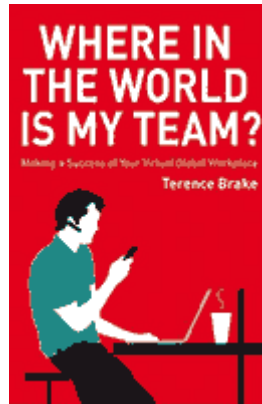


Will Williams lives in London, has a new girlfriend, as well as a complicated former one, works for Fun House, a software company that develops games with the help of a diverse global virtual team and a number of sophisticated communication and collaboration technologies, has a boss called SHE – and is a fictional character. The story of Will’s complex work environment (and life) was conceived by Terry Brake, an Englishman who currently serves as president of a U.S.-based management consulting firm. Brake uses the story as a backdrop to present his views on the principles of effective virtual collaboration. The result, *Where in the World Is My Team*, is worth reading – for several reasons.



The author, who obviously enjoys telling the story from the perspective of a much younger character, presents the challenges and struggles of working in a virtual team environment in plain view. He uses this framework to discuss what makes virtual (defined as being connected through technologies rather than face-to-face) and global (culturally and regionally diverse) team collaboration so hard: the numerous factors that inhibit trust building, and the challenges of isolation, fragmentation and confusion that any such team must overcome.

Brake identifies the most critical teaming objectives as Engagement (emotional involvement and commitment to the team), Cohesion (working together as a unified, coordinated whole) and Clarity (shared understanding across the team). He focuses especially on six performance zones for global team collaboration: Cooperation, Convergence, Coordination, Capability, Communication, and Cultural Intelligence. The author cleverly breaks Will’s story into six chapters, each of which corresponds with one of the performance zones. They illustrate challenges, key strategies and best practice through events at Will’s company and in his life, at the same time delivering entertaining anecdotes and practical advice for global teamwork. The result is a powerful combination of food for thought with useful suggestions.

Last not least, Brake weaves into his story numerous examples of how the effective use of new technologies promotes team collaboration. A final briefing report that follows a more traditional textbook format summarizes key lessons.

If you enjoyed Eliahu Goldratt’s *The Goal* because of its ingenuous blend of fiction telling and business teaching, don’t expect to get quite the same from *Where in the World Is My Team*. Though it has its interesting and –at times– highly entertaining moments, this book focuses more strongly on the messages it tries to convey. Nevertheless, Terry Brake’s ‘business novel’ is worthy lecture if your own world is anywhere near as global as Will’s is.

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