

# FOCUS ON...

## Virtual Meetings

### In the News . . .

According to a recent survey by American Express Business Travel, some 74% of chief executives are already using or planning to use audio and video conferencing as a cost effective alternative to face to face meetings and training courses.

This trend is no more apparent than at Cisco, where they have used a range of virtual solutions to cut emissions related to business travel and meetings by a massive 45%.

Cisco reports that now almost a third of the company's 70,000 employees, some 20,000 people, spend at least 1 day per week communicating and networking with their colleagues by using virtual tools.

### The Virtual Revolution

With the explosion of the mobile internet, mobile web and high speed broadband to facilitate communication and collaboration, the working life of today's employees seems on the surface, to be getting easier and easier. However according to Kevin Fox, Managing Director at BLT, for most businesses there are some significant challenges in the way of achieving truly effective virtual communication. "Statistics tell us that there is a definite shift towards

communicating by virtual methods, but what they don't tell is just how effective those interactions are". "At BLT we have identified a clear gap between the results that individuals want to achieve and their personal capability in running virtual meetings and leading virtual teams". According to Fox, the next challenge for businesses around the world is to find a way of training and up-skilling their people to leverage the true potential of virtual communication.

### Use Our Programmes to Up-skill your People

The BLT Running Virtual Meetings Programme is a fast paced, interactive programme to give individuals a range of practical skills to facilitate effective virtual meetings. Delegates will learn to:

- ✓ Design engaging virtual meetings that are aligned to business objectives
- ✓ Integrate virtual meetings with the way that the team does business
- ✓ Create a virtual meeting environment that maximises participation
- ✓ Develop and navigate meeting agendas that are suitable for a virtual environment
- ✓ Facilitate a group to achieve the predefined objectives of their meeting
- ✓ Generate ideas, solve problems and make decisions in a virtual environment
- ✓ Use technology to enhance the flow of information and exchange of ideas



### Virtual Meeting Facilitators

- Do you want to improve the effectiveness of your virtual meetings ?
- Do you want to use an experienced virtual facilitator ?

At BLT we have a team of experienced facilitators who regularly run cross functional/cross cultural virtual meetings.

To find out more visit [www.businesslinkedteams.com](http://www.businesslinkedteams.com)

### Building your own Training Skills Programme

At Business Linked Teams, we have a significant amount of experience in helping organisations to identify and develop high quality training solutions that enable their employees to harness the full potential of virtual interactions.

If you would like to find out more about how our programmes 'Leading Virtual Teams' or 'Running Virtual Meetings' can be tailored for your organisation, then please contact us on 00 44 (0) 845 519 0121 or visit our website [www.businesslinkedteams.com](http://www.businesslinkedteams.com).

### 10 Top Tips for Running Virtual Meetings

- ✓ Create clear objectives for each virtual session
- ✓ Always create an agenda and circulate it to participants in advance
- ✓ Develop participant pre-work that is clearly linked to the session content and use it in the meeting
- ✓ Collect back pre-work responses before the meeting and integrate the results with the design of the 'live' meeting
- ✓ Include at least one interactive activity for every 10 mins of virtual meeting
- ✓ Develop and agree a set of ground rules
- ✓ Assign roles to participants to maximise their involvement
- ✓ Use quick polls regularly throughout the meeting to gauge opinions
- ✓ Maintain attention during the meeting by addressing questions to participants by name
- ✓ Agree a process for recording and sharing key items e.g. actions and questions etc.