Good research paper on google's culture

Abstract

Google, Inc. was founded in the late 1990s by CEO Larry Page and Sergery Brin. The company is known for its Google search engine, its first product. The search engine contains a proprietary algorithm that increases the relevance of the engine's search results. Since its inception, Google has grown exponentially and expanded into Internet cloud and advertising services. The company has recently expanded into fiber Internet, green technology, and biotechnology. Google's organizational culture and values are largely responsible for its exponential growth. The company and CEO Page foster a culture of risk-taking, making the impossible a reality, and structured chaos. Whether Google will be able to maintain its culture in the future is up for debate, but it will need to maintain its high tolerance for mistakes and risk if it is to continue to innovate. Other organizations might find it difficult to embrace the values and beliefs of Google's culture, especially if those organizations thrive on a high degree of structure and regulation.

Keywords: Google, organizational culture, leadership styles

Company Description

Google, Inc. sells products and services in the technology sector. The company is a leading worldwide provider of advertising and search engine services, in addition to operating systems, operating platforms, enterprise and hardware products (MarketLine, 2015). Google's flagship products are its search engine " Google," the Android operating system for mobile devices, the Chrome Internet browser, and YouTube (MarketLine, 2015). The

company operates offices in several companies, with its main headquarters in Mountain View, California. Google had 47, 756 employees as of 2013 and revenues of $59, 825 million (MarketLine, 2015). The company's 2013 revenues represented a growth rate of 19. 2 percent over the previous fiscal year. Most of the company's revenue growth came from an increase in its advertising services, including AdSense (MarketLine, 2015).

Google, Inc. operates as two separate business segments: Google and Motorola mobile (MarketLine, 2015). The company's founders, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, began collaborating on the Google search engine in 1996. Google, Inc. officially became a corporation in 1998 and PC Magazine placed the search engine on its list of the Top 100 websites (MarketLine, 2015). Throughout the years, Google made a series of acquisitions that allowed the company to expand its array of products and services. Some of the more well-known products and services are Google Earth, Google Checkout, Google Wallet, DoubleClick Ad Exchange, and YouTube (MarketLine, 2015). The company has recently expanded its operations to initiatives involving renewable energy, automobile automation, and biotechnology (MarketLine, 2015).

Drivers of Success

Google's success is in part driven by its structure. The organization's leaders pride themselves on sustaining a culture of " structured chaos" (Lashinky, 2006). Structured chaos can best be described as somewhere in-between bureaucracy and anarchy. The company's leaders believe that too much structure stifles the creativity and risk-taking essential for success (Helft, 2014). At the same time, some degree of structure is necessary for

continuity and attention to detail. Google has capitalized on the popularity and continued success of its search engine, which is built upon a proprietary algorithm that ensures relevant search results (MarketLine, 2015). The Android operating system has also made a large contribution to Google's success. Google's core competency seems to be discovering unique and hard to duplicate ways of meeting the market's needs.

The company's culture is lenient when it comes to making mistakes. One of its founders, Larry Page, has been known to be supportive of employees who make mistakes and admit to them. He " wants to run a company where we are moving too quickly and doing too much, not being too cautious and doing too little. If we do not have any of these mistakes, we are just not taking enough risk" (Lashinky, 2006). This type of culture fuels growth, development and innovation. Without enough innovation and risk, a company can simply not discover new ways to meet the market's needs.

Unique Leadership

Google's culture and leadership approach is unique since they encourage a high degree of flexibility and loosely structured chaos (Lashinky, 2006). The company's senior management values innovation and high amounts of growth in short amounts of time (Lashinky, 2006). Management does not want employees to get too comfortable, but they should not get too out of control either. The company's culture promotes open collaboration at all levels. It is important for senior managers to share their ideas with entry-level employees and vice versa (Lashinky, 2006). Google's engineers are also required to spend a significant amount of time on their own individual projects (Helft, 2014). This fact reveals the company's leadership values a

balance between individual and group innovation. Striking the right balance between the extremes appears to be Google's underlying leadership approach.

Larry Page's Management Style

Larry Page, Google's CEO, is known for being a visionary focused on future possibilities. Impressions of Page attribute the leader as believing the impossible is possible and likely to occur (Helft, 2014). Page sees possibilities for improvements in technology and the manners in which the market uses it (Helft, 2014). The CEO pushes for targets that extend beyond the initial targets proposed by his project managers and engineers. For instance, when Google's project manager for the company's Internet balloons project proposed a goal of increasing the Internet's overall bandwidth by five percent, Page asked why Google could not double or triple the capacity (Helft, 2014). In this sense, Page's leadership style is one that pushes boundaries and limits. It is a style and outlook similar to Walt Disney, who thought it was fun to bring the impossible to life.

Values and Beliefs

Page clearly values innovation and creativity in his organization. The CEO fosters an environment where risk is paramount to success. He realizes that mistakes are the hallmark of a risk-taking culture, but Page does not discount the value of being detail-oriented. Given the fact that Google's offices include free cafeterias and volleyball courts (Lashinky, 2006), Page values the spirit of having fun in the process. Incubation is a critical step in the creative process and Google provides its employees many opportunities

to take advantage of this step. The organization's values and beliefs coincide with the ideas of freedom, adaptation, and one must fail in order to eventually succeed. The bottom line is never the focus at Google. The focus is making ideas real.

Sustainability

Google's current culture can be sustained in the long run, as its leaders have been successful at sustaining it since the company's inception. As the company continues to expand into new ventures, the challenge will be to keep operations de-centralized. Larger corporations with several different product lines and divisions tend to need some degree of centralized control in order to maintain continuity. If Google implements more structure, the company runs the risk of becoming less focused on innovation and adaptive flexibility, which have been instrumental to the company's success. Since the company has yet to split its operations into more than two business segments, this is a strong indicator that the company has found a way to keep its structure light.

Implementation in other Organizations

Google's culture of risk-taking and innovation would be difficult to implement in a public government organization. The main problem is that the implementation of a culture similar to Google's would be such a sharp departure from a more bureaucratic style that it would result in high amounts of resistance. Government organizations are highly structured and dependent on rules, regulations and documented procedures. Google's culture of loose supervision and high allowance for mistakes would confuse a

good number of employees in a bureaucratic organization. Quite a few employees would be uncomfortable in such an environment since they may be accustomed to high levels of structure. A culture such as Google's would need to be implemented in small increments in order to avoid resistance.

References

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