



慶應義塾大学ビジネス・スクール

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Google¹: How can creativity be managed?

Ten miles north of San Jose International Airport, there is a city called “Mountain View”, just 15 minutes’ drive along Interstate 101 towards San Francisco. After driving down the exit ramp, I turned right into a local road and kept driving. Under a glorious blue sky, I drove through a spacious parkland covered with lush grass and clusters of trees and a quiet residential area featuring rows of one-story detached houses. However, this landscape was soon replaced by rough-looking exposed soil characteristic of a newly-developed area. Shortly after entering this section of the development area, the vast campus of the headquarters of Google Inc. came into view on my right.

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Formerly the headquarters of Silicon Graphics Inc (SGI), the whole site complete with the buildings has been taken over by Google. Walking through the campus with those thoughts in my mind, I was reminded of how times had changed. Reminiscent of a university campus, I saw a lot of young people (of course Google employees) riding bicycles and groups of people engaged in discussion as they walked with a drink bottle in one hand. In the middle of the campus, there were beach volleyball courts, where a game was under way. Vaguely thinking that co-founder Sergey Brin might be among those people as I had heard that he often played volleyball here, I headed towards the receptionist’s desk of the building I was visiting. I thought to myself, “So this is the famous Google headquarters, a magnet for all those exceptionally talented job seekers from all over the world.

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What is Google?

“Google is an Internet search engine developed by Google Inc., a company co-founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, who were Ph.D. students at Stanford University at the time. Over the years, the company has developed and enhanced various products, such as efficient Internet search techniques and tools, including Google Toolbar, an Internet search tool which lets the user perform a

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¹ This case has been compiled by Prof. Masahiro Okada, an associate professor at Keio Business School, based on interviews conducted in August 2005 at the headquarters of Google Inc. (1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043) and Google Japan Inc. (F6, Cerulean Tower, 26-1, Sakuragaoka-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, 150-8512), as well as published data. It is a teaching material prepared to facilitate class discussion through the use of the case method, and as such is not meant to comment on the quality of management in any way (first draft January 2006). The case has been published by Keio Business School (1-1, Hiyoshi Honcho 2-chome, Kohoku-ku, Yokohama City, Kanagawa Pref. 223-8523, telephone 045-564-2444, e-mail case@kbs.keio.ac.jp), and all inquiries regarding the reproduction or any other use thereof shall be directed thereto. The reproduction of this report or any part thereof is prohibited, along with its incorporation into a search system, its use in a spreadsheet and its transmission (electronically, mechanically, via photocopying, sound recording, video recording or in any other form or shape). Copyright © 2005 by Masahiro Okada

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