

Innovation and creativity – google case study



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Innovation and Creativity

Managing creativity and innovation is central to the repositioning of organisations, (especially to those the size and magnitude of Google). This concept refers to taking on new techniques and technologies, to developments in the provision of new products and services, as well as forming and implementing strategies to secure competitive advantages. However, success in a business relies on making the right change, on choosing the right ideas and implementing innovations that will make a difference. 1 (Andriopoulos and Dawson, 2009). First the differences between creativity and innovation need to be identified.

Creativity is the ability to come up with ideas that are new, surprising and valuable. 2 Innovation, is the successful exploitation of these new ideas. 3 (Edquist 1997) Google is both creative and innovative in a variety of different ways. Firstly, “ Cloud computing”; normally if you drop your computer, you would normally lose all your documents, pictures etc. Google have created this platform called cloud computing, which not only securely stores all your data in the “ clouds” online, but is available whenever you demand it, wherever you are and on all devices. 4 This can be illustrated by the diagram below:

The move to the cloud is ushering in a revolution on how we communicate, work, and effectively live. However, as Google advisor Terry Winograd pointed out, “ people wonder whats going to happen to information, that is mine personally, my bank records, health records, that I don’t control it.” They are therefore trusting Google with all their private documents, pictures

and records, giving Google a lot of responsibility to keep all this information safe, secure and nowhere near any third-party companies.

Another example of creativity that takes place in Google is their concept of 20% time. Creativity commonly occurs from individual entrepreneurs. The problem is people have an idea, but don't have enough time to work on it. Google addresses this issue in the following way: every technical person in the company is expected to spend 20% of their professional time on stuff they find interesting. A prime example of how this leads to innovation and creativity, is the case of a google engineer and product manager, who used their time to invent Google Music - a free music download that has the support of the major record labels. 5

Lastly, Google has a potentially, extremely productively creative idea, which they hope to implement in the next few years: ocean data centres. Google has filed a patent to build data centres out on sea, powered by the latest technologies and wave energy. The benefits to the company are evident - sea bound servers would be much cheaper to run, and there would be no real estate or property taxes to pay. 6 This example, like the others mentioned above really demonstrates Google's wide range of innovation and creativity techniques.