

Executive Summary

Google is a unique organization and technological giant providing a wide range of products from search to mail to office productivity tools. Their culture of constant innovation and creativity provide a unique look into the work required to develop and introduce a new product into a market successfully. Google Docs is a perfect example of this and a great way to look into the benefits Google's culture provides, along with how it handles challenges and drives innovation.

Google Docs was a product Google released in 2007 that aimed to provide a unique experience for word processing: live collaboration via a web browser. Google hoped to work within the word processing space and provide a radically innovative product by leveraging improvements in web browsers. They hoped to move the traditional offline word processing experience (such as working within Microsoft Office) into the online domain. Their new product was consistently benchmarked against their well-established competitors within the market which provided a number of challenges to overcome. Google's overall target market was the existing word processing market (offline) but they were also able to create a market for online word processing.

A look into the organizational structure, culture, and vision provides an interesting perspective on what it took to generate success from Google Docs. With the overall culture of the organization focused around innovation and creativity without disregarding user satisfaction, the creation and dedication they put into Google Docs falls in line with their core values. Their vision also aligns with how they handled the challenges faced by Docs, relying on loyalty of their users to seek out flaws while still providing free innovative products. The dedication of Google to building Docs from an idea into a full-featured and widely used product shows the power of their organizational culture.

While Docs was a radical innovation it initially competed in an existing market with the offline word processing suites. This market came with competitors from well-established software suites including Microsoft Office, Apple iWork, and OpenOffice. However, with the new technology and online collaboration Google Docs provided, they were also able to create a new market for themselves in the online space. There were no existing competitors within the online word processing market at their time of release which provided them a much needed gap for success.

The implementation stage of google Docs saw both successes and failures which eventually required iteration to improve these shortcomings. The successes were mainly surrounding the innovation Google achieved and the user base they had, while the failures were typically related to feature gaps when benchmarked against competitors. The iterations Google completed through acquisitions to improve the product were able to provide a number of lessons learned to improve the existing product and avoid challenges when developing new ones.

The result of lessons learned throughout the Google Docs lifespan provided Google with the basis of Google Drive, their comprehensive document storage and editing platform which was extremely successful. Lessons were also learned by their initial competitors Microsoft and Apple who both developed online-collaboration versions of their existing office suites to directly compete with Google's success. Overall, the innovation that Google was able to achieve with Docs eventually changing the entire focus of the existing market provides an interesting point of analysis from an organizational perspective.