

## **Google's Culture: Genius That Demolishes**

Khaliq Ahmad\*  
Research Professor, Putra Business School, Serdang, Malaysia.  
Email: khaliq@putrabs.edu.my

Muhammad Amin Jailani  
Putra Business School, Serdang, Malaysia  
Email: pbs21101024@grad.putrabs.edu.my

Harvend Anbarasu  
Putra Business School, Serdang, Malaysia  
Email: pbs21101038@grad.putrabs.edu.my

Sulthan Salahudeen Mohamed Ali Jinna,  
Putra Business School, Serdang, Malaysia  
Email: pbs21201155@grad.putrabs.edu.my

Krishnamalar Shamugam,  
Putra Business School, Serdang, Malaysia  
Email: pbs21101036@grad.putrabs.edu.my

A.F.M. Kabir Anwar  
Putra Business School, Serdang, Malaysia  
Email: pbs21201140@grad.putrabs.edu.my

\* Corresponding author

**Abstract:** *Despite winning the Best Global Company Culture 2021, Alphabet Inc. (Google) is struggling with the miserably emerging culture issues from the inside. This world-most-visited website, Google headquartered in Mountain View, California, has offices in more than 70 countries around the world. Hence, the company employs more than 100,000 people with diverse backgrounds. It seems Google offers the most diverse organizational culture but why are they not even listed in the Fortune Top 25 World's Best Workplace 2021? What was happening in their widely known predominant open culture when 20,000 employees and contractors left the company's offices after The New York Times exposed the controversial exit of their most "aberrant genius" of Android creator Andy Rubin in November 2018? How this aberrant genius that was believed by the former CEO, Eric Schmidt as an authentic ingredient of Google's success is killing the organization from the inside? This is an issue of deteriorating corporate culture that this case study will discover to reveal the importance of managing culture in the perspective of ethics and professionalism.*

**Keywords:** Organisation Culture; Managing Culture; Ethics; Professionalism.

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## **BACKGROUND**

Mr. Andy Rubin joined Google in 2005. He contributed to the development of Android, the operating system that powers 80% of smartphones today, throughout the following few years.

The success story of Mr. Rubin lies in the development of android and the positioning of Google as a major force on desktop computers and the availability of Google's maps, email, and web browsers on everyday mobile devices. Billions of dollars in revenue were also generated by Android-based mobile apps and advertisements. All of these achievements have placed Rubin in an esteemed position in Google which ultimately led the top management to neglect the dark side of his ethics and character.

Many of his subordinates and colleagues accused Mr. Rubin of humiliating others and having extramarital relationships with other women in the office. Even the security staff found bondage sex videos on his computer and informed Google's top management. They didn't take any hard steps against him except only docking his bonus. Consequently, in 2011, he had a consensual relationship with a female employee of the Android team who did not work for him. Mr. Rubin's ex-wife Rie Rubin divorced him claiming that while they were married, he had several "ownership relationships" with other women, paying them hundreds of thousands of dollars.

According to two former Google executives with knowledge of the circumstances, Mr. Rubin began receiving about \$20 million a year in salary, bonuses, and stock-based compensation in 2011 after being named a "Senior Vice President" at Google. Mr. Rubin received a \$14 million loan in 2012 to purchase a Japanese beachfront estate.

Instead of amending his ethics, morale, and character with the rise of his career ladder, he continued to maintain unfair and illegal relationships with women. The matter got worse when he started dating another woman from the Android section in 2012. By 2013, she had lost interest and wanted to end things but was concerned about how it would impact her career. She agreed to meet Mr. Rubin at a hotel where she claimed he coerced her into having oral sex. The relationship was ended by the incident.

The woman complained to Google's human resources division in 2014, according to the people, and then Google started an investigation. While the inquiry was still going on, Mr. Rubin got a stock grant of \$150 million which was quite unusual as per Google's policy. Google's CEO Mr. Page said he believed Mr. Rubin was never fairly compensated for his work on Android. It presented a horrific working culture of Google to its employees. A characterless man devoid of morale and ethics is being honored and paid instead of a rigorous sexual harassment complaint.

Ultimately Google's investigation found it true, and Mr. Page decided to fire Mr. Rubin. Google ultimately gave Mr. Rubin \$90 million. He would receive \$2.5 million per month for the first two years of the deal and \$1.25 million per month for the following two. Additionally, Google put off paying back the \$14 million loan he took. Even Mr. Page tried to make the farewell of Mr. Rubin an amicable one. Mr. Rubin received statements of gratitude from Google's top management.

## **GOOGLE AND ITS INDUSTRY OVERVIEW**

Larry Brin and Larry Page are the founders of Google Inc in 1997 in a Menlo Park garage. After that, they announced, "Google is not a conventional company, we do not intend to become one." They proved it later by making Google Inc one of the world's most powerful and advanced companies.

As of today, Google is under its parent company named Alphabet, part of the evolution that began in 2015 intending to speed up the overall development of the company in all verticals. As the entire avenues of modern technology are covered by Alphabet or Google, anyone who wants to do a Google company analysis needs to clear up his schedule.

As of today, in the IT industry only Amazon, Microsoft, and Apple are bigger than Google as per their balance sheets. All these companies are valued at a trillion dollars, today. Google is not stopping itself with the horizons of search engines and cloud-based services. But they are into space exploration, modern robotics, artificial intelligence, health-related activities, and even the field of harnessing the wind.

During the early days, the ventures at Google covered many innovations that helped to shape the modern technology world. In 2020, considering many facts the founders decided to stay on board and they appointed Mr. Sundar Pichai as the new CEO of Google and its parent company Alphabet as well. They have morphed into several divisions under the group, among them, Sidewalk Labs (smart city endeavours), Other Bets (space R&D), Verily (disease prevention), and Calico (health).

The shares of Google in the US stock exchanges will be mentioned as GOOG as non-voting shares and GOOGL as voting shares. The top three shares of the company are owned by Brin, Page, and former CEO Eric. When Pichai took over as CEO in December 2019, GOOG stock sustained its value of over \$1,300 per share. The company's market cap was over \$855 billion, and it employed nearly 104,000 people around the world.

Google and its parent company Alphabet are changed and continue to change the world every day through their activities through plenty of their divisions. The company is spending so much on its R&D, so the products of the company are becoming promising enough. Their products are used by billions of people across the world and there is no sign of declining on it; instead, this grows spontaneously.

Besides the above, there are many other ventures under Google. Companies like Waymo the automobile vehicle division of Google, CapitalG the funding company, Deepmind the AI & AML Company, and Jigsaw an online security improvement company. We should not forget their holdings like Pixel-a phone company, YouTube-the revolutionary video platform, and last but not least Android-the phone OS Company. Android is one of the best acquisition companies of Google and Alphabet so far which this case study will discover.

## **THE GENIUS THAT DEMOLISHES**

Google has been struggling with many underlying issues within its organisation. One major source of those issues is the company's acceptance of aberrant geniuses. When Andy Rubin, the creator of Android, left Google in 2014, he took with him a \$90 million exit package. That's a lot of money for anyone to walk away with, but it is especially noteworthy when you consider that Rubin was leaving the company he helped build. So, what happened? How did a once-valued Google employee become disgruntled enough to leave with such a hefty payout? The answer, it seems, lies in Rubin's aberrant genius. Aberrant genius is a term used to describe someone so talented and creative that they often flout the rules and expectations of those around them. This can lead to tension and conflict within an organization, as other employees feel that they have to constantly adjust their behaviour to accommodate the aberrant genius.

In Rubin's case, his aberrant genius led him to clash with Google's increasingly organizational culture. Rubin was known for his informal and unstructured approach to work, which didn't always fit well with the more regimented way that Google was run. This led to friction between Rubin and his colleagues and eventually led to his departure from the company.

This has been an emerging issue that the organization is struggling to cope with or overcome. This is solely because these individuals are the driving force behind their product excellence, thus it is difficult to offload them in many ways. This ever-growing issue can be curbed by having a diverse field in the company. For instance, the lacking diversity in its workforce its work in China leads the organization to accept aberrant geniuses. A diversified culture among the people will aid in having a better understanding and curb these issues. Effective communication is highly appreciated in dealing with these issues as it will lead many parties to have a balanced chance and rights to gain their deserved ranks in the organisation.

## **PROTAGONIST LEADERS**

Google has a long history of embracing aberrant geniuses. One of the company's co-founders, Andy Rubin, was known for his rebellious streak and disregard for authority. Eric Schmidt, who served as Google's CEO from 2001 to 2011, was also known for this particular belief. Despite their often-disruptive behaviour, aberrant geniuses can be extremely valuable assets to organisations. Their unique perspectives can help to challenge the status quo and spur innovation. In Google's case, the company has consistently been one of the most innovative firms in the world, and its embrace of aberrant geniuses has played a role in its success. Unfortunately, Google explored and found trustworthy cases from a female representative, who said Rubin constrained her to perform oral sex in a lodging in 2013. Before long, Larry Page, Google's previous CEO, requested his acquiescence. However, the organization applies the Aberrant genius culture of previous Android head Andy Rubin, who left Google in 2014 with a \$90 million leave bundle after being blamed for pressuring a collaborator to perform oral sex. Be that as it may, the organisation kept on paying him a huge number of dollars in portions of \$2 million per month for a very long time.

Page commended Rubin when he left the organisation, saying in a 2014 public explanation that he needed to want Andy to enjoy all that life has to offer with what's a straightaway with Android, he made something genuinely wonderful - with a billion or more cheerful clients. Google might have terminated Mr. Rubin and paid him hardly anything on the exit plan. All things considered, the organisation gave him a \$90 million leave bundle, paid in portions of about \$2 million per month for quite a long time, said two individuals with information on the terms. The last installment is planned for the following month.

Mr. Rubin was one of three chiefs that Google safeguarded throughout the last 10 years after they were blamed for sexual wrongdoing. In two cases, it removed senior chiefs, however, mellowed the pass up paying them a huge number of dollars as they left, even though it had no lawful commitment to do as such. In a third, the leader stayed in a profoundly repaid post at the organisation. Each time Google remained quiet about the allegations against the men.

## **EPILOGUE**

Ethics and professionalism should be taken into scrutiny as this is extremely important in an organisation. Every individual at each rank should maintain these ethics as it will show the dynamism of the organisation and thus the values and goals can be met. In Google's issue, to get rid of the former Android Head, Andy Rubin, they presented him with an exit package of

\$90M which created uproar among other employees and led to mass walkout from their employees. This should not be the way as it will lead to more problems as it can be an advantage to other employees by getting away with "lucrative packages" to solve the issue. The management should be professional and ethically clinical in dealing aggressively as the goals and values of the company are kept intact.

Maintaining professionalism and ethics in every way possible is key in developing a stable organisation. Professional ethics is important because it dictates to professionals a series of rules related to the way professional acts towards the people with whom he or she relates professionally. When dealing with aberrant genius in Google, it is important to maintain the highest levels of ethics and professionalism. This means being open to new ideas and perspectives, but also being willing to have difficult conversations when necessary. It can be tempting to try to sweep aberrant genius under the rug, but doing so can create bigger problems down the road. Instead, it is best to address aberrant genius head-on in a way that is respectful and constructive.

Theoretically, from a philosophical point of view, ethics has to do with morality and with the way people act in the sense of goodness or badness. Moreover, maintaining a diversified cultural organisation is essential to any company's goals and values. By understanding that there are cultural differences between people of different backgrounds, people will be more mindful and sensitive to those differences, so you can adapt and develop greater insight on how to best manage and work with a diverse team.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How could Google handle an aberrant genius like Andy Rubin by appreciating their professional achievements and contribution to the company, while also keeping an eye on their aberrant behaviour?
2. What other behaviours and qualities should Google consider for hiring to keep them survive in the most competitive and dynamic IT industry?
3. While it's important to encourage creativity and out-of-the-box thinking, there needs to be a balance between letting your employees run wild and keeping them in check. Is that enough to look into ethics and professionalism to equalise between those two needs in Google?

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