

# Four Tips for Virtual NPD Teams

Making Innovation Work

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## Four Tips for Virtual NPD Teams

### EVERYONE WORKS ON A VIRTUAL TEAM

Advances in networking and communications technologies, and the *expansion of the global economy*, have significantly changed both [New Product Development \(NPD\)](#) teams and the *nature of innovation* work throughout an enterprise. Organizations have become **more distributed across geographical boundaries and across functions**, divisions, and even



other firms. Relationships between stakeholders inside the organization and those previously considered outside ([customers](#), [supplies](#), [communities](#)) are becoming more important. Most organizations have discovered the **value of collaborative work** through [cross-functional NPD teams](#) and thus have changed their [work processes](#). Today, there is a new kind of work group, the “[virtual team](#),” made up of people who primarily communicate electronically *via* several modes (webmeetings, e-mail, social media, and others). Its members may *hardly ever see each other in person*. In fact, they never meet at all, except in cyberspace.

Most of you either have been or will be **participating in or leading a virtual NPD**

**team** of professionals, designers, and developers. Today, even “non-virtual” teams, which may be co-located in the same building, largely communicate by electronic means <sup>(1)</sup>. Unfortunately, *50% of virtual teams fail to meet their goals* due to an inability to manage the risks associated with dispersed and decomposed work <sup>(2)</sup>. *Failures are attributed to long distances, differences in time zones, cultural differences*, poor working relationships, difficulties in communication, lack of trust, low accountability, ineffective organization structures, and reliance on individual contributions <sup>(3)</sup>.

In this paper, we offer four tips to improve the productivity of virtual or dispersed teams.

*Some authors discourage the use of the term “virtual” since it might imply they are not actual teams, and this is likely to weaken performance expectations.*

### TIP #1 - START WITH A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

Virtual teams have become a common way for cross-functional teams to **achieve corporate goals in a cost-effective manner**. Advantages of virtual teams include cost savings, tax advantages, extended work hours, and ability to leverage [subject matter expert \(SME\)](#) knowledge among geographically

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dispersed employees. However, it is well known that **the quality of work tends to decline as the degree of dispersion increases.** With increasing distance, team members are challenged by <sup>(4)</sup>:

- *Difficulties in communication,*
- *Decreased task coordination,*
- *Lack of mutual support, and*
- *Declining cohesive actions.*

Even low levels of dispersion (e.g. same building but a different floor) can lead to a decline in vital team functions <sup>(5)</sup>.

Because virtual NPD teams need to be even *more proactive, deliberate, explicit, and disciplined* than traditional teams <sup>(6)</sup>, formation of the team and initial kick-off of team activities plays a larger role. The face-to-face kick-off meeting should be held so that the NPD team members can become better acquainted with one another. As a last resort only if a face-to-face meeting is **completely impossible** and it is not feasible to temporarily or partially co-locate team members, a *high-quality* video conference can serve as a substitute for the face-to-face kick-off meeting <sup>(7)</sup>. Face-to-face communication is critical as the NPD team forms and will enhance the team's long-term effectiveness <sup>(2)</sup>.



The beginning of an NPD project is "*make-or-break*" for the team <sup>(7)</sup>, whether it is a traditional, co-located, or dispersed team. Teamwork is essential to generate high levels of creativity for [breakthrough](#) ideas <sup>(8)</sup>. Therefore, the kick-off meeting **must** include project definition and establishing team protocols or ground rules <sup>(7; 6)</sup>.

At the [kick-off meeting](#), team norms should be established <sup>(7)</sup>, including **meeting and communication protocols**, knowledge management standards, **roles and responsibilities**, and learning and growth goals for the organization. These items are discussed specifically in tips #2, 3 and 4 below. Of course the [NPD Team](#) should define the project and agree on the expected delivery of

the new product features at any kick-off meeting, yet these activities are *even more important for virtual teams* than traditional

NPD teams. These definitions and team behavior norms are captured in the [Product Innovation Charter \(PIC\)](#).

**Communication and rapport** among NPD team members can be increased by a face-to-face kick-off meeting, including a "team-

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building” social activity. Such social interactions are *a necessity to effectively completing “real” project work* <sup>(7)</sup>. Building trust among team members and establishing a common purpose far outweigh the selection of a set of technology communication tools. Since social interactions are required to build trust and commitment among team members, the *face-to-face kick-off meeting* allows people to “put a face to a name,” resulting in improved working relationships. This is also a great time to have team members participate in “trust-building” exercises using an expert facilitator. **Trust is invaluable for the success of a virtual team** <sup>(3)</sup>.

Any technologies that will be used for team collaboration, communication, or [knowledge management](#) should be introduced at the face-to-face meeting. **Adequate training on new tools and expected usage** of these



technologies should also be provided at the kick-off meeting. To increase productivity of team members, this same technology tool set should be *utilized continually* throughout the

project <sup>(9)</sup>. Any new or improved software **should not** be introduced during the product development stages until **all** NPD team members have *received formal training* and agreed-upon **communication protocols** to utilize the new technology.

Other agenda items for the face-to-face meeting for a newly formed virtual NPD team follow.

- **Establish and document common purpose** (mission, vision, objectives, tasks, and expected outcomes). Successful teams work toward a *common goal with shared purpose and mutual accountability*. Project goals should be documented in shared group files or on a common team intranet. *Knowledge management* tools (such as Microsoft SharePoint) are often used alone or in conjunction with project and [portfolio management software](#) to capture data and information for the virtual NPD team. (See a recent white paper by [Global NP Solutions](#) on [how to select a portfolio management tool](#).)
- **Clarify stakeholder expectations**. This important step can eliminate later confusion during product development, project execution, and [commercial launch](#). If *all* stakeholders

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are unable to participate in the face-to-face or video conference kick-off meeting, their needs should be documented for the team *via* a stakeholder questionnaire, project summary, and/or team charter. Survey Monkey or other on-line tools can be used to collect this data if no other format is available internal to the firm.

- **Understand team membership.** It is important for virtual NPD teams, who may not have worked together previously, to *understand the capabilities of other cross-functional team members*. For example, some team members play a core role in completing the project objectives, while others place ancillary or extended team roles <sup>(6)</sup>. Some team members are selected based on *expertise and reputation*, while others serve by diversifying the team to aid in [brainstorming](#) and innovation.

In addition to functional representatives (e.g. marketing, engineering, R&D, and manufacturing), NPD team members should cover a broad spectrum of *behavioral styles*, as well <sup>(7)</sup>:

1. Direct / action-oriented,
2. Conscientious / analytical,

3. Influential / social, and
4. Steady / stable.

Team members should only be selected for participation in a globally dispersed team if they are *qualified to do the work* <sup>(10)</sup>. A further advantage of a virtual team with diverse backgrounds is the ability to provide a *broader knowledge base* and increase cross-fertilization of ideas <sup>(11)</sup>.

Individuals from cultures valuing *individualism* (such as the United States) are more likely to participate in knowledge transfer than people from *collective cultures* (such as Thailand). However, an NPD team member emerging from a collectivist culture is more likely to contribute to *collaboration efforts* <sup>(2)</sup>. Such behavioral differences need to be understood for dispersed teams to *work effectively and to successfully develop a new product or service*.

- **Building relationships and trust.** In all types of teams (traditional, co-located, cross-functional, and dispersed), trust becomes one of the most important elements for success. Unfortunately, *trust is also one of the most difficult characteristics* for team members to build at a distance <sup>(7)</sup>.

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Certainly, the face-to-face kick-off meeting helps to accelerate trusting relationships between team members.

### TIP #2 - ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

One of the key outcomes of the face-to-face kick-off meeting should be an **agreed-upon**



**set of communication protocols.** The NPD team should document these group norms in the PIC for future reference and arbitration.

Of all the challenges facing a cross-functional virtual NDP team, **communication covers a broad category** which not only captures task definitions but allows team members to verify understanding, activity progress, and to *build trust and rapport with one another*. Some sources claim that as much as **70% of communication is non-verbal**, leaving only 30% of the communication bandwidth available in electronic and other distance communications<sup>(12)</sup>. Continuous face-to-face communication, on the other hand, helps build team identity and emotional commitment<sup>(13)</sup>.

*Team communication and collaboration* is generally facilitated by *close proximity*, spontaneous face-to-face conversations, and through the richness of "*whole body communications*"<sup>(5)</sup>. Decreases in team member proximity amplify the importance of teamwork related skills<sup>(5)</sup>. Furthermore, *management often underestimates the loss in team performance* (quality of work output) as team dispersion increases<sup>(7)</sup>. Additionally, differences in cultures tend to grow as teams are spread over greater distance. Cultural categories include (7):

- *Individual behavior styles,*
- *Functional departments (e.g. marketing vs. engineering),*
- *Organizational, and*
- *National (e.g. Japanese vs. American).*

Each of these cultural differences can manifest itself as an area of conflict on traditional teams, but it is even more critical on a virtual team to understand and accept such cultural diversity. The challenge of a dispersed team is to find **creative ways to communicate and collaborate** without losing sight of the common enterprise and project objectives.

Communication, vitally important in any type of team, is even more *crucial for a dispersed team*. Communication involves both technical aspects (sharing of information, task

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coordination, and problem-solving) and social attributes (mutual support, cohesion, and effort) <sup>(5)</sup>. Research has shown that providing **personal satisfaction** (personal development and growth) to team members as a result of participation in the team is a prerequisite to the way the team functions <sup>(10)</sup>.

**Communication protocols** may include such elements as:

- All e-mails will be acknowledged as received within 24 hours, or
- All voice mail messages will be returned within 4 hours.

*Synchronous technologies*, such as teleconferences, video conferencing, and web meetings, should be used in *decision-making*, while information sharing can successfully utilize static media (asynchronous) means, such as intranets or group calendars.

Finally, the team members and team leader should be cognizant of non-native English speakers <sup>(14)</sup> and *allow for clarification* in all verbal and electronic communications.

While at least one study has found insignificant correlations between technology tools for communication and the resulting team effectiveness <sup>(10)</sup>, many common electronic methods of communication are used in dispersed teams <sup>(5; 7)</sup>.

• <i>e-mail</i>	• <i>telephone (or mobile phone)</i>
• <i>pager</i>	• <i>voice mail messaging</i>
• <i>fax</i>	• <i>intranet (or group file sharing)</i>
• <i>on-line forums (discussion groups)</i>	• <i>chat (or instant messaging)</i>
• <i>video conferencing</i>	• <i>webcasting (or web meetings)</i>
• <i>electronic whiteboards</i>	• <i>social networking</i>
• <i>newsletters</i>	• <i>blogs</i>
• <i>wikis</i>	• <i>VPN/FTP protocols</i>

Highest utilized tools are typically e-mail and dyadic telephone conversations <sup>(10)</sup>.

Concerns with electronic communications, due to the loss of the rich body language bandwidth, are based on the *content of the message and the intended audience* <sup>(10)</sup>. While high technology tools are necessary to overcome the difficulties of working at a distance, they are not sufficient for successful NPD team project outcomes <sup>(7)</sup>.

*Dispersed team members* can strengthen their social connections through a team website or Facebook-like "fan pages". Each team member can post a photo or avatar of

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himself/herself, list expertise and skills relevant to the project work, as well as personal information, such as family and hobbies, in order to build rapport <sup>(14)</sup>. A **supportive environment** will encourage *team cohesiveness* in a dispersed team.

Again, it is important that everyone on the NPD team has been *adequately trained in the communication technology* (e.g. webinar, shared files, discussion forums, etc.) and group communication protocols. If not, people on the dispersed team can become frustrated with trying to log-on, instead of meeting to discuss project issues <sup>(7)</sup>. Training programs for virtual communications tools need to go beyond “how” and **include “why” and “when”** in order for the virtual NPD team to be most effective <sup>(15)</sup>. Dispersed teams need to understand the correlation between the technology tools that they are using, expectations of communications, and project outcomes in order to be as productive as possible <sup>(10)</sup>. A *dedicated IT specialist for distance meeting software tools* should be available at the firm to quickly address such technical issues for the highest context usage of electronic communication tools.

Infrastructure and file access may need to be controlled for the project team and/or individual team members depending on the concerns of security, privacy, and intellectual property protection. Considerations for

**security, privacy, and access control** need to be thoroughly evaluated for team members located in different countries especially, including export controls on information to government-deemed sensitive nations.

### TIP #3 - ESTABLISH MEETING PROTOCOLS

Another task at the face-to-face kick-off meeting for the NPD team to accomplish is to **establish an agreed-upon set of meeting guidelines**. Again, these should be documented in the PIC. More effort is required of a dispersed team to *agree on mission, vision, and objective, measurable goals* for the project <sup>(7)</sup>.

*Virtual NPD teams* need to have *more formal meetings* than traditional, co-located NPD teams. Depending on the product and market complexity and stage of development, meetings should be scheduled about once per week. Generally, it is *better to have meetings at the*

*beginning of the week* to plan expected work, rather than at the end of the week as a review of tasks completed.





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Meetings should ensure engagement of all team members <sup>(3)</sup> and **utilize a variety of electronic communication methods**, which lead to higher perceived team performance <sup>(15)</sup>. A recommended best practice is for each team member to “check in” <sup>(14)</sup> with a status report, issues, and successes for his/her area of the product development project. Since the team meeting is one of the few *synchronous and personal communication pathways* available to a virtual team, some NPD teams choose to *hold shorter, more frequent meetings*, rather than longer, less frequent reviews <sup>(14)</sup>.

Instant messaging (IM) is becoming one of the most used technology tools to schedule meetings <sup>(15)</sup>. *IM is more efficient* in many circumstances than group calendars and provides another social contact for team members and team leaders.

Virtual teams tend to be composed of more independent workers due to the physical barriers of distance. Therefore, the team meetings are important to **establish common ownership, acceptance, and understanding of the NPD project** schedule, budget, resources, and deliverables <sup>(7)</sup>. However, with highly dispersed teams, interactive cross-functional meetings with non-core members may not be the most effective method of communication <sup>(7)</sup>. In this case, one-way (or asynchronous) methods of communication, such as e-mail or newsletters, may be better

ways to *provide ancillary team members with status updates*.

In one study, the differentiating factor between successful virtual teams and ones that failed, were **well-planned meetings**. Haphazard meetings, without explicit agendas, lack of preview of discussion items, poor communication and decision-making, and lack of technology tool utilization <sup>(8; 3; 2)</sup> yielded teams unable to meet their goals. Meetings should be used to reinforce positive team behaviors and communication (use of knowledge management tools, restate project goals, enforce roles and responsibilities). Frequent team meetings also allow for fast feedback time <sup>(9)</sup>, a requirement for successful virtual NPD teams.

Too often in dispersed teams, decision-making is based on inferences and assumptions, rather than a **common pool of data** <sup>(15)</sup>. Archives of project history (including white papers, supplier bid quotes, consultant reports, and minutes of meetings), similar product development efforts, and ready access to test and market data allow all team members to build innovation knowledge, team trust, and to actively influence the project outcome <sup>(9)</sup>. Meetings using *synchronous communication technology* (such as telephone or video conferences, electronic whiteboards, webmeetings, etc.) are *best for decision-making processes*, while status updates can be

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communicated through the shared intranet or e-mail in an asynchronous manner.

### TIP #4 - ENGAGED TEAM LEADERSHIP

While at least one recent study <sup>(10)</sup> found that leadership was only moderately correlated to the effect of a virtual team, the [NPD team leader](#) plays a **significant role in guiding the behaviors** of the dispersed team. Other studies have indicated that team dispersion substantially hinders the leader/follower relationship <sup>(2)</sup>.

First, the team leaders should **coordinate and facilitate the face-to-face kick-off meeting**. As described in Tip #1, the kick-off meeting establishes all of the team norms which contribute to the actions and success of the virtual NPD team down the road. A good team leader will manage the *project definition, stakeholder buy-in, and product description activities* to ensure all team members participate and own the project objectives. Monalisa, et al. <sup>(3)</sup>, define trust as "*confidence in the team leader and vision.*"

Second, the team leader is responsible for *decomposing complex product design goals to smaller tasks* which can be completed by the individual team members at isolated sites <sup>(3)</sup>. These decomposed tasks are typically less challenging for NPD team members <sup>(1)</sup>, so the

team leader is further challenged to **motivate the team members** to achieve project schedule and budget goals.

The team leader should also engage in at least *weekly one-on-one sessions with each team member* to ensure work progress <sup>(14)</sup> and to assist in removing obstacles to timely completion of project deliverables. Additionally, *varying the format of meetings* can help team members stay engaged as no single technology works for every area of communication. For example, teleconferences allow distant team members to multi-task and lose connection/ attention from the topic at hand. A video conference (e.g. Skype) or webcast with extensive use of whiteboard or polls can **ensure all team members are actively engaged** in the discussion session and decision-making process. Such techniques, however, become more difficult to implement as the differentials in time zones increase.

Third, the team leader is likely to serve as a liaison among the dispersed team members <sup>(15)</sup>. Since organizations will recognize the need for face-to-face communications yet want to save travel



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expenses, the *team leader may routinely visit each location* in order to help build team relationships, provide one-on-one communication, seek input, give feedback, and hold sensitive discussions <sup>(15; 8)</sup>. John Adams says, "*It is simply not possible to manage by e-mail.*" <sup>(8)</sup>

Finally, team performance is strongly influenced by the way conflict is handled on the virtual team <sup>(2)</sup>. Because *dispersed teams will rely on the management style of the team leader* <sup>(8)</sup>, it is especially important for virtual team leaders to provide an example of the acceptable team collaboration behaviors <sup>(5)</sup>:

- Open sharing of **information**,
- Efficient task **coordination**,
- Balance of team members' **contribution** to problem-solving,
- Mutual **support**,
- Team **cohesion**, and
- Team member **effort/productivity**.

It is more difficult in a dispersed team to detect deviations from project expectations, so *team members must be more proactive* to accept, own, and understand the project goals and schedule limitations <sup>(7)</sup>. To move project negotiations beyond conflict between team members or sub-groups from a confrontational situation (*win-lose*) to collaboration (*win-win*), the team leader should use *statements and inquiries of project*

*goals*, probing conflict resolution theory, thereby increasing team member trust.

### PUT VIRTUAL TEAM TIPS INTO ACTION

In today's globally competitive work environment, **virtual NPD teams are common** and management is slowly developing a set of *best practices for effectiveness in performance*, schedule, and budget in such teams. While team collaboration, communication, and quality are facilitated by close proximity, some coping strategies are emerging: holding a face-to-face kick-off meeting, temporary relocation <sup>(5)</sup>, high quality video conferencing, and increased electronic meeting (including teleconferences) frequency for higher context discussions.

Dispersed teams can contribute to *cost savings* for an enterprise, as long as **best practices for communication and collaboration** are implemented. Excellent computer and web network capability and connectivity are required, along with suitable training on the technology communication tools to gain a cost savings over a more traditionally co-located team.

Because today's business environment involves **knowledge as the work product** and with a growing trend of home-based workers, innovation management needs to be more

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aware of regulatory compliance in a broader global perspective. Additionally, NPD team members based in different international settings will not only need to work with various cultural norms, but may be subject to *specific legal requirements* on privacy (sharing of personal information) and/or intellectual property. Any NPD team should be organized and trained for legal and regulatory compliance, use and understanding of frameworks or standards, and monitoring/control of *team effectiveness and efficiency*.

Dispersed team members may also feel more work stress as their “work” time encroaches on “personal” time (24/7 availability), especially for team members working over large geographic and time zone differences. Group calendars and mutual support can encourage team members to *feel more connected* and to share difficulties or challenges in meeting scheduled deliverables, especially for personal reasons (e.g. sick children, vacation, elder care).

In particular, whereas traditional teams rely on personal and formal management accompanied by some subjective elements of evaluation, dispersed NPD team members may not have direct formal supervision, and evaluation is based primarily on objective deliverables. *Rewards in traditional teams tend to be individually based*, whereas ***dispersed teams may have group goals*** which are defined and rewarded contractually.

Taxation on salaries and benefits in different locales should be considered when cash or cash equivalent rewards are given to team members in recognition of project performance.

Dispersed teams are better able to meet the needs of consumers and enhance profit margins <sup>(2)</sup>. In general, as the *competitive advantage for globally dispersed knowledge workers grows*, virtual NPD teams will enable companies to:

- ***Respond faster*** to market changes,
- Address ***market needs*** at lower cost,
- Quickly respond to ***global competition***, and
- ***Shorten product delivery*** cycles.

Finally, success in NPD comes from following a repeatable procedure of identifying market opportunities, developing products using a Stage-Gate™ process, *portfolio management*, and excellent ***teamwork***. Four tips for highest success with virtual



NPD teams were described in detail above.

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1. Hold a **face-to-face kick-off meeting** for any large or complex product development project.
2. Establish and **formalize standard communication protocols** and technologies for dispersed team members.
3. Hold **frequent, interactive team meetings**, especially for problem-solving and decision-making requirements.
4. **Lead by example.**

### QUICK REFERENCE GLOSSARY

Check out our website for a quick and easy list of terms used in New Product Development. Some terms used in this article are shown here.

**Brainstorming** - A group method of creative problem-solving frequently used in product concept generation. There are many modifications in format, each variation with its own name. The basis of all of these methods uses a group of people to creatively generate a list of ideas related to a particular topic. As many ideas as possible are listed before any critical evaluation is performed

**Breakthrough** - Highly significant or dramatic invention or improvement in performance, achieved through consistent, focused, and synergistic efforts.

**Cross-Functional Team** - A team consisting of representatives from the various functions involved in product development, usually including members from all key functions required to deliver a successful product, typically including marketing, engineering, manufacturing/operations, finance, purchasing, customer support, and quality. The team is empowered by the departments to represent each function's perspective in the development process.

**Customer** - One who purchases or uses your firm's products or services.

**Kick-Off Meeting** - The first official meeting of a group of people who will be working together on the new product development project. The agenda will usually include introductions, developing the mission statement, describing the new product, and roles and responsibilities of team members. An outcome of the kick-off meeting is the Product Innovation Charter (PIC).

**Knowledge Management** - Sometimes abbreviated as KM, Knowledge Management comprises a range of strategies and practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. Such insights and experiences comprise knowledge, either embodied in individuals or embedded in organizational processes or practice.

**New Product Development (NPD)** - The overall process of Strategy, Organization, Concept Generation, Product and Marketing Plan creating and evaluation, and Commercialization of a New

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Product. Sometimes referred to only as "Product Development."

**New Product Development Process (NPD Process)** – A disciplined and defined set of tasks and steps that describe the normal means by which a company repetitively converts embryonic ideas into salable products or services.

**Portfolio Management** – A business process by which a business unit decides on the mix of active projects, staffing and dollar budget allocated to each project currently being undertaken. See also pipeline management.

**Portfolio Management Tool** - A portfolio management tool is a computer program, spanning from a simple spreadsheet to a full-featured and integrated software suite that allows the entire new or active product portfolio to be viewed and analyzed according to selected key variables. PM Tools generally include idea pipeline and product lifecycle management. Software tools may include team member notification, scheduling, budget control, and knowledge management modules.

**Product Launch** - The process by which a new product is introduced into the market for initial sale.

**Project Team (or NPD Team)** – A multifunctional group of individuals chartered to plan and execute a New Product Development project.

**Subject Matter Expert (SME)** - A person with direct knowledge of what is done in the job, what knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics are required, and the general background of persons who are able to do the job

successfully. These may include those currently doing the job, recent incumbents, those who supervise others doing the job, and other acknowledged experts.

**Team Leader** - The person leading the new product development team. Responsible for ensuring that milestones and deliverables are achieved, but may not have any direct authority over project participants.

**Virtual Team** - Dispersed teams that communicate and work primarily electronically may be called virtual teams.

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Prior to founding Global NP Solutions, Dr. Jurgens-Kowal acquired over 12 years of experience in leadership and management positions with ExxonMobil Chemical Company and a total of 16 years as a practicing Chemical Engineer. Her corporate career encompassed various functions, including **New Product Development, Portfolio Management**, Licensing, Marketing, Logistics and Supply Chain, Manufacturing, **Project Management** and Research Technology.

Teresa has extensive experience leading successful teams, managing the product development life cycle, and defining the portfolio strategy. Her deep expertise in intellectual property management, product and process licensing, **portfolio planning**, customer service and various business processes make her an *ideal teacher, mentor* and *trusted advisor* who knows both the theory and practices of New Product Development.

Dr. Jurgens-Kowal earned a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from the **University of Idaho** in Moscow, Idaho and a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the **University of Washington** in Seattle, Washington. She is a licensed **Professional Engineer** in the **State of Louisiana** since 1998. Teresa is a **certified New Product Development Professional (NPDP)** by the Product Development Management Association (PDMA) and Global NP Solutions, LLC, is a **Registered Education Provider (REP)** with PDMA. She is a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), and participates in the local section of the American Marketing Association (AMA) and the Houston Chapter of the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD).

Teresa holds chemical process and catalyst patents, and is published in the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* and *Journal of Physical Chemistry*. She has recently been appointed as Book Review Editor for the *Journal of Product Innovation Management*.

Currently, Dr. Jurgens-Kowal is working on founding a *Gulf Coast Chapter of the PDMA* organization. She has an office in **Houston, Texas**. In her free time, Teresa enjoys bicycling and scrapbooking.