Dave’s Dilemma

• Dave, IT Manager
  - 20 person team
  - Part of large IT department

• Distributed Teams Research
  - Team members work in different physical locations
  - Dave’s Team: Some colocated with others, some not colocated

• Asked to do more with the same number of staff
Dave’s Dilemma

• How work gets done must change
  – Each team member has more task variety
  – Become more physically distributed
    • Place staff at client sites
    • Allow staff to work at home at times
    • Retain staff that moves out of area
    • Leverage outsourced staff

• Other managers insist that all IT staff needs to be physically together
• Resource implications of not being together
  – Need to see each other; performance may suffer

Game Change

• Field of Play has Changed

• New Field / New Resources / New Rules

• What are the new ‘rules’ for top performance?
Top Performers Resource Use

- **Leverage location and communication mode**
  - Face-to-face vs. electronic interactions
  - When to focus on face-to-face/electronic
    - With who, when, where

- **Two different patterns of interaction**
  - Face-to-face resource network
  - Electronic resource network

Research Project and Method

- **Social Network Survey and Analysis**
  - Who do you communicate with on the team
  - Two types of networks:
    - Face-to-face vs. electronic communication

- **Analyze Patterns of Communication**
  - Patterns → Resource access → Performance

- **Questions**
  - How does colocation with team members relate to these two types of networks?
  - Does more technology use make any difference?
  - How do the two networks relate to individual performance?

- **Tool for Managers to Use**
Social Networks

Prominence, visibility

Jon
Sue

Cohesive Group

Yan
Research Sample

- 254 people
  - 18 distributed teams
    - 9 organizations

- Technology and Human Service teams

- 7 global teams, 11 wholly based in U.S.

- Individual resource access & performance
  - Not group performance

Findings – Bad News / Good News

- Colocation with team members
  - Resource access goes up – prominence, visibility
  - Even resource access in electronic networks is affected

- As the number of colocated team members
  - Resource access goes down

- As communication technology use
  - Prominence, visibility goes up
Key Finding

• Electronic networks were related to Individual Performance
  – No relation between Individual Performance & face-to-face networks

• Being Visible in the Electronic Network is key to individual performance

Insights

• How to Play on the New Field
  – Value Electronic interactions as you would Face-to-face interactions
    • Respond in timely manner
    • Judicious use of electronic interactions
    • Balance:
      – A smaller set of close knit contacts you keep in touch with regularly
      – Larger set of less frequent contacts
      – Increase range and cross boundaries – physical, functional, status
    • Culture of working electronically
    • Agree upon electronic expectations
Insights

• Access to relational resources and performance does not have to degrade in distributed teams

• Electronic interactions
  - Can be (HAVE TO BE?!) used to access resources that are associated with higher performance

Making it Work for You

• What patterns are related to higher performance in YOUR organization?

• Do-it-Yourself Network Analysis

• 5-10 minute questionnaire
• Intrateam, interteam, interdepartment

• Software for analysis is readily available
Nice to Meet You.....
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