

7. What is your view of performance appraisals? How can they be improved?
8. What pay system do you prefer? Why is this your preference?
9. Why don't most employees realize how expensive benefits are and how much they contribute to compensation cost?
10. Are unions greedy because they expect workers to receive more than they are worth, or is management greedy because it takes excessive salaries and gives too large a share of the profits to the owners?

... CASE: GOOGLE'S HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Think it's easy to work in the human resources department at Google? Despite being a dream job for many, is it possible that people actually want to leave Google?

As it turns out, a lot of women were leaving Google. The company, known for its happy employees, asked why.

Rather than a human resources office, Google refers to its department as People Operations. The mission of People Operations is as follows:

In People Operations (you probably know us better as "Human Resources"), we "find them, grow them, and keep them"—bringing the world's most innovative people to Google and building programs that help them thrive. Whether recruiting the next great Googler, refining our core programs, developing talent or simply looking for ways to inject more fun into the lives of our Googlers, we bring a data-driven approach that is reinventing the human resource field.¹

So, why were these women leaving Google? Google used its analytical skills to study the problem and found that their maternity leave plan did not match the working mother's needs and the newborns they were now caring for.² Google's maternity policy previously allowed for 12 weeks of fully paid and vested leave. A more flexible plan was created that allowed new mothers to take a reasonable amount of time off as needed. The new maternity plan offered biological mothers 18 to 22 weeks of paid maternity leave to better match the significant development that occurs in children between the 12- and 18-month-old range.³ Mothers also now had the ability to split up maternity leave rather than using it all in one continuous period. This allowed for new mothers to work a few months after giving birth, and then take off the remaining time left on their maternity leave.⁴ The policy change proved to be effective. Google found that returning mothers left at half the rate they were leaving at previously.⁵

Google is often rated the best company in the world to work for by *Fortune* magazine.⁶ What has kept Google in this standing for so long? Does Google know something that the rest of the world doesn't? Is it the free gourmet

food, onsite laundry, or long lunch tables to encourage mingling among employees?

Human resources managers are faced with many daily decisions on how best to handle new and current employee situations. As Prasad Setty from People Operations said, "We make thousands of people decisions every day—who we should hire, how much we should pay them, who we should promote, who we should let go of. What we try to do is bring the same level of rigor to people decisions that we do to engineering decisions. Our mission is to have *all* people decisions be informed by data."

Or, to put it in a less data-derived context, "If you like your job, but for all that, it should be—and could be—something more. So why isn't it?"⁷ Hopefully, every human resources department can help its employees reach their full potential.

Case Questions

1. Which human resources management process was most likely the least important for Google?
2. Which human resources management process was the problem with Google's female employees?
3. Does Google practice effective strategic human resources planning?
4. From reading the case, does it seem that Google gets most of its employees from internal or external recruiting?
5. How did Google change its human resources management process regarding maternity leave?

Cumulative Case Questions

6. Explain how changes in the external environment resulted in changes in the internal environment at Google (Chapter 2).
7. What type of strategy is Google currently pursuing? (Chapter 4)
8. How did Google manage diversity in the case? (Chapter 6)

Case References

1. Google website, <http://www.google.com/about/jobs/teams/people-operations/>, accessed October 2, 2013.