

## Trucks Sales & Marketing EMEA



2013-03-06

### Leading from a distance – learning new ways of working

Human Resources, TSM EMEA

As a result of the last years changes within the Volvo Group more and more teams are now spread out over different countries and locations and more managers are facing challenges of leading from a distance.

“We have now held the first training session out of four for managers in Gothenburg and Lyon in how to lead from a distance. This initiative is launched for managers to be able to communicate more effectively and to maintain engagement in their teams even if they are not down the hall from one another” says Ann-Charlotte Palm, Director Talent Management and Competence Development TSM EMEA. “Challenges many are facing today, not just

managers, are to keep the meetings effective and also to create good cooperation and teamwork when we are relying on virtual tools”

Christina Hogan, Behavioral Scientist and running many of the programs, emphasizes that the principles are the same for virtual meetings as with face-to-face meetings but the practice is different. “To ask everyone to mute in a virtual meeting would be the same as asking everyone to have a tape over their mouth in a face-to-face meeting that they should remove each time they want to talk– it is not making the meetings effective” says Christina. “All teams need to decide their own strategy and ground rules for how to communicate from a distance she continues”.

“For us to be successful in this new way of working it is important to get rid of old habits and believes of how virtual meetings should be run and to challenge our self” says one of the participants Maria Tevell, Director Aftermarket and Soft Products Concepts. “Is it possible to do a PBP discussion via a virtual meeting? How can we run a brain storming session via live meeting? These are the kinds of questions we have discussed in the training. To be successful we will need to be very creative and innovative in our approach as leaders”.

“Once the four training sessions are done, we will evaluate the initiative and decide how to go forward” summarizes Anna-Charlotte Palm.

Want to learn more about how to communicate from a distance? Find some more useful tips below. For further reading, a [Virtual teams guide](#) is available or log on to the [Virtual Ashridge, a learning service](#) where you will find more in depth learning guides on this subject.

#### **How to improve communication from a distance**

- A virtual team is made of 10% technology and 90% trust – start to build trust in the team. Think HOW.
  - Technology is not the common enemy – instead see the opportunities and spiral up!
  - Agree in the team about your own guidelines and principles for how to communicate.
  - Use different techniques to create involvement, e.g. imagine all participants sitting at a virtual meeting table. Use images to active the right and left side of the brain.
  - Show body language also in virtual meetings – it makes a difference if your stand up at your desk. You will then have a more energetic and powerful meeting.
- Source Lorensbergs consulting.*