

Facilitating. Profound. Change.

Creating Radical Collaboration

"Yet another travel ban!" The company Ian worked for had yet again banned all travel, which he indeed thought was very good for the environment, but however caused a headache regarding all F2F meetings and seminars that were planned during the next few months. "Our team members are not used to collaborating virtually themselves, and definitely not used to running virtual workshops for clients. I need your help, we need to get so much better at this, quickly!"

The team consisted of 12 people, all experts in their domains, but also with a need to collaborate as a team. They were all located in different places, with some time differences to consider, and they were definitely not "geeks" when it came to using virtual tools. To get them to collaborate virtually was a bit of a challenge, to get them to train and facilitate virtual sessions in their areas of expertise would take some skills development... and courage!

We started by planning the development process together with the team, using digital tools, but with the primary aim of co-creating how to develop virtual teamwork. In the first session, we used Zoom as the platform, together with Mural as the facilitative tool. The Zoom gives opportunities for break-out sessions, which meant that the team could be split up in three smaller groups working in parallel. After intros and getting familiar with the annotation tools in Zoom, we used a force-field analysis template in Mural design our development process: One group worked on what the Desired Scenario for virtual collaboration would be, one group discussed the Current Situation and one group focussed on the Worst Scenario, i.e. where they absolutely not wanted to end up.

The great thing about Mural is that everyone works in parallel on the whiteboard, however Zoom Rooms makes it possible to hear only the colleagues in the break-out team. And, the facilitator can get you back in the big group with one click! Amazing! We used Zoom and Mural in the same way as we would have worked in a F2F session. At the end of the session, we reflected upon both the outcome, i.e. the way forward in the upcoming sessions, and also how they felt about using digital tools in their collaboration. The reviews were outstanding! "I didn't even think of the tools, I only concentrated on the task we worked on!" one team member said. "I felt so professional moving post-its around, clustering and prioritising, like we were all in the same room!" another one said.

We planned three virtual sessions with the team after the initial one. In all, we were using different digital tools, and focussing on different aspects of virtual radical collaboration. Each session was around 90 minutes and between each time we met, the team members applied the different tools in their own meetings with clients. At the end of the three sessions, we can a Train-the-Trainer workshop during a whole day, where the team members worked in pairs and co-facilitated one client workshop of 45 minutes each, including both presenting content and using digital facilitative tools.

Ian was in the workshop, as a participant. "I can't believe this! From us all being very sceptical to virtual team work, they now come across as the world's leading experts in field! It's amazing what they have accomplished in just a few sessions!"

Malin Morèn & Trevor Durnford
© Facil Profundo SRL 2020