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At Google, It Takes a Village To Hire an Employee

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ORLANDO, FLA.—Want to work for Google? Be prepared to handle the crowd.

The \$167 billion company with more than 19,000 employees uses “crowd sourcing” when it comes to making hiring decisions. So said Google’s Manager of HR Technology and Operations Melissa Karp during the recent International Human Resource Information Management systems conference.

The company’s web site states: “Virtually every person who interviews at Google talks to at least four interviewers, drawn from both management and potential colleagues. Everyone’s opinion counts, ensuring our hiring process is fair while maintaining high standards as we grow.”

Released in June 2008, a *Universum IDEAL Employer Survey* found that nearly one in five undergraduate students (17 percent) chose the web’s leading search engine as their ideal employer.

And why not?

According to its job site, not only does Google provide excellent benefits, it also pays for lunch, dinner and snacks, offers on-site oil changes, car washes, dry cleaning, massage therapy, a gym, a hair stylist, fitness classes and bike repairs, and it even offers new parents a “take-out benefit” through which they can expense up to \$500 for take-out meals during the first four weeks that they’re home with their newborn. Tack on back-up child care, tuition reimbursement, movie day, holiday parties, a ski trip—there’s actually too many perks to mention.

So with a work culture unlike any other—it stands to reason its hiring processes are unique, too.

Wisdom of the Crowds

Google’s hiring premise is based on James Surowiecki’s *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies and Nations* (2004), which, in short, states that any given group of people is always smarter than any given expert. Google also uses the basic premise behind the creation of Wikipedia that “people are willing to contribute to the collective knowledge, especially if they receive information in return.”

Google’s not the only one using crowd sourcing to get things done. According to *Wired.com*, Lego encourages customers to design robot operating systems and Lego sets; Zazzle.com allows users to place their designs on mugs, shirts, posters and the like and gives the designers a cut if people buy them. Even the Beastie Boys’ latest concert movie, whose name we can’t divulge, was shot by 50 fans using Hi8 cameras.



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