

Social Connecting in Times of Physical Distance

Final Report (Abstract)

Team of authors

Prof. Dr. Sybille Sachs
Matthias Möllenev
Ramona Demasi
Silvan Oberholzer

Innovation Check

Implementation partner

peopleXpert GmbH

Research partner

HWZ University of Applied Sciences Zurich

Institute for Strategic Management: Stakeholder View

January 2021

Abstract

In the context of COVID-19, professional collaboration, and especially that in a virtual context, has moved to center stage. In order to ensure the quality of this virtual collaboration, it is all the more important that each individual feels included and that "social connecting" can thus take place. This creates the basic conditions for successful professional collaboration.

It is important that we distinguish "social connecting" from a purely sympathy-based connection. People in a team who like each other usually have no problem establishing and maintaining good connections with each other. However, if this leads to the formation of groups within a team in the form of an inner, sympathy-based circle and an outer circle, major problems can arise, especially in virtual settings. The members of the "outer circles" are clearly more at risk of becoming lonely in a home office situation.

Using the "Beyond Leadership" methodology as a possible form of collaboration, this preliminary study shows that "social connecting" can also take place successfully in a virtual context, regardless of pre-existing sympathies or antipathies. In a short time, it was possible to identify the same goals and values of the participants, which is a basic prerequisite for cooperation and successful collaboration. Success criteria for a "Social Connecting" in social distance were validated and presented on the basis of the elaborated I-P-O-I model (Input, Process, Outcome, Impact).

There is a need for further research on the impact of "Social Connecting" and its effect on the satisfaction with work and life in general and the future and competitiveness of companies in the virtual work context. Based on the developed I-P-O-I model "Social Connecting", further methods of virtual collaboration from the areas of group coaching and agile methods are to be used and tested for their effectiveness. The toolbox for virtual and physical "Social Connecting" resulting from a network platform for "Social Connecting" will help companies to achieve a suitable balance between successful physical and virtual collaboration. A corresponding research project is planned at the HWZ for 2021.