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## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Trust in Virtual Teams***

Author: **Thomas P. Wise**

Publisher: Gower Publishing Limited

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Reviewer: **Shailaja Suresh**

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### Introduction to the Book

The book captivates the reader's attention by its title and theme. It speaks about the most frequently faced puzzle by an IT project manager these days – managing virtual teams. Virtual teams are a trend now in IT and would soon become the mode of operation in most software companies.

The author points out that the essence of virtual teams is trust. He discusses the different elements of virtuality that the project manager should be aware of in order to strategically use them to bring up high performance project teams. The author being a quality expert, emphasizes the importance of quality assurance in companies that rely upon virtual teams.

### Overview of Book's Structure

The book has been divided in 3 parts:

- 1) Understanding and building trust – This speaks about synergizing the 3 types of trust in a virtual environment to build the team's resiliency:
  - a) Personality based trust
  - b) Cognitive based trust
  - c) Institutional based trust
  
- 2) Virtual team working – Virtual teams do not go through the usual stages of team maturity like forming, norming and storming. Therefore, this section talks about the importance of elements of virtuality like geographic proximity, electronically mediated communication, and a perception of homogeneity within the team which when had a grip on, could help build high performance teams.

- 3) Quality assurance, trust and the virtual team – This section focusses on describing the role of quality assurance and how the differences in quality practices could affect trust and team's performance in a virtual world.

Though some of the chapter contents are verbose, the organization of the book into three such different sections, help the reader assimilate the points discussed very well.

### **Highlights: What's New in this Book?**

This book subtly touches upon the challenges faced by a manager in a virtual environment and ways to handle them using trust as the essence. However, it does not stop there. The author goes much beyond and has discussed plenty of real world examples to support his theory and deductions.

The author also discusses the seven organizational strategies which could be directly applied by a manager to a virtual team. Though these strategies are not new, they have been correlated to a live environment very well thereby aiding to easily relate these concepts to everyday work. The information presented under these strategies have been crafted meticulously to make even a fresh manager grasp the ideas.

### **Highlights: What I liked!**

First of all, the book has been presented with clear formatting and an easy-to-read font which is a big plus.

The author has done a fantastic job of conveying the concept in the most interesting way by providing real cases. There have also been many statistical studies conducted that have been presented with visual graphs making the comprehension easy.

Of all the concepts spoken, I really like the idea which emphasizes how organizational policies and practices when executed with quality control and assurance could help formulate trust in the organization. This kind of trust among workforce is the very need of virtual teams to work towards organizational goals. The author has done a good job of emphasizing quality in organizational practices.

### **Who might benefit from the Book**

Any IT project manager should benefit from this book. As already stated, virtual teams are emerging now in every organization, and it is mandatory for a project manager to be well informed about the factors required to build high performance teams in such an environment.

Team members of virtual teams could also benefit from this book. The chapters on personality and cognitive based trust could help the team members understand the behavior of their fellow mates better and settle the culture differences, especially in a global setting.

## **Conclusion**

The author with his vast experience and research on virtual teams, has channelized to share his learnings through this book. The book not only focusses on briefing the factors that control the virtual teams effectively, but also strongly advises on how organizational processes and policies should be formulated such that trust stays with all employees in an organization. It is the seeds of this trust that lay the foundation in every employee to stay motivated towards achieving the organizational goals.

With reduction in space and resources, office buildings would become a rarity soon. Since trustworthy virtual teams are the need of the hour, this book is definitely worth a read.

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## About the Reviewer



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Shailaja Suresh did her B.E and B.Tech (dual engineering degree) from College of Engineering, Guindy, Chennai, India. She is a C-PGDBA graduate from Symbiosis, Pune, India. She is a PMI certified Project Management Professional and a Scrum Master who has a vast experience and exposure in Agile related software methodologies.

She believes in continuous learning and shows great enthusiasm to learn new technologies. She loves reading, writing, solving puzzles, collecting archaeological artifacts. Anything out of the ordinary interests her and kindles her curiosity. She enjoys interacting with people on space and management related topics.

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