

Google (unionization)



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Context for unionization at Google Unionization of workers is in most instances accepted as a positive development favouring workers. A labour union may be defined as a legal organization formed with the express purpose of representing, protecting and defending the rights of workers. (Drummond, 2008). Where Google is concerned, the question that arises is whether unionization is even necessary, because the Company's policies are focused towards ensuring the well being of its employees, to such an extent that in a survey of 440 companies, Google was ranked as the best one to work for. (www. greatplacetowork. com). The only indication of employee unrest surfaced on one occasion when Google employees discovered that the Company had been secretly monitoring their activities using concealed cameras on desktop PCs. (Khouieri, 2007) but this was easily and quickly dissipated with an offer of increase in pay.

From the perspective of key stakeholders however, the lack of unionization is beneficial, especially because it ensures that company operations are unlikely to be held up for too long due to strikes or similar collective action by employees. In a global online environment, that requires constant employee input in updating and maintaining sites and processing applications, any hindrance in the continuous progression of work could be disastrous and affect consumers, advertisers and Google's partners all over the world. In a competitive environment, consumers have been increasingly discriminating and demanding, thereby requiring employees to be constantly vigilant in developing new products and services.

Employees also need to be vigilant in dealing with problems such as the development of viruses and/or impediments in the smooth operation of software applications associated with Google's search engine, AdSense

programs and other technological applications. A strike by employees brought on by unions demanding higher pay or better working conditions for example, would cause these activities to grind to a halt and adversely affect the interests of consumers, many of whom are heavily dependent upon the online environment in their day to day work activities. Any impediment in the work of employees would also hinder the interests of vendors and suppliers who are liable to lose any cost advantages they may be currently enjoying in their relationship with Google. Where management is concerned, the scope for profits of the Company would also be severely affected, because in a competitive online environment, any impediment to employee inputs could result in heavy losses for the Company from lost productivity, even for a short period. It is also likely to impact negatively upon the corporate image of the Company and allow room for Google's competitors such as Yahoo and AOL to make significant inroads into Google's market and among Google's clientele.

The management at Google therefore needs to be very responsive to employee concerns, because the productivity of the Company rests upon the creativity and skill of these employees. In the event unionization is considered, management needs to ensure that they train up a separate base of non union employees who will be available to deal with a crisis in the event of a strike or any suspension of work by regular employees for any reason. The Company already has group networks for various categories of employees such as disabled employees, homosexual employees, minorities, etc and it must step up its efforts to ensure that these group networks are effectively addressing any grievances or concerns among employees in order to ensure that all employees are motivated so that they remain productive.

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