

How Remote Teams can Harness
the Energy, Talent, and Insights
of Diverse Cultures

WILLIAM R. DODSON

VIRTUALLY INTERNATIONAL

Praise for Virtually International

Virtually International's timing couldn't be better. The era of remote work and virtual meetings has been foisted upon us, and Dodson harnesses his years of international business experience in crafting the definitive guidebook to the Zoom generation. Highly readable, entertaining, and informative, Virtually International is overflowing with lessons for companies aiming to unite their teams of employees scattered throughout the globe to best accomplish their goals.

— Rob Schmitz, International Correspondent, National Public Radio (NPR)

A comprehensive must-read for those working in or managing virtual, international teams. Combining personal experience with management theory, Bill effortlessly details the complexities, challenges, opportunities and rewards of working across cultures, geographies and time zones.

- Viktoria Kish, Founder, International Study Programs

Dodson has written the right book at the right time. Remote work is the new normal, but the unfortunate truth is that most organizations are simply not good at building or managing hybrid teams. Dodson not only analyzes the challenges, but offers practical, actionable solutions that can be implemented immediately.

— Andrew Hupert, Professor of International Negotiation, Hult International Business School

Dodson's extensive work and writing experience across Asia and Europe make him eminently suited to produce a book like *Virtually International*. An informative and engaging read!

— Patrick Williams, Senior Vice President, Asia at Rosti Group

I've interviewed over a hundred leaders in the remote work space, getting their take on what effective remote leadership looks like. William stands out among them for having a holistic set of principles honed through the course of a long career, one that started before working with distributed teams had a name. If you aspire to manage or lead people spread across the world, this book must be on your shelf.

 Luís Falcão de Magalhães, Founder at Think Remote and Host of the Distant Job Podcast

A book about the virtual business world that is insightful and entertaining! Who knew it was possible? Dodson has lived this topic, from China to Seattle, for the last twenty-five years, and he packs all of his knowledge, wisdom, and humor into these pages. Get it today, build your 21st-century team the right way and tell them Turner sent you (I don't get a commission, but it still sounds cool).

— Turner Sparks, Internationally Acclaimed Comedian; Co-host, The Lost in America Podcast (#1 Comedy Podcast in Armenia and Azerbaijan, 2020!)

Dodson succeeds in capturing the key enablers to successful remote project management. Having completed a new factory-build during the pandemic, with a hybrid international team, the content and tone of the book resonates very closely to my actual experience. We heavily leveraged the latest technologies Dodson refers to and managed to maintain transparent communication across diverse cultures in five countries.

 Chris Dineen, Managing Director at Electrolux Professional (Thailand) Co, Ltd

VIRTUALLY INTERNATIONAL

How Remote Teams Can Harness the Energy, Talent, and Insights of Diverse Cultures

BY

WILLIAM R. DODSON



United Kingdom – North America – Japan India – Malaysia – China Emerald Publishing Limited Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

Copyright © 2021 William R. Dodson. Published under exclusive license by Emerald Publishing Limited.

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80117-191-5 (Print) ISBN: 978-1-80117-190-8 (Online) ISBN: 978-1-80117-192-2 (Epub)



ISOQAR certified Management System, awarded to Emerald for adherence to Environmental standard ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985 ISO 14001



For my daughter, Sarah Elisabeth



CONTENTS

About the Author	viii
Introduction	1
The Work of Hephaestus	9
Assembling Remote Teams	37
The Habits of High-performing Remote Teams	61
Remotely Productive: Anywhere, Anywhen Work	83
Out of Many Cultures, One Team	101
Navigating Cross-cultural Currents Remotely: Practical Tips	121
Conclusion: The Promise and The Limits of Remote Work	141
Acknowledgments	147
References	149
Index	157

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William R. Dodson is an author, journalist, management advisor, and technology educator. He has been working with and managing virtual international teams since 1997 across dozens of countries. His expertise is in cross-cultural team communications, remote project management, and cross-border organizational change.

He lived and worked in China for more than 10 years. He assisted Western organizations entering into and restructuring in Asia.

He is the author of two books about the social, economic, and technological developments shaping 21st-century China. A graduate of Cornell University in Physics, he lives in Greater Seattle.