

The Impact of Culture on Google's Success

Executive Summary

Google is known worldwide for its innovative products and services. It continually attracts the best and brightest engineers, computer scientists, and economists from around the world, and has the reputation of being one of the best companies to work for. Google's organizational culture has been identified as core reason for its success.

Google receives over one million resumes per year, and has thus developed an intensive recruitment process in order to hire individuals that best fit into the organization's culture. Interviewers, current employees, and executives spend dozens of hours screening potential recruits, and in to maintain their high standards, Google will keep a position vacant rather than hire a sub-optimal candidate.

Google's mission is "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful [5]." This ambitious mission is deeply embedded in Google's culture, and is instilled its employees, leaders, and founders. It acts as a constant source of motivation and inspiration for new products and services. Google's work environment and communication practices facilitate social interactions and stimulate creativity and collaboration through openness and sharing. It realizes that recognition is a crucial part of an organization, and hosts numerous recognition rites and ceremonies to celebrate its people and its culture. Diversity and inclusion of employees has also been identified as one of the key sources of engagement.

Google advocates that trying something new and failing is an inescapable and essential part of the innovation process [30]. Employees are empowered to try new things, take risks, and think and act like entrepreneurs. This is facilitated through 20% time projects, where employees can spend one day a week working on their own projects. This structure has proven to be an incredible source of innovation, and almost half of Google's offerings originated from 20% time projects. Rather than imposing structure and control, Google's leaders are ambassadors of culture and primarily serve to share information and connect teams throughout the organization.

Google has developed a matrix organizational structure. With this strategy, the hierarchy of authority does not exist for day-to-day decisions, and employees benefit from increased freedom and responsibility [1]. Google's decision making process

emphasizes the importance of data. Because of its extensive internet-based services, Google is able to test numerous products and features on millions of users quickly, and use the results to make informed decisions about which ideas to pursue and improve.

Although Google has been largely successful, there are some risks associated with their practices. Additionally, there are a number of lessons that other organizations can learn from Google.

- Openness and trust serve to empower employees. Some individuals may not use these opportunities in ways that support the organization's goals.
- Employees enjoy work environment perks such as good food, fitness centres, and recreation facilities. This may impose an unhealthy lifestyle on some employees that abuse these benefits by spending all of their time at work and missing out on external time with family and friends.
- Google invests a significant amount of time and resources in its rigorous hiring process. As a result, excellent candidates may be missed. However, Google has recognized that hiring sub-optimal applicants may actually be more costly to the organization than leaving a position vacant.
- Data-driven decision making removes politics and personal biases. Intuition is still an essential aspect to consider, however, as the data does not predict the future.

Overall, Google is an excellent example of the crucial role that culture can play in an organization's success. The organization's mission, inclusive and comfortable environment, empowered employees, communication practices, and decision making procedures facilitate the cutting-edge innovation and continuous improvement that has led Google to be the technology giant it is today.