



IMMERSION INTO REMOTE COMMUNICATION

Working and collaborating across distances has become normal in many companies. The evolving nature of work is enabled by new technologies as well as digitalization, and necessitated by globalization and flexibilization. This means an increasing number of employees no longer work in direct contact with their supervisors, and that many work teams only exist virtually. Communication and leadership are often taking place remotely, and this presents new challenges for management and employees alike.

The challenges facing remote leadership



Experts' opinions in semi-structured interviews with 71 professionals from renowned companies all across Germany

Communicat-
ing clearly

Building trust

Developing
common goals

Recognizing
mistakes early

Giving quick
feedback

Generating
commitment

(Study by: Remdisch/Schumacher, 2015)

Some companies are utilizing these challenges and adapting their products to the emerging importance of remote work environments. An example is Suitable Technologies, a market leader from Palo Alto which features the Beam Smart Presence systems. They allow users to interact with remote locations. They enable the experience of personal communication and information sharing to become remotely accessible, even operating an entire store remotely as seen above. This form of technology could prove useful for any employee or leader operating remotely.

As a co-creation project of Airbus Group Leadership University and the LeadershipGarage research group we conducted an evaluation study that assessed the performance of communication and leadership mediated by Beams. Based on our interviews, we identified 3 immersion levels that must be addressed in order to be successful communicating remotely:



Ensuring personal performance through the anticipation of potential value, thorough preparation, and open feedback.



Understanding the impact that telepresence technologies have on how you interact with other people.



The digital culture and the technological prerequisites to make telepresence successful within the organization.

ACTIVELY MOVING TOWARDS DIGITAL IMMERSION



Personal performance level

Anticipated Value → Why should I adopt a new technology?

- Overcoming physical restrictions
- Personal Curiosity
- Improvement over existing technologies

Acclimation → How do I become comfortable?

- Additional factors in interaction

Proficiency → From whom am I comfortable receiving honest feedback on my progress?

- Actively seeking feedback

Interpersonal performance level

Reflect and Relearn → What is different about human interaction through telepresence?

- Experience new problems
- Adjust to the situation

Adapt and Perfect → How can I use contextual knowledge from each conversation to ensure a good experience for myself and others?

- Recalibrate interaction skills



Organizational performance level

Architecture → What do we need to enable its use?

- Technological Prerequisites

User situations → In which situations can we find value?

- Exploring new uses

Digital culture → How do we make new technologies the norm going forward?

- Mindset shift
- Fundamental Organizational changes

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