

“Why can’t we work together anymore?”: can intercultural, cross-functional, remote teams collaborate?

You have been hired as a consultant by Reynolds Walker Walton (R2W), a growing supply chain software company based in Northwest Arkansas with locations in Bangalore, India, and Suzhou, China. R2W has had success with culturally and linguistically diverse, virtual, and highly talented teams (usually of about 8-10 employees) who handle challenging, time-sensitive projects, but those teams are now not working well together. Their teams all speak the same language (English) yet are cross-functional, which means they consist of team members from different departments: backend and frontend engineers, data scientists, developers, product managers, sales, and marketing staff. The men and women who comprise these teams now struggle to share knowledge willingly, share resources, and even meet deadlines. This quarter alone, R2W has missed one key internal deadline and came within a day of missing a vitally important client deadline!

How can R2W retain its diverse team composition, a high level of technical expertise, and have a multi-continent virtual work environment without continually running into the same problems? R2W teams must remain cross-functional and geographically dispersed/culturally diverse – i.e. **do not suggest** that US employees only work with US employees or engineers work with fellow engineers. Senior management needs to learn what the current research is on teamwork and team formation, negotiating cultural differences and diverse viewpoints with teams, and virtual teamwork *as well as* learn how other companies and organizations have dealt with this challenge. Your job is to conduct this research and provide two recommendations to R2W senior management.

Your task: Compose a 2-page, single-spaced business brief answering what two recommendations you have for R2W to improve its practices. Be mindful of your tone, as the goal is to **recommend**, not dictate action.

Note: you will need to cite 4 different sources in APA on your references page. Your references page won’t count towards the 2-page requirement. When citing sources, use parenthetical citations (see *Publication Manual of the APA* §6.11-21), not footnotes. The readings cited below are all in APA format, but **remove the hyperlinks** when you cite.

Readings on team formation, team dynamics, and collaboration:

Cross, R., Rebele, R., & Grant, A. (2016). [Collaborative Overload](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 94(1), 74-79.

Duhigg, C. (2016, February 25). [What Google Learned from Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team](#). *New York Times*.

Retrieved from ProQuest Central database.

Haas, M. & Mortensen, M. (2016). [The Secrets of Great Teamwork](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 94(6), 70-76.

Schaubroeck, R., Tarczewski, F., & Theunissen, R. (2016). [Making collaboration across functions a reality](#). *McKinsey Quarterly*, 2, 106-112. Retrieved from Business Source Complete database.

Woolley, A., Malone, T., & Chabris, C. (2015, January 16). [Why Some Teams are Smarter than Others](#). *New York Times*.

Retrieved from LexisNexis Academic database.

Please note that we have additional readings on our FBC website, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Organizations with noteworthy collaboration initiatives, policies, or studies:

[HP](#)

[Marriott](#)

[Google \(Project Aristotle\)](#)

[IBM](#)

[Credit Suisse](#)

[Walt Disney Parks & Resorts](#)

[Ford Motor Company \(One Ford Plan\)](#)

Other companies known for their previous and current successes with teamwork include: Apple, General Electric, P&G, Walmart, and Xerox.

Students **must submit** the business brief as either a .doc or .docx file type. Other file types cannot be graded and **will receive an automatic “0” grade** for the assignment. **No late work will be accepted.**