



Response Strategies to a Completely Virtual Environment

Deutsche Bank

The BA Achievement Award is organised by



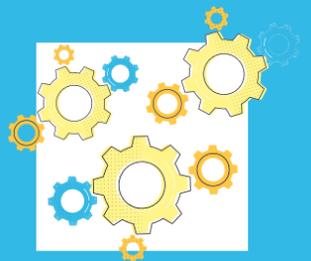
HOW TO BA IN A COMPLETELY VIRTUAL WORLD?

What have we learnt from the completely virtual environment, when everyone is working from home?

1

RE-WIRE COMMUNICATION NETWORK

Do not respond to requests for the same information:
Group the requesters and share the answers with a group.



2

RECREATE OFFLINE FLOWS

Prevent additional communication delays:
Analyse your major offline flows, re-create them online.
Share the information via mail lists or groups.



3

VIRTUAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Prevent your newcomers and teammates from getting lost:
Hold regular virtual onboarding and knowledge sharing sessions. Notes will help to fill-in the gaps later.



4

VIRTUAL COOLER TALKS

Keep your team a team:
Setup informal meetings or coffee breaks to talk about hobbies, outside interests, or discuss news.



5

OPEN UP & HELP

Plan some time to facilitate adjustments:
Open up and help your teammates with your personal stories, experience, ticks and trips.



6

SHARE A SCHEDULE WITH BREAKS

Overcome the detachment and help with planning:
Share your schedule with breaks with others - it helps to plan the day and get sense of what's happening.



7

VIRTUAL TEAM BUILDING

Overcome the tiredness:
Have a virtual team building - working online does not mean you should not have breaks.



8

POSITIVE FLOW

Create positive environment:
Pick up, highlight, and encourage positive events and news, even the smallest ones.



9

SHORTEN THE HORIZON

Plan and execute projects in short-term:
Focus on delivery of the immediately required projects - help others to free the resources for the next immediate project.



10

THANK YOU CULTURE

Appreciate and encourage steady performance:
Celebrate small victories and achievements, be proud of your colleagues.



Achievement summary

What did you do?

Facing challenges in a completely virtual COVID world, we analyzed the whole situation and developed an approach comprised of 10 steps each BA can take to create a better working environment.

Achievement details

Please explain the details of your initiative.

Initial Setup: Big Company, Virtual teams

Business Analysis (BA) in large international companies often requires working in a virtual team. Our virtual teams evolved into a structure where stakeholders from any location can request Technology to build or enhance any feature to support a business need. From a BA perspective, all communication comprises of two large flows: “online” flow with stakeholders, where you rely on emails, calls, and requirement specifications, and “mixed” flow with a development team, which has both offline meetings and smaller online communication around the requirements.

As we had experience in such a setup, as well as with internal research-driven trainings, we were already aware of certain challenges that hindered the overall team performance in the virtual world. For example, there can be communication delays due to time differences, misinterpretations of the requirements, misalignment of goals, and human error. Thus, as BAs, we did our best to choose the right communication channel, adjust work schedules so we can talk to colleagues overseas instead of endless email chains, and share knowledge with development teams.

Covid-19 Mode: Need some adjustments

Once we began working completely remotely during COVID-19, we realized that our virtual setup had become even more extreme, and routines were disrupted

After the initial excitement of having our workplace within arm’s reach, the reality of the unique situation hit. We found ourselves having separate calls on the same topic, lacking time for our planned activities, and working extra hours to meet the deadlines.

We saw colleagues duplicating tasks without talking to each other, as assumptions were made about what, who, and when for deliverables. Our stakeholders perceived us as a united working group, whereas the situation meant we felt separated, and

sometimes independently asked our stakeholders the same questions. Tasks and goals were building up and required more management intervention to resolve.

We paused and decided to examine the new challenges and devise possible response strategies. We started slowly; our first steps were to rationalize our existing communications. We grouped questions, considered outside stakeholders from integrated applications and changed priorities of communication channels based on urgency, complexity, and commitments.

Then, we focused on team spirit – we introduced virtual cooler talks, virtual team buildings, and established virtual onboarding and knowledge sharing sessions. In addition to that, we kicked off a Thank you initiative to keep the momentum going.

Once we started to see positive results, we also realized that we could improve our planning and motivation during our working days. We decided to start sharing schedules with our breaks and enriched our cooler talks with personal coping strategies and positive vibes.

Finally, we tried to deliver the immediate projects in order to deal with the turbulence of constantly changing plans, and free the resources for later projects.

Eventually, we achieved steady performance, the tasks became predictable and manageable, and we felt that we could share this success with a wider audience: other teams, our stakeholders, and top-management. After several rounds of discussion and fine-tuning of the response strategies, we now have 10 painless steps for BAs, Team leads, and Delivery managers.

Success: Adjusted, Reflected and Shared

Our practices helped us to move on and meet the delivery deadlines for all major projects.

Key achievement

Why do you think you should receive the award?

When faced with a unique situation, we quickly identified that our processes could be more effective. We also identified that the situation could be challenging for colleagues. We took action before any impact on our deliverables and introduced a successful new approach. We transitioned to a new working mode and achieved performance comparable to when we sat together in an office.

Our steps are relatable, easy to implement, and universal across different working setups. We believe that our steps can be a template and be further improved by other teams across the globe.