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5 Key Factors to Team Member Location: In Person vs. Remote

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The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote work. People started to realize teams could operate successfully without being confined to a single geographic location.

Because of this, the issue becomes, what are the key factors that determine whether team members should be in the same physical space or be remote. We share below five key factors you can use to make that determination.

First, let's draw parallels to the retail industry, and use that transformation, to give us valuable insights into the future of teams.

The Changing Landscape For Teams: Lessons from Retail Stores

In the past, retail success relied heavily on physical store locations. The mantra "location, location, location" was widely accepted, emphasizing the need for stores to be easily accessible to customers. However, the rise of e-commerce and online retail giants like Amazon has reshaped the retail industry. Consumers now make purchases from centralized websites. Physical store locations have become much less important.



Similarly, teams used to be localized, with team members working in the same geographic location. However, the pandemic accelerated the reliance on technology and the internet to foster communication and collaboration among team members. Remote work has become more widely accepted, enabling team members to be located in different cities, states, or even countries.

Team Member Location Factors

When determining whether team members should be in the same geographic location, it is crucial to consider several key factors:

- **Centralization vs. Decentralization**

The degree of centralization or decentralization of team functions affects the feasibility of remote work. Centralized tasks that require less communication among team members lend themselves well to remote collaboration. Accounting, for example, is typically a centralized function governed by established rules and regulations. Decentralization, on the other hand, where decisions are more complicated with less structured rules, may require increased communication and coordination, making remote work more challenging.

- **Effective Communication via Technology**

The ability to effectively communicate through technology is a fundamental consideration. If communication can be easily accomplished through digital tools, remote work becomes more viable. Monitoring work activities and progress can also be facilitated through technology. Tasks that require in-person interaction, such as complex decision making or developing construction project, make remote work less feasible.

- **Interdependence among Tasks**

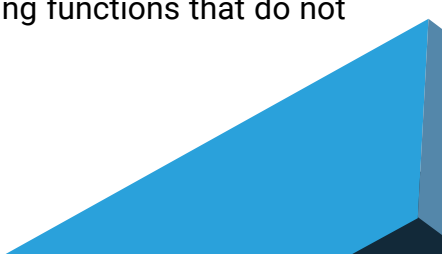
The level of interdependence among team tasks determines the suitability of remote team membership. Tasks that require constant, split-second interactions, and/or multi-person collaboration, like in basketball, are more challenging to execute remotely. Conversely, tasks with less interdependence, like in football, that can be organized in a more sequential manner, enable remote collaboration.

- **Product Accessibility**

The extent to which team members need to physically interact with the product is another important factor. Roles that require direct access to or usage of the product may not be suitable for remote work. However, if certain team members do not require physical proximity to the product, remote work can be effective for those specific roles.

- **In-person Communication Needs:**

The nature of tasks and the necessity for in-person communication influence the feasibility of remote work. Complex tasks that rely on non-verbal communication may require team members to be physically present. However, breaking tasks down into smaller components and assigning functions that do not heavily rely on in-person interaction can facilitate remote collaboration.



Looking Ahead: The Future of Teams

In conclusion, the future of teams lies in embracing the possibilities of remote work and effectively using these five factors to decide if tasks can be remote or require in-person single-location relationships. The ...

- greater centralization of tasks,
- more effective technology enables communication,
- lower the interdependence among tasks,
- greater product accessibility, and the
- less in-person communication is needed,

the more viable remote team membership becomes.

Leveraging technology and fostering strong communication channels will be critical to building successful teams in the future. As remote work continues to gain prominence, it is important for organizations to understand the preferences and needs of employees working remotely.

Contact The Abelson Group and ask Dr. Abelson to assist with in-person vs remote team membership. Or, no matter where your team members are located, ask Dr. A to facilitate a team building session to increase team member communication, effectiveness, performance, and retention.

[Visit our website for more information](#) or to contact The Abelson Group. Dr. Abelson can also be contacted at succeed@abelson.net or by calling 979.696.2222.



About Dr A

Dr. Michael Abelson, (Dr. A) is CEO/President of The Abelson Group, has over 45 years experience consulting on hiring and managing individuals and teams, using psychological assessments to identify and enhance human performance, and training others on how to maximize themselves and others.

Contact us to schedule a speech, training, &/or team building session with Dr. A.

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