

# Why Managing Virtual Teams Requires Empowering Different Personalities



By JOE HEWITSON - Contributor

The virtual office is currently one of the hottest trends in business. Companies are looking to adopt new strategies for handling growth and cutting costs. Virtual offices, as it so happens, tackle both of these proverbial birds with a single stone, according to Cambridge Network.



Many companies are managing virtual teams to boost efficiency.

As enticing as this concept is from a business perspective, humans tend to be a bit more fickle when you start changing their routine. This makes managing virtual teams challenging, to say the least. That said, we've documented a few user archetypes you're likely to encounter through your mobile workforce management, along with tips to assuage potential hurdles they may face:

## 1. The Hermit

This particular individual is probably the biggest proponent of a virtual office — though he isn't one to vocalize it. Even so, this person may encounter unique challenges of his own that require proactive intervention on your end.

It's your job to make sure you're preventing these users from finding themselves — happily or not — on a virtual island, isolated from other team members. To do this, your No. 1 priority should be encouraging communication.

The best way to accomplish this task? Make it easy and make it a habit. In a virtual office, your resident hermit may not have or want a phone staring condescendingly at him from the corner of his desk. Deploying something like a conference and collaboration platform lets him more easily communicate without the anxiety of actually picking up the telephone. In combination with regular "stand-up" meetings, you may just coax that hermit into the sunlight.

## 2. The Diverter

We all know this type. Be it beautiful spring weather, or a smudge on the screen, just about anything will throw this person's focus out the window. Unlike the hermit, virtual offices can be a tough place for the diverter to thrive.

In order to effectively manage virtual teams with users like this, you'll need to add a little structure to her routine. Users in this category often respond well to tangible goals that can be reached daily or even hourly. Having a clear direction to work toward in easily achievable chunks incentivizes focus and helps ward off distractions. Of course, this becomes a bit of a micromanagement nightmare if your team contains more than a few people. With the help of a flexible project management platform, however, users can manage their own goals while you provide insight and encouragement as necessary.

## 3. The Socialite

If the hermit were to have a nemesis, it would be the socialite. Let's face it — some people are energized by human interaction, while others are drained by it. It's only natural. However, the socialite takes it to the next level. With a constant need to collaborate, whether professionally or socially, this person is most productive in a group setting. It's no wonder, then, why the socialite might struggle in a virtual office environment.

To harness the socialite's raw social energy and apply it to productive efforts, your best bet is to break down the virtual walls. Kind of like those trendy new office layouts — yeah, the physical ones — in which there are no defined offices or workspaces, the socialite requires a bit more openness and transparency. In a virtual office, this means providing collaborative digital workspaces, seamless communication, and an overall sense of community. That last one takes a little extra effort, but with some creativity, you can breathe new life into your team through virtual meet-ups, team challenges, and even some clever use of virtual reality, such as the office simulator featured by Upload.

In the end, managing virtual teams requires a similar approach to traditional offices. You simply need to understand the individual strengths and weaknesses of your team members and leverage the right technology to empower success.

*Find out how Vonage Business can work with your organization to boost company-wide collaboration.*