

## How to make an effective use of the collaborative tools?

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Global project managers can increase collaboration during global projects, through the correct and effective use of collaborative tools. Staples, Wong and Cameron (2004) identified that companies must establish conditions for the collaboration and communication systems to be employed and that these must, 'fit with the strategy, structure, culture, processes, and IS infrastructure (for example, training and support).'

Project team members will exchange more information using the collaborative tools, write more project documents in the project management system and capture more ideas during meetings, once they know how to use the technology in an effective manner and see the benefits of doing so.

The modules on this part of the framework present techniques to improve the efficiency of global projects, by fostering the use of the collaborative tools implemented in your company, improving the communication channels among global team members. You must understand the way people communicate in their day-to-day tasks, in order to prepare the collaborative tools to simulate their local activities. When the communication technology in place does not allow the ideas to flow naturally, there is a tendency to favour local contacts rather than distant colleagues. The number of informal contacts among global team members – and therefore the global communication channels – can increase if technology is available to allow social discussions to complement work-related conversations. When global team members can complement verbal discussions by drawing schemas, sharing applications and taking online meeting minutes, they increase the quality of information exchanged. This reduces the time lost during meetings and discussions, minimises the number of misunderstandings and raises the quality level of the project information.

Sources: Staples, D. S., Wong, I. K. and Cameron, A. F. (2004) 'Best practices for virtual team effectiveness'; in Pauleen D. J. (Ed) 'Virtual teams: Projects, protocols and processes' (Idea Group Publishing, UK). Image © Roxana González | Dreamstime.com