Career Research Report

Google and Cisco

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult decisions one has to make is the career path that they will take, and the right company to work for. It is essential for me to find a company that I would love to go to everyday because I believe that if you are happy at where you are working then you will exceed at your job naturally. Therefore, the purpose of this report is to discover a company that best suits my standards and criteria, from the company's work environment to their size and location. Due to my major being business administration with a concentration in human resources management, I examined each company's relations with their respective human resources department.

I have narrowed my research to two companies, Google and Cisco. Google is a multinational corporation that specializes in Internet-related services and products while Cisco is an international company that designs, manufactures and sells networking equipment. This report analyzes many aspects of the two companies such as their background and history to an examination of their SWOT analysis by using a variety of online resources, for instance, the companies' websites, Data Monitor, and the San Jose State University's electronic databases. Following a thorough study of the two companies, I concluded that employment at both companies would suit me the best in regards to an ideal company.

THE IDEAL COMPANY FOR ME

The perfect corporation to be employed for would have to have particular distinctiveness that complements my professional and personal preferences. One of the most important traits I believe a company should have is the need for innovation. While the specific types of innovation policies differentiate widely for different companies, it all requires skill and creativity which are critical towards productivity and have been shown to play a significant role in the growth of companies. A culture of innovation assists a business to increase productivity and thrive in a competitive market, as well as creating higher value products and services.

In addition, the ideal company is a company that values and respects their employees. It is important to care about the workers because they ultimately make up the workforce for the entire company. Companies that treat their employees well by providing an enjoyable work environment and appropriate benefits create a motivated and engaged staff. Consequently, they can make a corporation much more productive than competitor companies with a disengaged workforce. For that reason, many of the world's most profitable firms are beginning to realize that a valued culture is one of their intangible assets that contribute to a business's health. In the end, companies that clearly value their employees are more appealing to work for and provide an incentive for each individual to stay and grow within the company.

COMPANY I: CISCO

BACKGROUND

Cisco Systems was founded in 1984 by Leonard Bosack and Sandy Lerner, who were both computer support staff at Stanford University. They both developed the first multi-protocol router that allowed them to communicate with each other by deciphering data between them. Cisco's technology opened up the potential of connecting all of the world's computer networks together. Cisco started mainly by providing LAN (local-area network) products. As the global Internet grew, Cisco had an early foothold in the growing industry and quickly became a leader in the data networking equipment market. The corporation expanded its product services to include a wide variety of other networking solutions, including Internet appliances, website management tools and network management software. Today, Cisco has shaped the future of the Internet and has become the worldwide leader in networking by renovating how "people connect, communicate and collaborate." (Cisco, n.d.)

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

A majority of the company's products are classified into three categories: Enterprise and Service Provider, Small Business, and the Home. In the Enterprise and Service Provider section, Cisco sells many Cloud Computing services and numerous products that enhance collaboration such as TelePresence, Unified Communications, and borderless networks. Many small businesses usually include startup companies that need routers and switches, and network storage systems while home users require broadband services dealing with cable modems. For the first time in six years, Cisco has launched a new re-branding with "Tomorrow starts here" and "Internet of Everything" campaigns to place the multinational corporation into a global leader for the next ten years in "connecting the previously unconnected and facilitate the IP address connectivity of people, data, processes and things through cloud computing applications and services" (Cisco, n.d).

HR WORK CULTURE

The Human Resources department of Cisco maintains about 700 Human Resources staff members who support the company's employees of 66,000 all around the globe. To manage and optimize such a large number, the corporation hires a team of Human Resource professionals whose job is to produce a training and developmental strategy for HR personnel. By using the WebEx Meeting Center, the employees conducted a highly successful pre-internship orientation session that greatly accelerated interns' time to productivity. From then on, the Human Resources department has used WebEx to transform how the function interacts with both prospective and current Cisco employees. (Casaubon, D. 2008)

Cisco has recently designed the Collaborative Connected Workplace Environment to reduce real estate costs and boost productivity and satisfaction. The new workplace design transformed the

company into a completely wireless environment for enhanced mobility. Cubicle walls were taken down to provide collaboration space that lets in more natural light as well as creating a more open and spacious atmosphere. The recent designs also enhanced employee flexibility by allowing them to have the option of their work setting, including a work station, open or close collaborative space, and to even work at home for a period of time. The new work settings provides the staff the opportunity to be more productive based on their choices since they can choose to work together or independently in an inviting, expansive, well-lit environment (Cisco IT Case Study, 2007).

SWOT ANALYSIS

One of the main core strengths of Cisco is their leading market position and a strong brand image. Cisco obtains 62% of the market share for IPTV products, 70% of the market share for security products, as well as 56% share of the market for wireless local area network products. By holding an enormous market share in several product categories in routing, switching, and mobility solutions, they have a competitive advantage over other similar companies while maintaining economies of scale for the corporation. Another main component in assisting their huge market share is their prominent brand image that has been recognized as one of the most desirable brand around the world. Their strong brand value makes it much easier in introducing new products into the market system (DATAMONITOR: Cisco, 2012, pp. 4).

 Due to Cisco being a significant multinational corporation, the company faces a major weakness in supply chain issues that lead to delays in order requirements. By outsourcing their manufacturing plans, they become dependent on suppliers from different countries and are limited in controls on delivery schedules. As a result, the company normally suffers from shortages of their supplies due to capacity and manufacturing issues which causes a change in the pricing of their products. In conclusion, Cisco's supply chain issues may ultimately affect the revenues and margins of the firm (DATAMONITOR: Cisco, 2012, pp. 5).

A large opportunity in the company is the chance of expanding through major acquisitions and strategic alliances. For instance, the acquisition of NDS Group in March 2012 will complement the production of Videoscape as well as increasing the company's opportunities in the market of service providers in other countries, such as India and China, where NDS Group has already instituted customer relations. Strategic alliances with main technology partners such as Citrix Systems would permit the corporation to strengthen its products and services and increase revenues in the upcoming years (DATAMONITOR: Cisco, 2012, pp. 7).

A key threat to Cisco is the increased competition from many similar companies such as Symantec, Netgear, Juniper Networks, and Brocade Communication Systems. Although Cisco maintains a massive brand image, these other expanding companies are going through rapid changes and offering alternative solutions with major advantages in networking and communication. The fierce rivalry between these companies may affect the financial conditions and market shares of Cisco in the near future (DATAMONITER: Cisco, 2012, pp. 8).

COMPANY II: GOOGLE

BACKGROUND

Google recently began in Stanford University in 1996 as a project by Sergey Brin and Larry Page to create a search engine that ranked websites according to the number of other websites that linked to that site. The domain website google.com was eventually registered on September 14th 1997 and the Google corporation was formed a year later in September 1998. By the end of 1998, Google search engine already had an index of about 60 million pages and was seen as "the future of the Web" by many stock market investors (Google, n.d.).

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

In the early years, the main service of Google was their innovative search engine that attracted a huge number of followers who enjoyed the simple design. In 2000, Google began selling advertisements that were connected to keywords searched, generating huge amounts of revenue. In 2004, Google launched their own email system, Gmail, which many online users use today due to its large amount of storage and efficiency (Wikipedia, n.d.). Today, Google has expanded its vast amount of web products and services that many people use on a daily basis such as the Google Chrome web browser, Google Maps, Picasa, YouTube, Google Drive, and even Google+ (Google, n.d.).

HR WORK CULTURE

Google's Human Resources department is not even called Human Resources but rather "People Operations", where they "bring the world's most innovative people to Google and build programs that help them thrive in the company." (Google, n.d.) In People Operations, Google uses people analytics to produce continuous innovation, an idea they think will dominate the marketplace. People analytics is the world's only data-driven HR function, replacing the old subjective decision-making approach in human resources. Many of their decisions such as Google's free food and wide range of fun activities in the workplace are based on data that has been thoroughly researched (Sullivan, J. 2013).

SWOT ANALYSIS

The biggest strength of the company is one that they started out with from the very beginning: their powerful search engine. About 60% of all the internet searches are made from Google's search engine. Even more, 90% of all mobile searches are conducted through Google when they entered the mobile market by acquiring the Android phone company. The powerful search engine uses leading technology such as PageRank to keep track of the relevancy of a page. Many companies struggle to compete with Google's accuracy. Thus, the company holds a strong market share while dominating the position as the world's leading search engine (DATAMONITOR: Google, pp. 4).

One of the weaknesses Google suffers from is the unfavorable revenue sharing in their mobile apps on the Android phone market. When competing with the market leader, Apple's App Store, Google is underperforming greatly when it comes to generating revenue. The creators of the apps on Google obtain 70% of the revenue while the remaining 30% is divided between Google, the carriers, and the payment processors. Whereas Apple's App store generated 4.9 billion dollars in revenue, Google only produced a mere 341 million dollars, a miniscule amount compared to Apple. A main component for the lack of success is due to the fact that Apple has been in the App business longer than Google (DATAMONITER: Google, pp. 7).

A major opportunity for Google is the increased growth in search advertisement that can lead to a rise in revenues for the corporation. With the new generation converting many businesses to online, the advertising industry will do the same, slowly shifting from offline to online ads. Most of the revenue from Google comes from advertising, specifically 96% of it. With estimations, paid search spend is assumed to increase 31% to 55.6 billion dollars in 2014. With a dominating brand image in search advertisements, Google will greatly benefit from the growth of the market in the near future (DATAMONITOR: Google, pp. 8).

The biggest threat to the Google Corporation is the attraction for many business lawsuits, as a result of the Motorola acquisition. Apple won a patent dispute a year before against Motorola for the special slide to unlock features on the smartphones. This decision will ultimately affect Android phones and manufactures in the near future. With many patent infringement problems to worry about, Google has a significant problem on their hands regarding the future of the Android smartphones. If there are too many legal problems to deal with that could potentially decrease profits while increasing costs, Google may leave the smartphone market altogether (DATAMONITOR: Google, pp. 9).

Another major ongoing lawsuit against Google was brought on by Oracle, after Google acquired Sun Microsystems Corporation in 2010. The lawsuit was for copyright and patent infringement on Java technology in the creation of the Android smartphones. Oracle asked for 1.2 billion dollars in damages but the two companies were unable to reach a settlement since then. Many of these lawsuits constitute an unfavorable reputation for the Android market, and ultimately to Google. Any negative verdict related to patent infringement or intellectual property rights in the near future may affect Google's financial conditions and operations (DATAMONITOR: Google, pp. 9).

CONCLUSION

CISCO

A comprehensive research of Cisco's company shows that working at this corporation provides a wonderful opportunity for the new generation. The company's main products and services focuses on web connectivity and internet resources, which is a subject matter that is familiar to many young adults in this era. Along with that, Cisco has a very innovative approach towards its internship program by using WebEx to facilitate productivity and can be a perfect chance for college students like me to get into the work field. The Collaborative Connected Workplace Environment is also very appealing as it enhances employee happiness by giving many people flexibility for their work environment. The new workplace design definitely complements the new generation of employees through innovation and would create an enjoyable experience coming to work every day.

GOOGLE

It is difficult to resist all the perks of working at Google, such as the free lunches and napping pods, but what is even more attractive about Google is the passion in their products and services as well as their drive for continuous innovation. Google is the only company that uses data-analytics for the Human Resources department which they renamed, "People Operations." Instead of subjective decisions, data analyses are used to make all their decisions and have shown to improve efficiency and employee satisfaction in the company. Many of their products and services are very well-known to people all around the world that use Google on a daily basis, from the search engine to their email. Hence, the success of the company seems very stable in the future due to their prominent brand image.

FINAL DECISION

After carefully studying these two companies inside and out, I have come to the conclusion that working for both of these firms would be the perfect career for me. Both of these multinational corporations place innovation as a critical factor to their success, such as Cisco's new workplace design to Google's very own People Operations. These two specific innovations appeal to me greatly as it shows how both companies value and respect their employees by taking new risks, money, and time to improve employee contentment. Being a part of either of these two major brand companies would be a privilege since I know my creativity and voice will be heard, acknowledged and appreciated.

NEXT STEPS

Following this report, I have obtained a better knowledge of my two main companies to work for. Both companies are very competitive when it comes to employment, so a main goal for me is to maintain my high grade point average through my college courses and hopefully graduate in 2015 with my degree in business administration. Meanwhile, I will also apply for internship opportunities in these companies and follow up on LinkedIn as well as expanding my network with members of the professional Fraternity that I am in who are currently working in these two companies. Even more, I will continually update my resume with relevant classes and other internship experience to cater to each company when I start applying for internships. If I am able to obtain an internship at either company, it is a main priority of mine to exceed on the job so that after my performance evaluation at the end of the internship, I am offered a full-time position upon graduation.

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