

Virtual Team Optimization (VTO)

In today's increasingly global, virtual work environment, teams are struggling to stay connected, get projects done on time and within budget, and achieve results, despite the distance. These teams range from corporate and non-profit boards, IT and cross-functional project teams, off-shore work teams, to ad hoc task forces, and more. They rely upon conference calling, email, video-conferencing, and face-to-face meetings, when possible, to work together, reach critical decisions and make progress. They also rely on good communication and teamwork to ensure the best outcomes.

But current mechanisms and processes often fall short of helping dispersed teams achieve productivity, much less connectivity. In addition, the costs can be high, given the high price of travel, and the time required to assemble the right people to get their collective work accomplished. Organizations cannot afford to squander travel funds, or worse, the cost of lost productivity and sub-optimal decisions resulting from ill-prepared meetings and unfocused team members.

To respond to this need, SeeChange and CoVision have joined forces to provide our clients the Virtual Team Optimization (VTO) – a disciplined team process, bundled with a suite of online collaboration tools, targeted to help groups significantly improve their productivity and achieve results. The VTO includes three components:

- **Disciplined Process** – We employ and teach team leaders and members a proven group process that incorporates elements of collaborative teamwork and project management. This process ensures that groups are focused on their goals and scope, establishes and enforces a project and meeting schedule, encourages preparation and accountability, and drives groups to make decisions and get results.
- **Collaborative Online Tools** – Our process is married with a proven collaborative toolset developed by CoVision, which we tailor to the group situation, to create an online project website. All group members have access to this website for the duration of the project to: access and upload critical documents, prepare for meetings, conduct online surveys, dialogues, brainstorming and polls, track key milestones and decisions, and conduct virtual online meetings.
- **Independent Expertise and Facilitation** – Our experienced organization development and management consultants manage the team process so that the group leaders and members can concentrate on the work at hand. We assess the team situation and build teamwork, tailor the process and team website to fit the group's needs, work with group leaders to plan and facilitate the meetings, ensure progress is made at each step, and drive the group to achieve its goals.



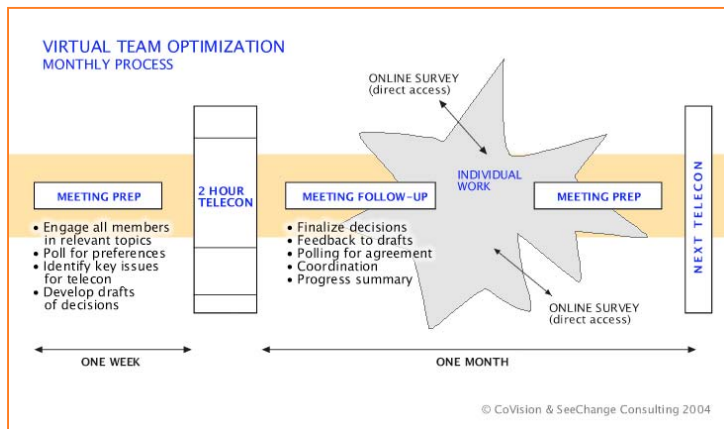
At the intersection of these three critical VTO elements are tangible results, in the form of time and cost savings, improved teamwork and morale, and higher quality decisions and actions.

We provide **three levels of support for teams**, depending on their needs:

Offering	Client Example	Results
Level 1 – Optimizing Critical Meetings	For a corporate leadership team of 150 members, we conducted a 2-day strategic meeting to define organizational priorities and obstacles, and build alignment around an action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities set and agreed • Keys to competitive advantage defined • Full participation achieved in tight timeframe
Level 2 – Optimizing Ongoing Teamwork	For a global non-profit board, we led a 5-month process, including virtual team meetings and online information sharing, to define a product development strategy and develop a plan for raising necessary grant funds to sustain the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased board member focus and discipline • Travel time and cost savings • Faster time to consensus • Clear plan to gain funding
Level 3 – Optimizing Critical Initiatives	For a senior executive forum, we facilitated first-time discussions and planning regarding developing people and new approaches to improve customers' experiences. This work continued with a combination of online dialogue and face-to-face meetings to carry out the new strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online pre-work jumpstarted meeting • New leadership team excited and motivated • Initiation of new, cost-effective virtual work process

Our client management approach always starts with a mini needs assessment, followed by a recommendation on the optimal level of support we foresee. Then we team with the client and conduct the following steps:

- Tailor the VTO site and process based on group needs
- Conduct initial teambuilding and training session (online or face-to-face) – establish goals, norms, schedule, and process
- Prepare for and conduct meeting(s) – plan, facilitate, debrief, adjust process and site for the next meeting
- Develop recommendations and gain closure



When working with virtual groups on an ongoing basis, we employ a monthly meeting process that ensures adequate preparation of all team members, productive use of telecon time, and a meeting debrief and follow up to ensure the group's progress.

For more information...

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Here's what our clients are saying:

"Your approach helped us speed up our decision process and think outside the box."

— EDMS Project Manager, Federal Government

"The VTO Process helped our global board be more disciplined in our preparation and helped us achieve consensus quickly on critical decisions."

— Chairman, Global Non-Profit Board

"Knowledgeable facilitators kept us on schedule, answered questions well, and were supportive of participants input."

— IT Director, Financial Institution