

Chapter VII

Hybrid Synergy for Virtual Knowledge Working

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ABSTRACT

Recent rapid technological advancement has influenced communication and information management. In addition, it has facilitated collaboration, an interactive process that engages participants who work together to achieve outcomes they could not accomplish independently. Using new technologies for remote collaboration from U.K., Finland, and Greece, we created our own collaboration and creativity technique as best practices for our team by utilizing an adaptation of Collaborative E-Learning and Six Thinking Hats. We call this model for knowledge working to enhance collaborative creativity Hybrid

Synergy. The question under investigation was “What tools, methodologies, techniques, and practices can support collaborative creativity of multidisciplinary teams for virtual knowledge working?” The results from the study conducted in an online course verified the importance of the individual contribution for the development and evolution of a virtual team as a whole. Furthermore, the propositions suggested the use of specific techniques and methodologies can enhance technology enabled organisational change.

INTRODUCTION

The new information knowledge society is now a critical resource for social capital and economics development. The concept of *intrapreneurship*, that is people who focus on innovation and creativity within one organization, suggests an economy that is increasingly dominated by knowledge using new technologies (Frazer, 2007). Therefore, organizations, educational institutions, as well as businesses have been investing in the integration of Information and Communication Technologies. One of the focus areas has been online education. In Greece, part of this integration is delivered by the Greek Ministry of Education. The planning, growth, and operation of the *Greek School Network* (GSN, <http://www.sch.gr/en>) has been advanced for this purpose. Acknowledging the Greek teachers' need for professional development through networking and exchange of experiences as an online community of practice for life-long learning, GSN provided the e-learning platform Moodle@GSN. Gradually, our e-learning team was formed, aiming at delivering online courses for the Greek teachers. Based on sound existing frameworks (e.g., Nemiro, 2002, we have developed methodologies and techniques facilitating our virtual networking to achieve cost- and time-effective results, encourage team collaboration (Nemeth & Goncalo, 2005) and expand our talents by combining educational traditions from the U.K., Finland, and Greece.

This chapter seeks to answer the question “What tools, methodologies, techniques, and

practices can support collaborative creativity of multidisciplinary teams for virtual knowledge working?” Answers to this question aim at supporting entrepreneurs within one organization (intrapreneurs) since, as Sawyer (2006) suggests, there might be a great number of creative employees within an organization, but if they work in a stifling organizational structure, they will not innovate (Frazer, 2007, p. 16). In this chapter, we will present concepts and methodologies behind our e-learning team, such as knowledge working, collaborative creativity, best practices, and tools for online collaborative knowledge working, as well as ways to measure and assess performance.

KNOWLEDGE WORKERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Knowledge workers are the employees who know more than anyone else about their organization (Drucker, 1966, 1973). They are the ones who, by virtue of their position or knowledge, are responsible for a contribution that materially affects the capacity of the organization to contribute, perform, obtain results, and share knowledge with other co-workers. These individuals are involved in occupations heavily reliant in knowledge, such as research and development, education and consultancy, and are mostly likely to be driven by the satisfaction of their work (Reilly, 2005). According to Reilly (2005), knowledge workers can be seen as an “awkward squad” by managers, as they

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