

# Key issues when working in international virtual workplaces

Mike Hogan  
Director, York Associates

IATEFL BESIG conference,  
Bonn, Germany  
15.11.2014



**York Associates**

*Communicate professionally anywhere.*

# Objectives

- ❖ Current workplace environments
- ❖ Key challenges  
and how to address them in the classroom
- ❖ Tips for high performance in virtual teams



# What happening now?

- ❖ Megatrends:  
Globalisation & Technology
- ❖ Team organisation is changing  
(hierarchy, overlap, matrices)
- ❖ Demographic shift – 5 generations
- ❖ Millennials

# Millennials at work



- 25% of the US workforce
- Over ½ the population in Indian workforce
- By 2020, 50% of the global workforce
- 1<sup>st</sup> generation with better grasp of key business tool
- 41% prefer electronic communication to face or voice
- Work-life balance demands and habits

# The context



- How would you approach this?
- 2 Day seminar


Advantages and  
disadvantages  
of  
(this type of)  
virtual team?

# Advantages

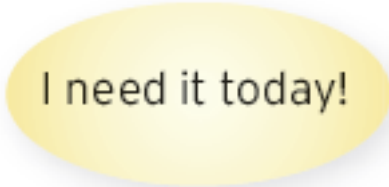
- 24hr global service
- Synergy of skills and knowledge
- Anyplace anytime working
  - 24/7 projects
- Flexibility
- ...



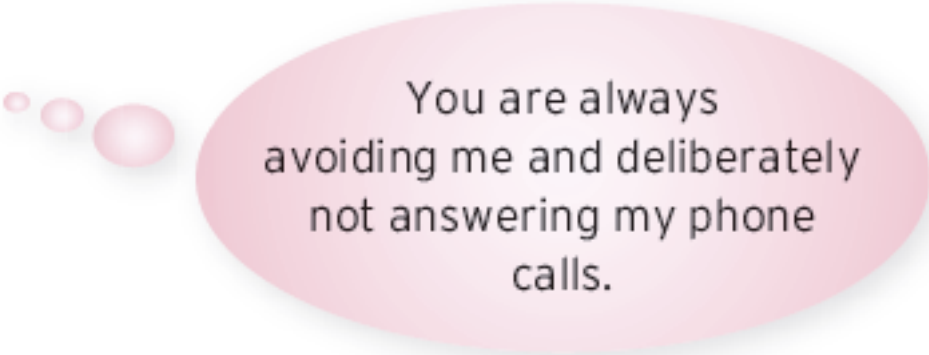
# Disadvantages?



Give me more time  
to prepare!



I need it today!



You are always  
avoiding me and deliberately  
not answering my phone  
calls.

Source: Basis for Business C1 (Cornelsen)



# International virtual team#3 Disadvantages

## Problem of interpretation

Happy?

Sarcasm?



Awkward

## No team building facilities

Sláinte

Cheers



## No access to face and body language

You know what I mean?

(Heavy breathing)



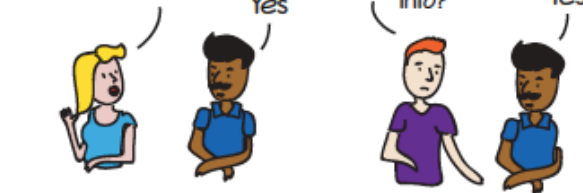
## Difference in cultures

We need it now

Yes

Why are you not sending me the info?

Yes



## Job insecurity

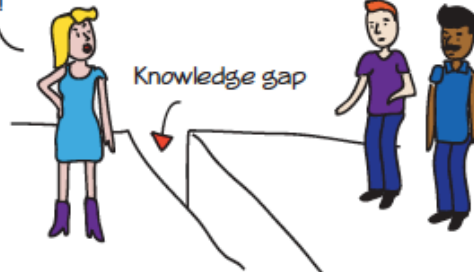
Those Irish are after our jobs...

Don't send any info, might help for keeping our jobs



## Knowledge gap

You suppose to be here!



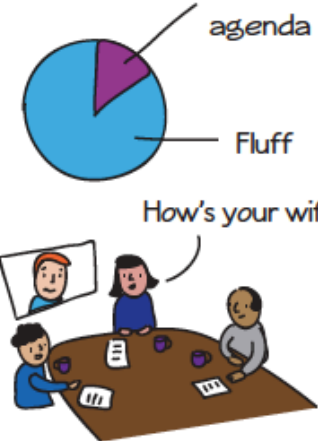
## Where is the agenda?



Actual agenda

Fluff

How's your wife?

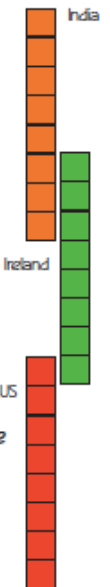


## Different time zones

No timely response



How long till he wakes up?

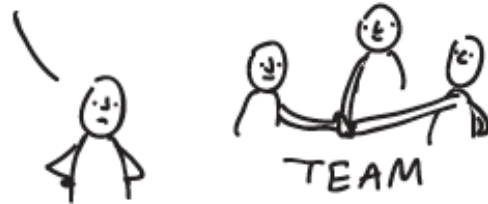


# How does this make you feel?

## ● Exclusion

I don't get their jokes...

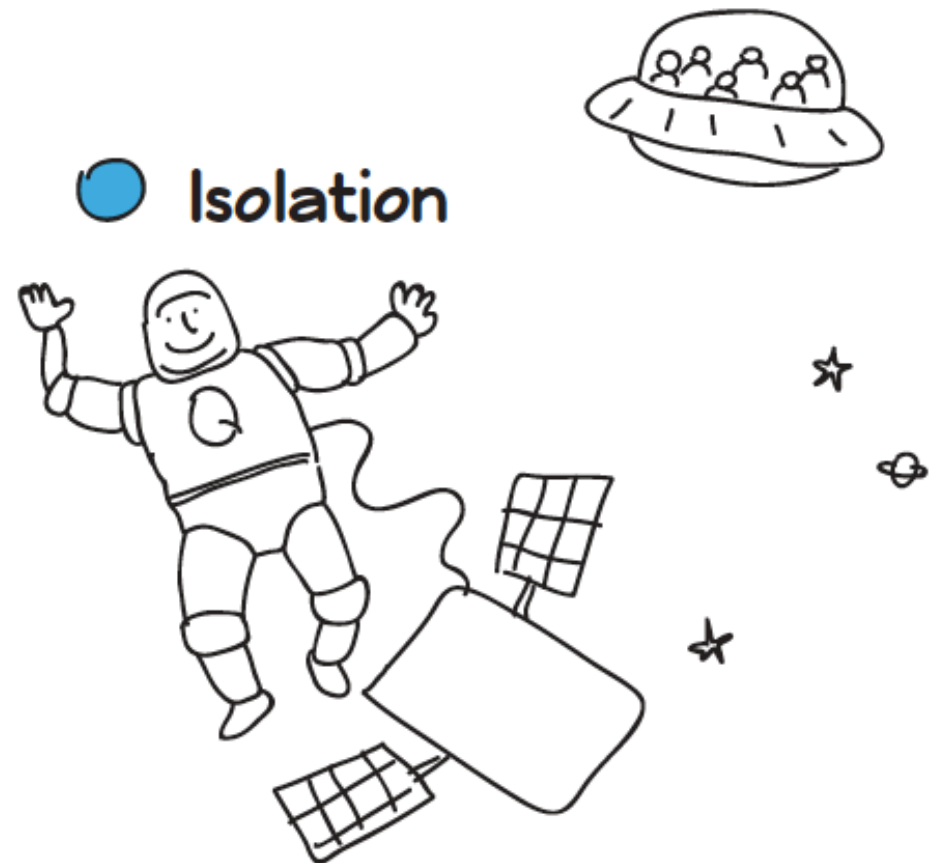
We care about each other!



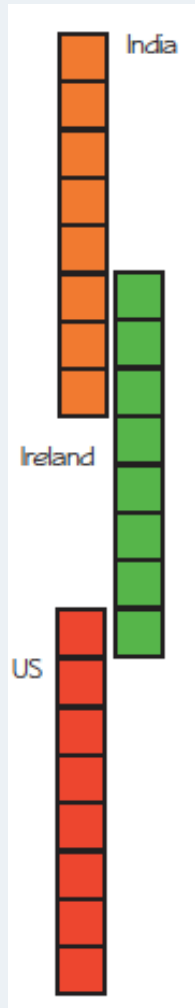
Why no one wants to visit us?



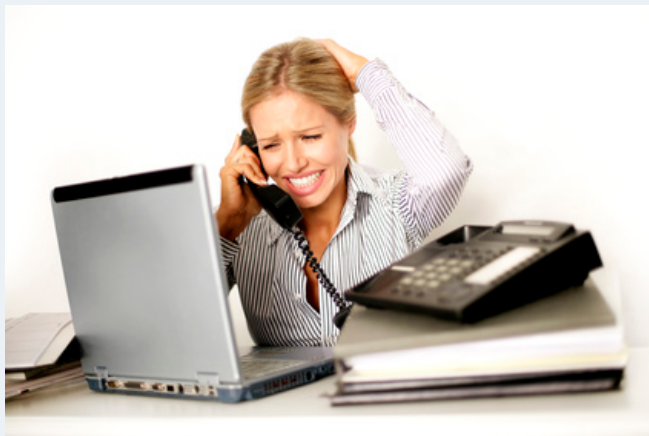
## ● Isolation



# Logistical communication challenges?



- **Different time zones**  
Hard to get everyone in the same room



Email works when it's late (but not virtual meetings)



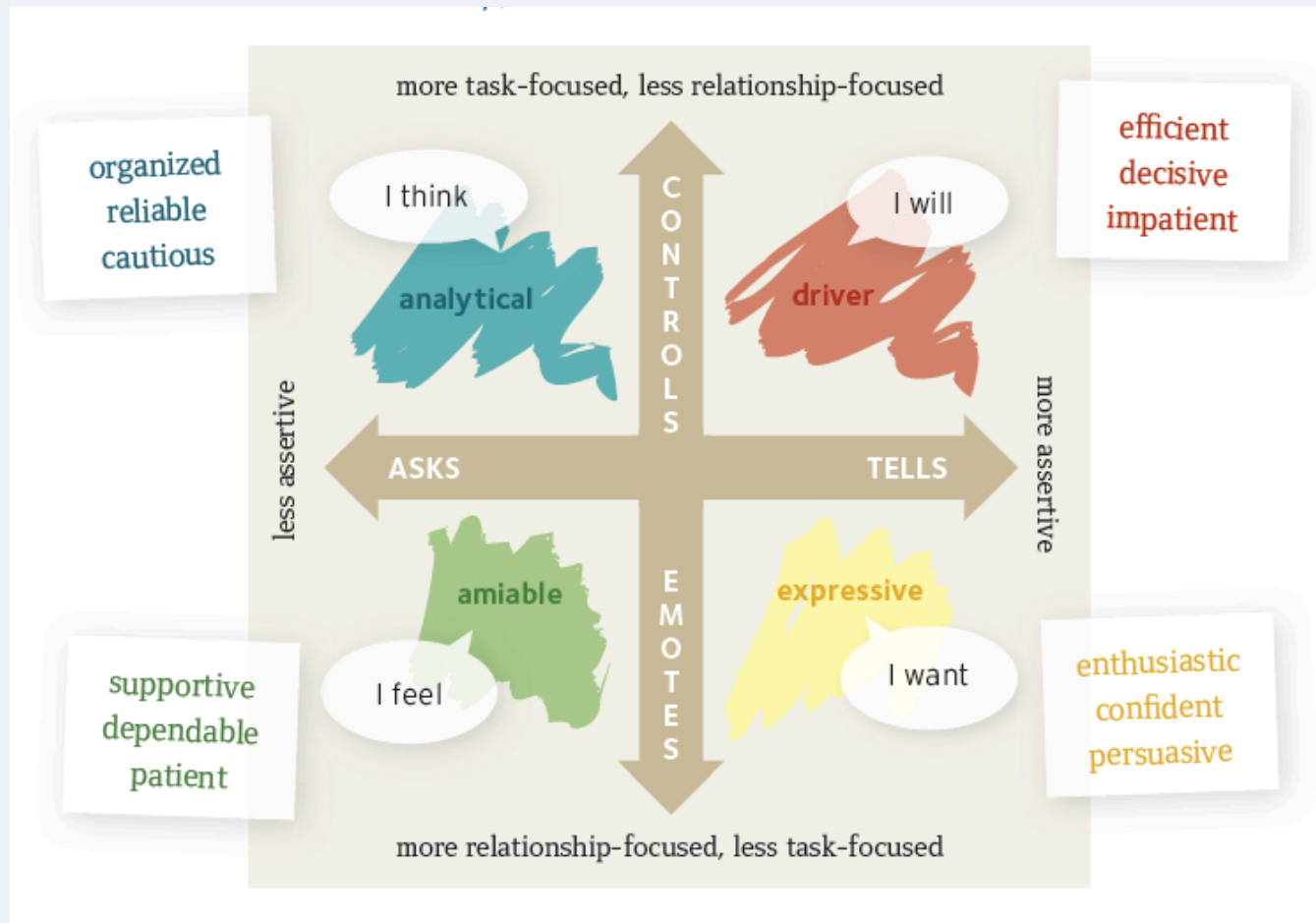
Can we arrange the meeting at 6am?



6AM????!?!?  
ARE YOU CRAZY?



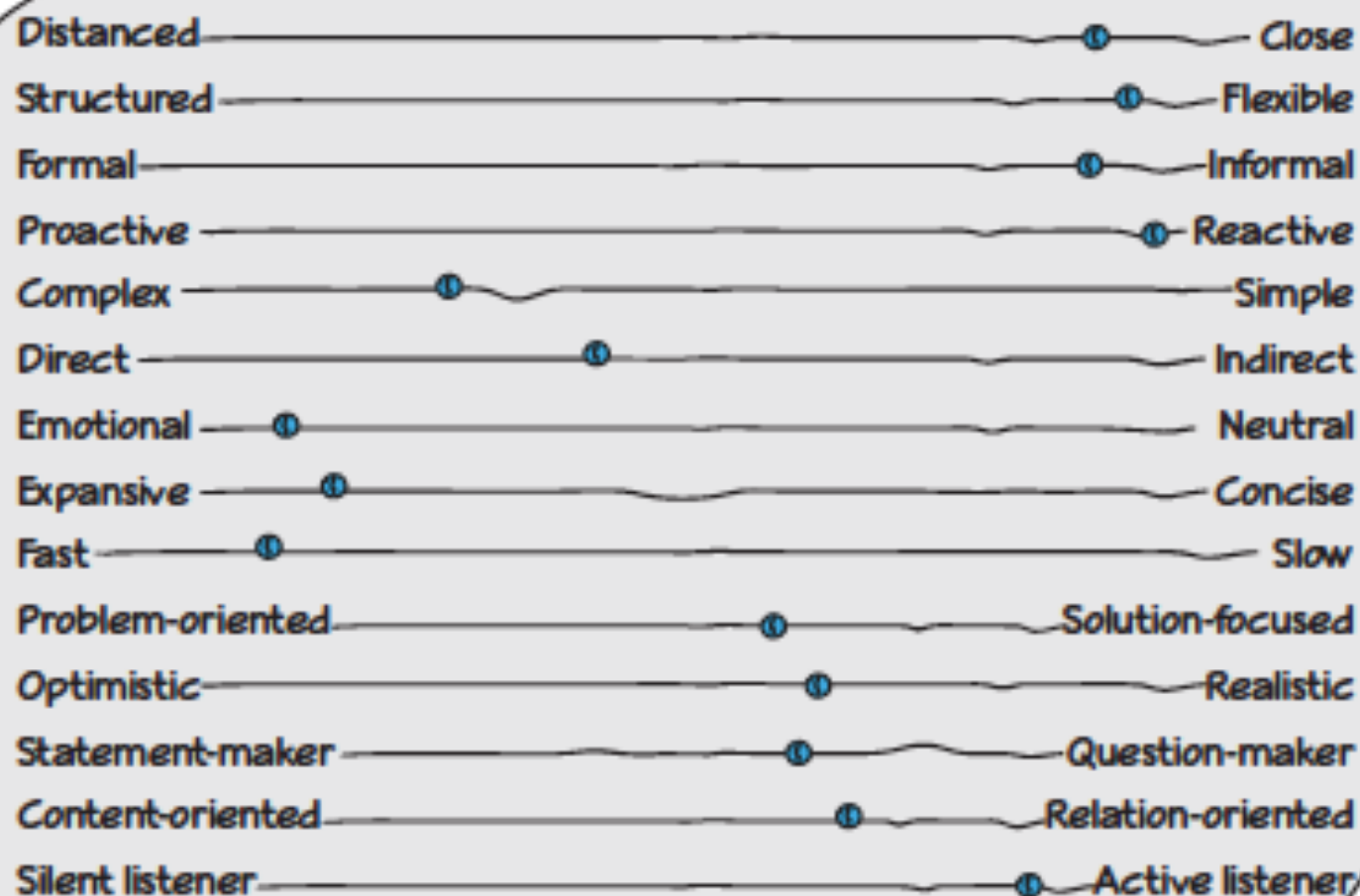
# Communication styles



Source: Merrill-Reid model featured in Basis for Business C1 (Cornelsen)

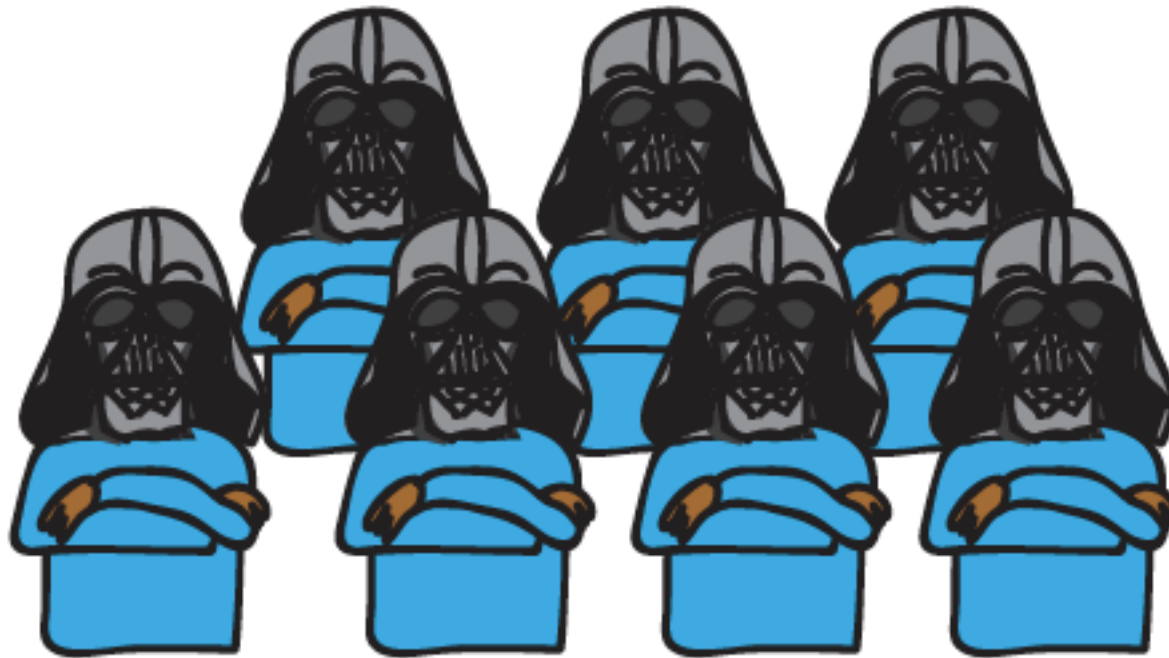


## What is your communication style?



What about the different teams?

## The worst team



So, which competencies are needed?

- Visibility
- Relationship building
- Trust
- Influencing
- Giving feedback
- Dealing with conflict

# Relationships

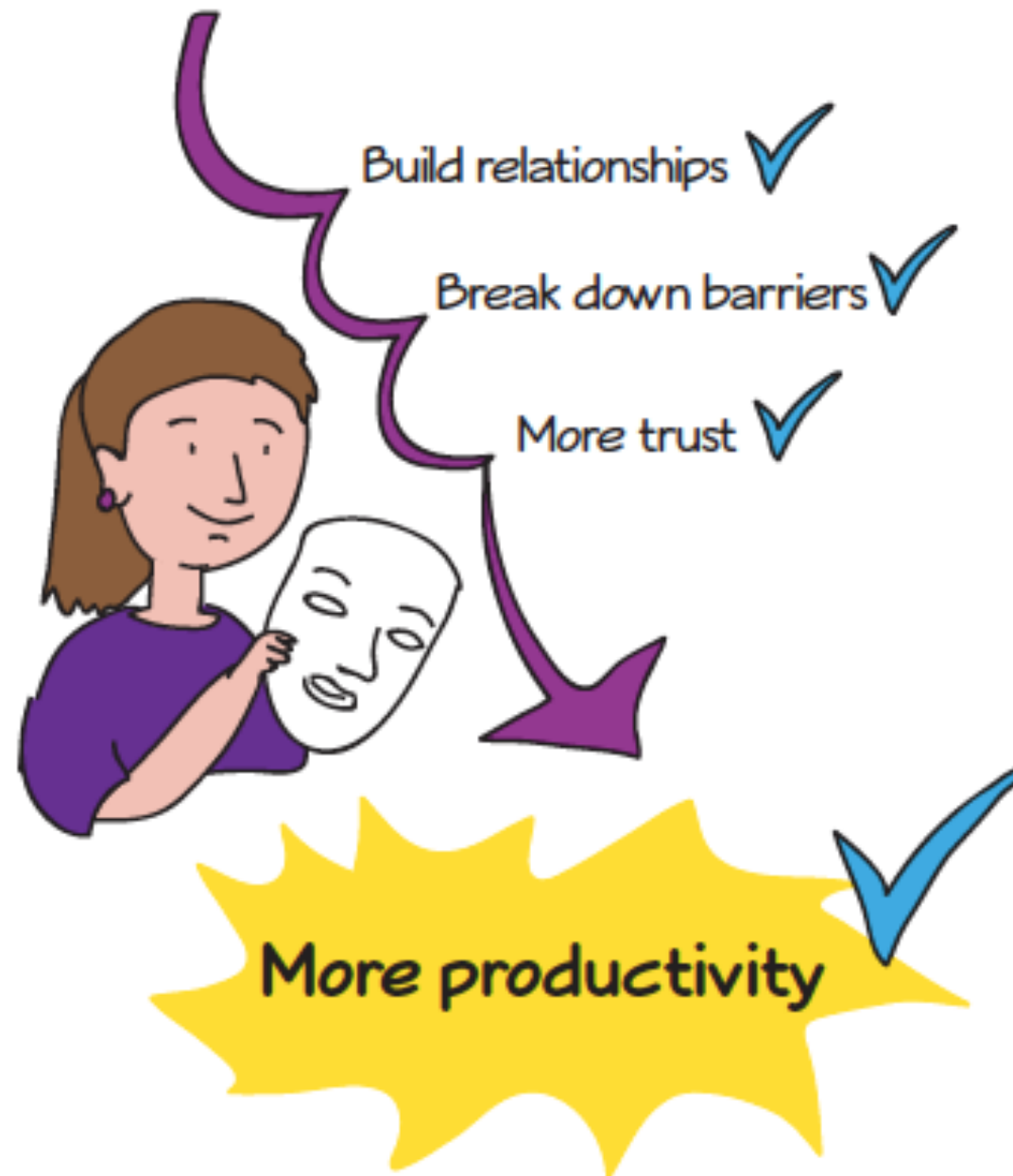
- ❖ How can you build relationships virtually?



The more people know about you the easier it will be for them to connect with you



## Why introduce yourself?



# What do the best networkers do?



# Trust

- ❖ Why should I trust you?
- ❖ Implications of not trusting?
- ❖ How do we build trust?
- ❖ How do we build trust virtually?



Be good in your job

Find similarities  
with the other  
person



Building



Don't take things  
personally

Be competent



Ask questions  
about them, and  
**LISTEN!**

Be empathetic

Be the first to  
take the risk -  
Trust!

**WHY?**

## Water seeds of TRUST

Integrity

Inclusion

Security

Open with information

Commonality

Accessibility

Predictability

Benevolence

Reciprocal

Competence



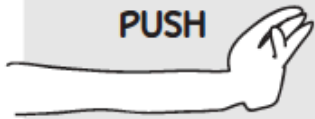
# Influencing

- ⊗ What is influencing?
- ⊗ Who influences you and how?
- ⊗ Why influence?
- ⊗ How to be better at it?

# Influencing

## Success factors

PUSH



The quality of the ideas

The credibility and authority  
of the speaker



The ability to make the right  
people support your proposals



"That won't work..."

"We should do this..."



The quality of the questions



The capacity to put yourself in  
your client's shoes



The ability to build on your client's proposals

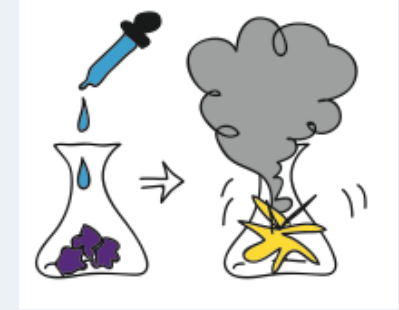
"Can you give me an example?"

"Why do you think would work?"

PULL



# Magic formula for working in international virtual workplaces?



## Key issues

- ⊗ Communication
- ⊗ Relationships – Trust – Networking
- ⊗ Influencing
- ⊗ Peer support

GROW model  
Co/Self-Coaching



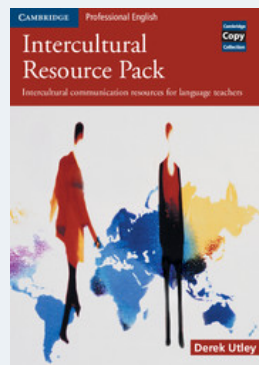


# The results...

- Team Charter
- Introduce yourself > visibility
- Pick up the phone
- Be early
- Put communication on the agenda
- Be sensitive
- Withhold judgment (DIE)



# York Associates Publications



# Virtual Teams:

## Further reading, references and credit

- Brake, T. (2008). ***Where in the World is My Team***. Wiley.
- Comfort, J. & Franklin, P. (2010) ***Mindful International Manager***. Kogan Page
- Derosa, D. & Lepsinger, R. (2010). ***Virtual Team Success***. Wiley.
- Dignen, B. & McMaster, I. (2013) ***Communication for International Business***. Harper Collins
- Hogan, M, et al. (2011 – 2014) ***Basis for Business*** series (A1 – C1), Cornelsen.
- ***Leading Virtual Teams***. (2010) Harvard Business Press.
- Lewis, R. D. (2012) ***When Teams Collide***. N. Brealey Publishing
- Scannell, M., Abrams, M & Mulvihill, M. (2011) ***The Big Book of Virtual Teambuilding Games***. McGraw-Hill
- PwC.(2011) ***Millennials at Work – reshaping the workplace***. Retrieved from [http://www.pwc.com/en\\_M1/m1/services/consulting/documents/millennials-at-work.pdf](http://www.pwc.com/en_M1/m1/services/consulting/documents/millennials-at-work.pdf)
- PwC (2012) ***Millennials at Work – reshaping the workplace in financial services***. Retrieved from <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/financial-services/publications/assets/pwc-millennials-at-work.pdf>
- A Conference Call in Real Life [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYu\\_bGbZiiQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYu_bGbZiiQ)

Illustrations by Naomi Fein of [www.thinkvisual.ie](http://www.thinkvisual.ie)



# Thank You!

Mike Hogan  
15<sup>th</sup> November 2014



**York Associates**  
*Communicate professionally anywhere*

mike.hogan@york-associates.co.uk



@yorkassociates @irishmikeh

# *York Associates*

- *Teacher Training courses*



**York Associates**

*Communicate professionally anywhere*

[mike.hogan@york-associates.co.uk](mailto:mike.hogan@york-associates.co.uk)