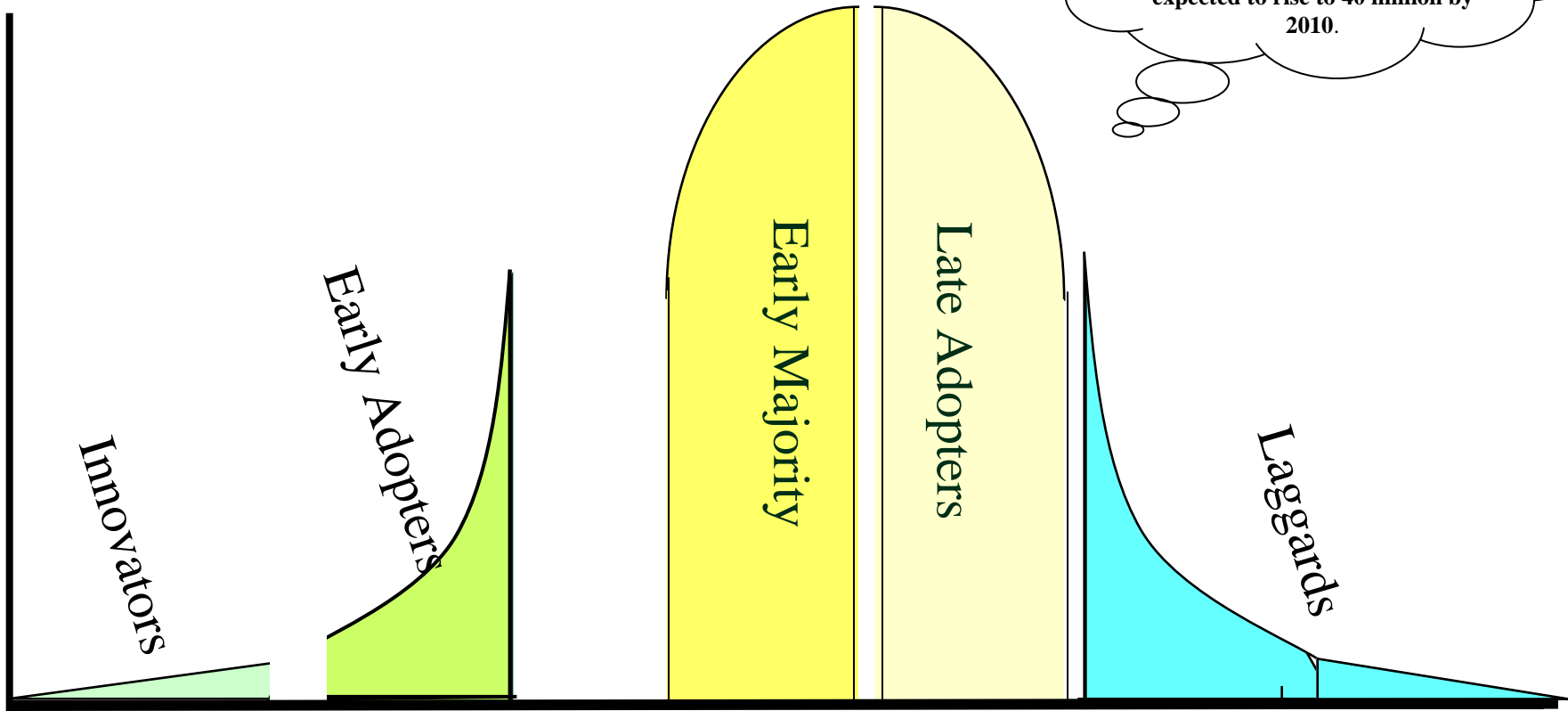
- Evaluate existing Communication Plans
- Explore Web-based Tools
- Explore Distributed PM Tools
- Identify & Interview Potential Team Members
- Introduce Concepts to Teams
- \*Develop Team Charter
  - Document Project Vision & Goals
  - Document meeting processes, team standards & norms
  - Identify measures of success
- HAVE FUN and ENJOY the e-Venture !

*\*effective teams TALK about HOW to work effectively*



# Where Are You, Where is your team?

23.5 million employed Americans tele-worked at least one day per month in 2003. This number rose to 24.1 in 2004. This number is expected to rise to 40 million by 2010.



Reference: Crossing the Chasm; Geoffrey A. Moore  
Other Book: 7 Levels of Change; Rolf Smith



## Dealing with a Resistant Culture

### ➤ **DIFFICULT**

Must move people across multiple “thought” zones

### ➤ **DELICATE**

Must produce victories early and consistent (small is ok) for example > timely communication to the team (on purpose); meetings that start and end on time.

### ➤ **DEVASTATING**

Must have an ‘executive’ sponsor. If the top has no vision, you will perish



## **Questions to Ask Future Virtual Team Members**

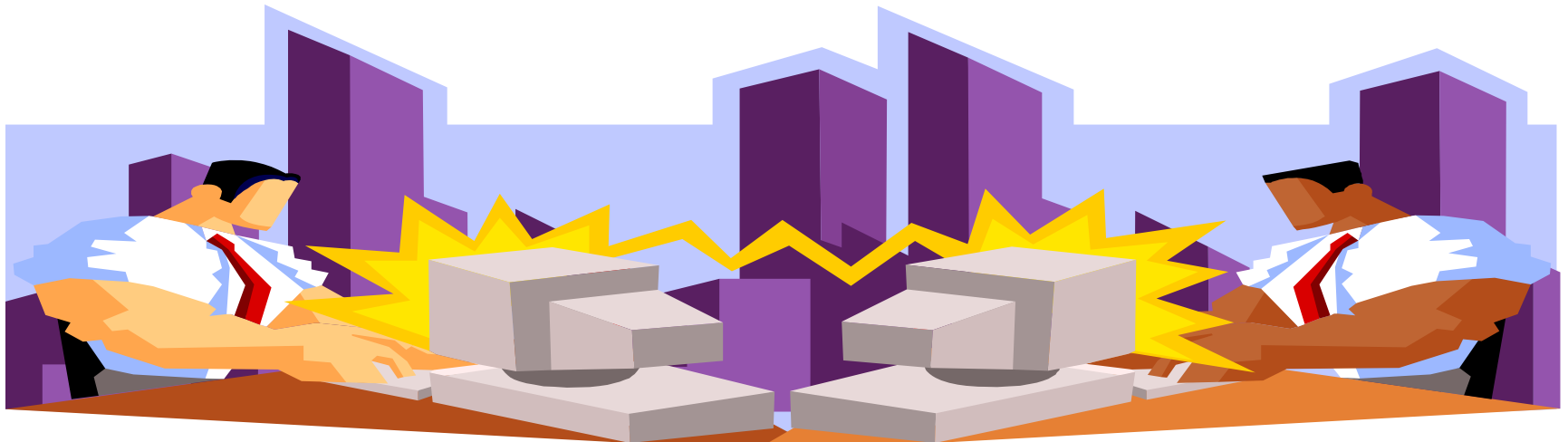
- 1. What is your preference – audio or visual to receive or communicate information ?**
- 2. Describe the way you work under tight deadlines.**
- 3. Describe how you work under tough managers.**
- 4. What is your definition of working too hard ?**
- 5. Persuade me to move to your city (200 words or less).**
- 6. How do you manage stress ?**
- 7. When you communicate with others via email, snail mail or phone – do you picture them in your mind ? Does the topic change the picture in your mind ?**
- 8. In a team environment, are you a motivator, a player, a leader, or an enthusiast ?**
- 9. In the past three years, what part of your professional skill set have you not improved?**
- 10. If you were a new team member, what would you do to meet your team members in the first 30, 60, or 90 days ?**



# Virtual Team Member Home Office Configuration



# Lessons Learned





# Tips for Virtual Team Members

- ❑ **Manage Individual time**
  - ✓ **Time flies when the team is away ...**
  - ✓ **“Forty-six percent of employees with Net access use it for personal activities.” – Angus Reid Group**
  - ✓ **Beware procrastination**
    - **Clear goals needed**
  
- ❑ **Make your work space a place for work**
  - ✓ **Do not accept distractions (i.e. convenient errands)**
  - ✓ **Create a productive place (maybe dress the part ?)**
  - ✓ **All materials / info needed**
  
- ❑ **Celebrate any and all successes**
  - ✓ **Add “Celebration Plan” to team charter**
  - ✓ **Beware depression**
    - **lack of pats on back and social interaction**



## \*Lessons Learned

- Set internal and/or external expectations, if you do not they will set themselves
- People are enamored with technology (new toys) – lead with process (the way), not the tools
- Team needs to speak the same language or not speak [Automotive Co.]
- Be prepared for more change, something new is always coming [Insurance Co.]
- Deal with jealousy openly (local vs. dispersed)
- Take estimated time to implement a Virtual team and multiply by 3 (culture, team, & tool)



**For Q & A**



# References

- *“The Distance Manager – A Hands-On Guide to Managing Off-Site Employees and Virtual Teams”*, by Kimball Fisher and Mareen Fisher
- *“Remote Working: Linking People and Organizations”*, by David Nickson and Suzy Siddons
- *“Mastering Virtual Teams”*, by Deborah L. Duarte and Nancy Tennant Snyder
- *“The I in Team”*, by Susan K. Gerke and Linda V. Berens
- *“Virtual Teams: Projects, Protocols and Processes”*, by David Pauleen
- *“Virtual Teams That Work: Creating Conditions for Virtual Team Effectiveness”*, by Christina B. Gibson & Susan G. Cohen