

# What are the differences between a traditional and virtual work environment?

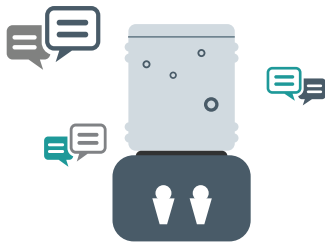
The key to succeeding in a virtual environment is to shift the traditional paradigm that we have to physically be in the same room in order to be effective. While there are certainly challenges of working virtually, we believe that virtual environments can, at times, offer advantages that are not possible in a traditional office.

## Traditional Environment



You run into someone in the hall and have an ad hoc meeting, or talk about business in the lunch room

Quick decisions and actions, problem solving on the fly, and many opportunities for informal knowledge sharing



Social media tools such as Sametime or Skype for Business can facilitate conversations that in many ways replicate the “water cooler chats” in a traditional office



Everyone is in the same location, with traditional work hours and “punching the clock” 9-5; commuting; shared office space and infrastructure (e.g., furniture, equipment, restrooms, break room)

## Virtual Environment

Everything is scheduled and calendared with a specific time frame within to accomplish something



More structured knowledge sharing and decision making (e.g., shared databases and status calls); often time delays in making decisions and solving problems



Each employee has their own definition of work hours; flexible schedules; time zone considerations; home offices, each with their own technology

Online collaboration tools (such as Google Docs) create a meeting space in which information can be presented to all parties, and everyone has an opportunity to respond with questions or comments, sometimes anonymously. Features such as WebEx’s emoticons and chat simulate the two-way communication made possible in a traditional corporate meeting room with participants sitting around a table.



Tends to be more hierarchal/formal organizational structure; traditional “command and control” leadership style; employees can sometimes be hesitant to truly speak their minds



Tends to be more fluid/informal structure; trending towards delegation and coaching in today’s virtual workforce; responses can be anonymized to receive more candid/unfiltered feedback



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