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## Leading a Geographically Dispersed Team



For nearly 20 years I led and managed world wide teams at [Intel Corp](#) and [Hewlett Packard](#). Both of those companies were global and many, if not all, of the organizations within those companies were global as well. Managing or leading (yes, there is a difference which I will talk about in a separate posting) a global team is challenging for the obvious reason that you are not all in the same building. But there are ways to effectively overcome this.

### Here is what has worked for me:

- 1. Go to the employees.** Find a way to go sit with your employees in their environment. This can be tough but I would wait for other meetings that I needed to attend near some of my remote employees and visit them before or after the meeting. Flying from the US to Europe or Asia Pacific to meet employees may not be worth the expense to many companies, however if you are meeting with customers, partners and are willing to hold a town meeting with employees from your umbrella organization then it may be easier to sell to your management or financial gatekeepers.
- 2. MBPA.** Maybe you have heard of Managing by Wandering Around (MBWA) well I used to do Managing by Phoning Around (MBPA). I would always schedule regular time to talk with my senior employees over the phone. I also would call into project meeting teleconferences just to listen or participate if needed. At first, my joining the meeting cast a silence among the participants (like I was going to announce the cancellation of the meeting), but once they knew I was there because I was interested they seemed to appreciate it.
- 3. Manager Partners.** In remote areas where you have employees find out if there are any managers from your umbrella organization that are also located there. If so, work with those managers to “adopt” your employees. This is typically for more administrative purposes as you are not moving the employee to that manager, but if the employee needs something signed or has a question that may be better handled in person (or may require some local knowledge) it is



always good to have a manager that your employees can turn to in the middle of their work day when you are fast asleep.

Lastly, remember that managing a geographically dispersed team is difficult for both you and the employees who are within the organization. **Being respectful of time zones** and local activities may seem like a hassle but it can really help develop a working relationship when you may not have much else to work with. Most of all, remember that just because your employees may be out of sight don't let them believe that they are not needed.