We are building a future, together.
Corporate Communication Strategy

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Table of contents

1 The Context
2 The Situation Analysis
3 The Stakeholder Analysis
4 The Communication Objective
5 The Communication channel
6 The Implement
7 The Evaluation
8 The Timeline & Budget
9 References
The Context

Google had a strong financial performance on 2013. They not only had met their financial obligations, but also performed far better than expected. The latest Google financial report (third quarter 2013) shows that Google stock surpasses US$1000 for first time, and according to Siliconrepublic, Google noted a third-quarter net profit of US$2.97bn – a rise of 36.5pc – amounting to US$8.75 per share. The strong financial performance can also been traced on the share price. Google's stock price rose 58.4 percent in 2013, breaking the $1,000 mark for the first time, while annual revenue increased 21 percent to $55.5 billion. Most of the stakeholders are confident and positive about company’s future because its financial performance. According to CNN, Google revealed Tuesday that its former CEO, Eric Schmidt, will receive $106 million in bonuses based on the search giant's 2013 performance. This news generated lots of coverage and business reviews along with blogs, mostly of people showed their confidence about Google’s financial performance. Moreover, Socialmention shows the sentiment towards Google is either positive (approximately 50%) or neutral (approximately 80%).

However, the company’s performance in China doesn’t seem to be very optimistic. According to China Internet Watch’s latest report, Google’s China search engine market share by revenue in Q4 2013 accounted for just 11.9%, which was roughly 65 percent lower than Baidu (76.6%), the China search engine giant.
The statistic makes a striking contrast compared to the search engine market in other countries in the global market like UK. (See pie chart below)

(Source: http://theeword.co.uk/info/search_engine_market.html)

As the chart shows, Baidu held its leading position in China search engine market. Both its efforts on PC and mobile devices contributed to its achievements. However, Google China’s market share dropped slightly as the competition among search engines became more competitive. What’s more, Google had been losing its product managers and IT elites in China, Google’s market share was encroached bit by bit. It's
worth noting that, prior to pulling out of the country, Google’s search engine controlled 29% of the Chinese market.

This situation is mainly because Google pulled out of China in 2010 as a result of numerous hacking attacks on the U.S. that originated from inside the country. Despite the fact that China has more than 560 million people who use the Internet, Google has no plans to return its services there. CNET reports that during Google’s annual shareholder meeting on Thursday, chairman and former CEO Eric Schmidt said he was “troubled by continued reports of censorship and spying on people” by the Chinese government. He explained that until China changes the way it treats its citizens, Google has no plans to invest more resources into the country.

Anyway, China is too tempting a market for Google to write off. Many clues show Google is planning going back to China. According to local media sources, it appears that over the weekend, the homepage of the Chinese Google domain was quietly made accessible. Moreover, Google Chairman Eric Schmidt said on January that the tech giant's encryption services could eventually open up countries with stringent censorship rules, which means China is definitely a jigsaw of company’s future plan.

The Situation Analysis

Strengths
• Google owns one of the most powerful brands in the world, so popular that the company’s brand name is used as a verb.
• Technological strength. The more we use Google, the better the company gets at building its gigantic database of relevant information. That's a self-sustaining competitive advantage: more popularity means a better product, which makes the services more useful and demanded.
• The company is financially very solid, it generates big cash flows from its online advertising business and reinvests heavily for growth in different areas.
• Projects like the company's self-driving car, Google glasses and fibre optic network capabilities show that Google is still a leading innovator.
• In 2009, one year before Google quit Chinese market, 700 people employed at Google Chinese offices, $300 million revenues were create in this year, and it accounts for 1% of corporate revenues. The market share was 24%

Weaknesses
• Necessary censorship in China (The great firewall, which blocks Youtube and some other Google services)
• Google do not have strong relationship with Chinese government, which would be a vital problem because their competitor Baidu have a solid government background.
• Google have not been familiar with Chinese upcoming university graduates.
• Patent litigations, privacy issues, lawsuits and all kind of regulations can be a risk factor for Google.
• Google have to rebuild its reputation in China.
• Google does not have too much CSR campaign in China.

Opportunities

• China has a massive internet market of which Google possesses 16.6% of the market, second by a large margin to Baidu, so the company still has a lot of room to grow in this massive market.
• Google has a very valuable and unique asset in Youtube. The biggest online video platform in the world could become a money making machine via advertising and/or premium content in the following years. It will be very competitive compared with Chinese video sites like Youku.
• Gmail, Chrome, Google Docs and Google Maps are just a few examples. The company owns an enormous ecosystem of services and applications which offer plenty of opportunities for further growth.
• The company has the scale and financial resources to acquire promising technologies and potential competitors. They can acquire some Chinese local companies if they need.

The Competitors

Censorship

The Chinese Internet censorship, as known as the great firewall, is conducted under a wide variety of laws and administrative regulations. Google's YouTube video service has been inaccessible in China since 2009, while access to other services in China are blocked sporadically.


Anyway, according to [Wall Street Journal](http://www.wsj.com), Google’s executive chairman Eric Schmidt has already expressed his view that government censorship can be ended within a decade with the help of encryption, and now he’s singled out China where Google will work on doing so.

Search engine Market

Major competitors of Google in Chinese search engine market include Baidu and Microsoft. Baidu is the leading search engine in China, and battles ferociously with Google for market share. Microsoft recently launched its version of the search engine Bing, and since has launched an advertisement
campaign in favor of Bing.

Mobile Device Market
There is not much difference as other countries in Chinese mobile device market. Apple is still the biggest competitor. Apple owns the high-end markets in smartphones and tablets, and a huge ecosystem for its products. The Cupertino giant has recently renewed its line of products, and will probably gain market share versus Android over the next months. Google and Apple can coexist and both be very profitable, but the competitive tension has been increasing lately, and that's a reason for concern.

The Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder is a person, group, or organisation that can affect or be affected by an organisation's actions, objectives, and policies. Stakeholders have varying needs and different stakeholders are entitled to different considerations.

Google has a responsibility to manage its operations for the benefit of its stakeholders. Stakeholders include not only the shareholders of the company’s stock, but also the employees, customers, suppliers, trade associations, and community. Google’s decisions may be influenced by the government, activist groups, and the media, all who have their own agendas and responsibilities to the people they serve. Each stakeholder has a relationship with Google and this relationship is the source of the stakeholder’s power to affect Google’s decisions. Google’s distributed business model ensures that no stakeholder has a level of importance that could alone change the direction of the company, but the way that the mass of web users, media, and governments interpret their activity could influence the company’s objectives.

This communication strategy plan will focus at recruiting skilled graduate trainees on Chinese market, for the sake of Google’s future globalization strategy. Through this communication plan, we seek to show an attitude that Google values global talent including Chinese graduates.

In order to make an effective communication strategy for Google to recruit skilled graduate trainees, this analysis will mainly look at Google’s stakeholders who have power and influence for the purpose. To identify the audience, I will firstly use a stakeholder analysis matrix to find power stakeholders (key stakeholders), and then I will try to identify their influence by the use of the Power versus interest grid adapted from Eden and Ackermann (Making Strategy, 1998).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Stakeholder Interests</th>
<th>Power and Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>The news towards the company</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Salaries &amp; wages, Job</td>
<td>Long-term development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>Security, Job satisfaction, Status, Diversity</td>
<td>of Chinese Market, Service quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Product availability, Reliable quality, Customer service</td>
<td>Revenue, Company Reputation, Word of mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Payment of taxes, Ensure legal working practices</td>
<td>Regulation, subsidies, taxation, planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>Long term contracts, prompt payment, Growth of purchasing.</td>
<td>Price, Quality, Product availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shareholders</td>
<td>Profit growth, Share price growth, Dividends</td>
<td>Election of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Environment, local jobs, local impact</td>
<td>Reputation, Goodwill, Government relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>More job position and a new choice of career path</td>
<td>Offer information, support the campaign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Power versus interest grid**

- **Meet their needs**
  - Customers
  - Employee

- **Key player**
  - Board of Directors
  - Shareholders
  - Government
  - Customers
  - Industry Association
  - Universities

- **Least important**
  - Activist Groups
  - Competitor
  - Board of Directors

- **Show consideration**
  - Media
  - Community
In this communication plan, some messages will be conveyed to the audiences with emphasise of different elements. To be specific:

**For Customers:** recruiting Chinese talent will greatly benefit Chinese customers with offering whole Google services in Mainland China and create Chinese characterised service in the future. In addition, global customers will benefit by diversification of the Google services and contents. For example: Chinese results in Google search engine, Chinese content’s on YouTube and Chinese data on Google map.

**For Shareholders:** re-entry into the Chinese market means Google further steps up in terms of globalization, more importantly, the revenue will increase in the near future.

**For Employee:** new blood will join the Google family.

**For Media:** many news story idea and angles will be created.

**Government:** the contribution of taxes and creations of job positions in China.

**Industry Association:** promote healthy development and offer more skilled talent for the Chinese Industrial talent.

Corporate communications will seek to drive reputation through the introduction and consistent use of a single key message, to be used in all appropriate communications, the key message is: we are building a future, together.

**The Communication Objective**

The market size of Chinese Internet and Mobile are increasing significantly these years. As Google has a responsibility to manage its operations for the maximum benefit of its stakeholders, there is unlikely that Google can no longer give up on one of the most potential markets in the world.

For the preparation of re-entry into the Chinese market, a communication strategy of recruiting skilled graduate trainees will be given. The aim of this corporate communication is to raise the company’s profile and cultivate the Chinese market’s goodwill, while for the reserve of future management talents who are familiar with
China’s business environment. The objective of this communication is defined by internal and external.

**Internal**
- To position China as an important part of Google’s future plan.
- To improve staff engagement and motivation by bringing in Chinese talent.
- To ensure company have enough reserve of talents who are familiar with Chinese market for the preparation to turn back into China.

**External**
- To tell the public and stakeholders that Google values Chinese market and global talent.
- To build relationship with Chinese public, government, Industry association and Media.
- To build stakeholder’s confidence about Google’s future financial performance.
- To enhance the company image as market leader.

**The Communication channel**

A proactive approach to communication, maintaining and developing effective two-way communication and working closely with our key partners are essential components of any activity. In order to implement the corporate communication effectively, a list of communication channel is selected:
The media focus will be Google’s future strategy structure and Google’s first time trainee programme facing Chinese graduates.

The Implementation

The Corporate communication will mainly implemented by Google’s communication department, with collaboration with Google’s PR and HR team. To deliver overall objectives with available resources, and rise to the challenge of re-entry Chinese market, the Corporate communications will consistently deploy pro-active internal and external communications to deliver our communication purpose, and to build and enhance Google’s reputation, with clear focus on efficiency and value-for-money.

This overall strategy sets out the key message and themes that will be used to consistently communicate Google’s priorities for the country, the audience, approach to research and evaluation, and the overall strategy in the four key areas: Recruiting Campaign, Marketing Communication (including use of social media), Media Relations and internal communications.
The communication is the responsibility of every member of the Google’s communication, Human Resource and Public Relations team. The communication implement structure is shown below.

Priorities for Action

**Priority 1**: Position China as a part of Google’s future plan.

**Initiative**: Develop a series of campaign by recruiting Chinese skilled talent from universities.

In order to prepare for the future moves, Google will start by recruiting talent using a campaign named “we are building a future, together.” To ensure the company has enough reserve of talent who familiar with Chinese market for the preparation to turn back into China. The campaign will integrate many activities and media, for example: career talk from Google’s current employees, trainee position placement on the job-hunting TV programme and Google overseas workplace visiting.

**Initiative**: Develop a key account strategy for media and Consumer influencers in priority markets

To effectively increase the amount of coverage that reaches our audiences, the communications team will develop a program seeking to raise awareness of the fact
that Google is very close to returning in China. A key account strategy allows our team to set criteria that will prioritize media and influencers, evaluate our success by contact and continue to nurture the most productive relationships.

**Initiative: Online Community engagement**

Our communication team will speak to audiences among all the social media sites, forums and specialised Internet communities, dedicating to maintain a multi-benefit relationship and in order to deliver a two-way communication with all our stakeholders.

**Priority 1 expected outcomes:**

- Consistent strategy to inform the execution of communications.
- Raise awareness of Google’s future moves
- Increase amount of media coverage

**Priority 2: Showcase the fact that Google cares about Chinese market and wants to create value for Chinese consumer**

**Initiative: Develop a media relations program that leverages the trainee programme campaign.**

To maximize the awareness of Google valuing Chinese talent, the communications team will develop and execute a media relations programme that creatively develops story ideas with trainee programme.

**Initiative: Develop a series of strategic Chinese social media sites tactics.**

In order to cultivate positive consumer relations, and inform them the news about Google China, the communications team will create a series of Google official social media sites account, and operate them.

**Priority 2 expected outcomes:**

- Relationships created during the trainee programme implementation.
- Media coverage of story of Google and China.
- Arouse audiences’ interest towards Google’s future moves.
- Goodwill of Google.
**Priority 3: Keep internal stakeholders informed and engaged.**

**Initiative:** Develop an internal communications plan for board, committees and other departments. Communicating the work of the Corporate Communications strategy will ensure appropriate internal stakeholders are informed and engaged. It will support the work of our Corporate Communications and Internal Communications department. Audiences will be reached through existing organization-wide channels.

**Priority 3 expected outcomes:**
- Respect and trust between the Google and its stakeholders.
- Promote Google as a desired employer.
- Ensure employees understand the corporate strategy and future plans.

**The Evaluations**

To ensure that the Communications strategy is contributing to Google’s overall objectives and is accountable to the shareholder for our use of resources, we have adopted key corporate methods of performance measurement.

**Evaluation of internal communications:**
- The coverage on the Google internal magazine
- Staff feedback on communication via Google intranet.
- The measurable outcome/response/action taken following the communication of specific.
- Information on intranet usage.
- Communications audit (to include focus groups and questionnaires).

**Evaluation of external communications:**
- The number of coverage generated
- Media monitoring, the tone of voice (positive, negative or neutral)
- The popularity of social media sites
- Word of Mouth
# The Timeline & Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>The Campaign</th>
<th>Internal Communication</th>
<th>External Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Press Release</td>
<td>News letter</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Student unions sponsorship</td>
<td>News updating</td>
<td>Press Release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Career Talks</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Social Media Sites Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Career Talks</td>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>Social Media engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>HR Process</td>
<td>Feedback &amp; Review</td>
<td>Special column pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Result release</td>
<td>Employee Engagement</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Press Conference £5,000
- Student unions sponsorships £20,000
- Career Talks £10,000
- Social Media sites Building & Maintaining £30,000
- Media Relations £30,000
- Government Relations £10,000
- Ads £50,000

Total: £165,000
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