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How Google Works



Synopsis

Google Executive Chairman and ex-CEO Eric Schmidt and former SVP of Products Jonathan Rosenberg came to Google over a decade ago as proven technology executives. At the time, the company was already well-known for doing things differently, reflecting the visionary--and frequently contrarian--principles of founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin. If Eric and Jonathan were going to succeed, they realized they would have to relearn everything they thought they knew about management and business. Today, Google is a global icon that regularly pushes the boundaries of innovation in a variety of fields. *HOW GOOGLE WORKS* is an entertaining, page-turning primer containing lessons that Eric and Jonathan learned as they helped build the company. The authors explain how technology has shifted the balance of power from companies to consumers, and that the only way to succeed in this ever-changing landscape is to create superior products and attract a new breed of multifaceted employees whom Eric and Jonathan dub "smart creatives." Covering topics including corporate culture, strategy, talent, decision-making, communication, innovation, and dealing with disruption, the authors illustrate management maxims ("Consensus requires dissension," "Exile knaves but fight for divas," "Think 10X, not 10%") with numerous insider anecdotes from Google's history, many of which are shared here for the first time. In an era when everything is speeding up, the best way for businesses to succeed is to attract smart-creative people and give them an environment where they can thrive at scale. *HOW GOOGLE WORKS* explains how to do just that.

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Customer Reviews

Eric and Jonathan cover a vast territory in their engaging discussion of Google's leadership in our software driven era. While their Google specific comments are singularly informed and compelling, I suspect their most valuable lessons are those applicable to virtually any venture. Many of these are recurring thematics within discussions of modern leadership, but rarely have so many useful concepts been so well and accessibly summarized as in "How." Despite 30 plus years in the business I furiously jotted margin notes throughout the book, reminding myself for instance, of the primacy of purpose, as illustrated by the story of a company, beginning with why it is important that it exists; the defining competitive separation afforded by traction and momentum or, get big fast; speed kills; iteration informs. This is a great read; informative, smart and wise, as reflected by their admiration of John Wooden and his aphorism "it's what you learn after you know it all that counts." For those interested I'll summarize below my 'Top 10' of the books many quality, illustrative elements. There are abundant actionable insights in this book and of course, the occasional tendril of presumption. Overall, my sentiment about the book is summarized by my ordering copies for my sons, nieces and nephews, regardless of the sectors they work within, or majors they are pursuing. My 'Top 10' of appreciated observations: 1. Crowded work spaces fuel contagious energy and spontaneity; the physical presence of team members matters. 2. Keep management lean, with numerous direct reports per manager to assure leadership is crisp and micro-management rare. 3.

Google is an admirable company and an enviable place to work. In 'How Google Works,' Schmidt and Rosenberg encourage other companies should follow its style of leadership. That's a big mistake. While Google is very successful in its fast-growing high-technology search and associated ad business, most companies operate in a far different environment not likely to benefit from the Google approach. Established trucking, grocery store, newspaper, restaurant, auto manufacturers, etc. companies should follow Google's very expensive creativity and operational freedom model - eg. allowing employees to spend 20% of their time on anything they want? No way. One could also readily assert that Google's success in its basic search and ad business covers up major errors in other areas - for example, it has spent billions on developing the software and technology for driverless cars. More for fast Internet in selected areas. Why? What evidence is there that Google will ever recover a dime for its efforts? However, Google does represent some obviously solid thinking applicable to those thinking of establishing a new business, especially those centered around the Internet. And I'd love to see large healthcare organizations follow some of their key observations. And everyone can benefit from reading their emphasis on the customer being the foundation of a business, and taking note of a Google 'rule of thumb' - at least half its employees

should be 'engineers' (technical experts). More important, their observation that product excellence is now paramount to business success. Customers have never been better informed or had more choices. It is no longer possible for overwhelming marketing strength to turn poor products into winners.

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