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10-2 Company Culture

Google adopted a decentralized approach to empower its employees. Its corporate headquarters in Mountain View, California, is known as the Googleplex and consists of a campus containing such amenities as on-site gyms and swimming pools, an outdoor volleyball court, and even high-tech “nap pods” for optimized downtime. When Sergey Brin and Larry Page founded the company, they recognized employees had to put in long hours to make the company not only successful but flexible enough to adapt to the changing environment. Thus, Google employees are provided with benefits to make the complex their second home. The company strives to make its corporate culture fun and innovative.

At the same time, Google works to ensure it has top talent at the company. While it reinvents the office experience, it also takes different tactics in recruiting to ensure it hires the most creative, talented individuals. For instance, Google recruiters take a bottom-up approach when reading résumés. Recognizing that top items such as education and work experience do not always guarantee the applicant is innovative, some Google recruiters start at the bottom of the résumé where applicants put more creative information. This type of mentality—being more concerned with hiring creative people than those who excelled in school—meshed well with Google’s famous informal policy of allowing employees to spend up to 20 percent of the workweek pursuing their own unique projects. Not only did this policy make employees feel empowered, it led to some of Google’s standout products including Gmail and key improvements to AdSense. However, in 2013 this “20% time” policy was largely discontinued after Google determined it was splitting its focus among too many projects. It decided to commit itself to putting “more wood behind fewer arrows.” Nevertheless, Google’s innovative company culture is one of the major reasons why it has become successful in so many different market niches.



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