

A close-up photograph of a person's hand resting on a red running track. The track has white lane markings, including a white arrow pointing to the right. The hand is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image, with fingers slightly spread. The background is a blurred view of the track lanes.

# RefineM

## Communication Challenges for Virtual Teams

NK Shrivastava, PMP, RMP, ACP, CSP, SPC4  
CEO/Enterprise Agile Coach - RefineM

# Agenda

1. Introductions and Expectations
2. Communication Challenges for Virtual Teams
  1. Lack of face-to-face interaction
  2. Low engagement by attendees during meetings
  3. Technical difficulties
  4. Time zone differences
  5. Cultural or language differences
  6. Learning curve for some
3. Summary / Q&A

# RefineM's Virtual Lunch & Learn

This is a monthly webinar delivered during the lunch hour in the first week (Wednesdays) of every month.

It's designed to help you learn while you eat lunch, providing a relaxed environment to enhance your experience.

The monthly webinars will cover a variety of Project Management / Agile topics.

# Your Expectations

What are your expectations from this webinar?

Why are you here today?

# Your Topmost Challenge

What is your topmost challenge working in a virtual team?



# NK Shrivastava

## PMP, RMP, ACP, CSP, SPC4

- CEO/Consultant since Dec 2011
  - Agile Transformation/Coaching/Adoption
    - Enterprise Agile Coach @ IBM
  - Project Management/Process Improvement Consulting and Training Products for Project and Agile Professionals
    - Essential Gear for Project Managers  
[RefineM.com/products/essential-gear-for-project-managers/](https://www.refinem.com/products/essential-gear-for-project-managers/)
    - PMP Exam Simulator  
[RefineM.com/pmp-exam-prep-practice-test/](https://www.refinem.com/pmp-exam-prep-practice-test/)
    - Agility Assessment Tool  
[Agility.RefineM.com/](https://www.refinem.com/agility/)
    - Videos – PMP and Agile  
<https://vimeo.com/search?q=RefineM>
- 20+ years of successful project leadership
  - Successfully led hundreds of projects of all sizes
  - Recovered many projects, saved millions of dollars
  - Implemented numerous process improvements
  - Coached/mentored hundreds of PMs and executives
  - Board member of SWMO PMI Chapter (2008-2014)

Helping organizations  
turn their project  
management capability  
into a *competitive  
advantage*

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# What's New at RefineM

Upcoming Free Webinars	Date
I Am a PMP, Now What? Career Strategies for PMs – on PM.com	May 6
Utilization vs. Throughput	Jun 3

## RefineM Products

1. Essential Gear for PMs- [Refinem.com/products/essential-gear-for-project-managers/](https://Refinem.com/products/essential-gear-for-project-managers/)
2. PMP Exam Prep Test Simulator – [Examprep.RefineM.com](https://Examprep.RefineM.com)
3. PMP® Self-Paced Online Training - [Vimeo.com/ondemand/refinempmpexamprep](https://Vimeo.com/ondemand/refinempmpexamprep)
4. Agility Assessment – [Agility.RefineM.com](https://Agility.RefineM.com)
5. Agile Fundamentals Self-Paced Online Training - [Vimeo.com/ondemand/refinemagile](https://Vimeo.com/ondemand/refinemagile)
6. Agile Business Reqs. Self-Paced Online Training - [Vimeo.com/ondemand/refinembusreq](https://Vimeo.com/ondemand/refinembusreq)



## Communication Challenges for Virtual Teams

1. Lack of face-to-face interaction
2. Low engagement by attendees
3. Technical difficulties
4. Time zone differences
5. Cultural or language differences
6. Learning curve for some



# Why Virtual Teams Are More Important Than Ever

**With the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19), more and more teams are going virtual.**

**Some are doing it voluntarily to reduce the spread of the virus, while in many communities, shelter-in-place orders have been issued.**

**We hope you stay safe and benefit from the ideas discussed here.**

# Common Challenges for Virtual Teams

1. Lack of face-to-face interaction
2. Low engagement by attendees during meetings
3. Technical difficulties
4. Time zone differences
5. Cultural or language differences
6. Learning curve for some

# #1 - Lack of face-to-face interaction

Symptoms	How to Overcome
1. Body language and visual cues offer important insights that are often lost in virtual interactions	1. Use videoconferencing whenever possible to preserve team members' faces and mannerisms
2. Without this information, misunderstanding is more likely, leading to missed requirements and greater conflict potential	2. Create opportunities to meet in person wherever feasible for important milestones – or celebrate later once meeting is feasible
3. Can especially affect hybrid teams if co-located team members are getting information that others are not	3. Use information radiators to make sure everyone has the same information

# #2 – Low engagement

Symptoms	How to Overcome
1. If whole team is not focused and some people are not engaging, then meetings may be disrupted	1. Use a team charter or social contract and ask everyone to agree to ground rules
2. Miscommunication and project delays can occur from team members who miss key updates	2. Create and distribute meeting recordings and minutes promptly after each meeting while it is still fresh
3. Can especially affect hybrid teams if some team members have more clarity than others	3. Utilize a shared workspace where people can view documents and ask questions

# #5 - Technical difficulties

Symptoms	How to Overcome
1. Meeting infrastructure is most likely to go down at the worst possible time, such as a critical meeting	1. Budget for hardware or software solutions, like dedicated bandwidth or a stable, dependable meeting platform
2. Any problem with meeting software or hardware introduces extra noise or static that can inhibit communication.	2. Have an IT support person available to diagnose and quickly fix problems
3. Issues can include delays, impatience, and even some attendees being locked out	3. Test every new piece of hardware or software before using it in a live meeting

Are you facing network speed issues, particularly these days?

# #4 - Time zone differences

Symptoms	How to Overcome
1. When team members are distributed across multiple time zones, especially with a difference of six hours or more, finding a common meeting time becomes difficult	1. Proactively schedule meetings – whenever possible, share meeting times 1-2 weeks in advance so people can prepare
2. Someone has to meet outside of normal business hours, which puts additional stress on them, inhibits productivity, and can cause tension	2. Rotate time zones to “share the pain”, and also record the meetings and share the recording.
3. Unfortunately, sometimes little can be done about this	3. Keep meetings concise and to the point to minimize pain

# #3 - Cultural or language differences

Symptoms	How to Overcome
1. Cultural differences between virtual team members from other countries, or regions within the same country, can cause confusion	1. Take advantage of exposure to different cultures and keep an open mind
2. Not just language differences – many factors can play in such as differences in mannerisms	2. Take training offered by your organization if it exists
3. Cultural differences can cause misunderstandings, leading to conflict and delays	3. Use a team charter/ social contract

# #6 – Learning Curve

Symptoms	How to Overcome
1. People problems including a steep learning curve for hardware or software can cause issues	1. Make sure attendees have a resource for learning about the hardware and software including documentation and a support person
2. If attendees have trouble adjusting to the learning curve, they could miss key items in meetings or be unable to connect	2. Make sure recordings & minutes are readily available for anyone who joins late or is disconnected while meetings are in progress
3. Differences between technology at home may also come into play	3. Make sure everyone has the same or similar devices and test for inconsistencies in advance



# Conclusion

1. Due to coronavirus concerns, more people need to work virtually than ever before
2. With more people working virtually, more chances for miscues and conflict arise
3. Be proactive in preparing and keep an open mind to address issues as they arise

**Stay home, stay safe, and stay productive**

# Questions?

**NK Shrivastava, MBA, PMP, RMP, ACP, CSP, SPC4**

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# Next Lunch and Learn

- ***I Am a PMP® , Now What? – ProjectManagement.com***
  - ✓ What's next for PMP certification holders?
  - ✓ What career paths are feasible?
  - ✓ How can you chart your desired path?
- ***Wednesday, May 6, 12:00-1:00 PM Eastern***

**Register Today - Don't wait for the last Minute**

# Next Training Course

## Agile for Waterfall and Operational Work



**April 17, 2020, Half-Day Over the Web**

***\$175 until April 3, \$225 afterwards***

***Learn how to use Agile techniques in any project environment.***

<https://refinem.com/agile-for-waterfall-and-operational-work/>

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# How to Earn 1 PDU for this Webinar?

1. **Log in to [ccrs.pmi.org](https://ccrs.pmi.org) and Click** on “Report PDUs” link.
2. **Click** “Courses and Training” and **Input** the following:

<b>Activity Name</b>	“Communication Challenges for Virtual Teams” <i>(complete before selecting provider)</i>
<b>Provider</b>	“RefineM LLC” <i>(key in the Provider name)</i>
<b>Date Started</b>	April 1, 2020
<b>Date Completed</b>	April 1, 2020
<b>Contact Person</b>	NK Shrivastava
<b>Contact Phone</b>	(417) 763-6762
<b>Contact Email</b>	<a href="mailto:Trainings@RefineM.com">Trainings@RefineM.com</a>
<b>PDUs</b>	1.00 Technical.

3. **Check** “I agree this claim is accurate” box and then **Submit**.

# Questions?

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# Training Opportunities from RefineM

Name	Online
<a href="#">PMP® Exam Prep</a>	Apr 20-23 May 11-14
<a href="#">Recipe to Deliver Projects Successfully</a>	May 01
<a href="#">Agile Fundamentals / Agile 101</a>	May 25-26
<a href="#">PMI-ACP® Exam Prep</a>	May 25-27
<a href="#">Agile for Waterfall/Operational Work</a>	Apr 17 May 15
<a href="#">Backlog Grooming for Agile Requirements</a>	May 22 May 28
<a href="#">Kanban Fundamentals / Kanban 101</a>	May 29
<a href="#">Business Requirements for Agile Projects</a>	Apr 10 May 08

All Q2 2020 classes are now over the Web.  
Click [here](#) for more details.

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