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Evaluation of the London Headquarters of Google - A success or a failure for the future IT sector of the UK

Introduction

Due to its expansiveness, greatness in vision, and innovative spirit, the future headquarters of Google in London is one of the projects that is being anticipated the most and that holds the most promise. If everything goes according to plan, this location has the potential to become the epicentre of learning for those individuals who are eager to expand their horizons. The project will cover an area of 60,200 square meters and will encompass the entire length of the boulevard along which pedestrians can travel from King Cross station to Granary Square, which is approximately 330 miles (Waite, 2021). It is the first building in Europe to be designed specifically for a particular purpose, and it poses a challenge to the conventional office location norms. Heatherwick Studio and Bjarke Ingels Group were responsible for the design of the project, and BDP is the company that is currently responsible for delivering it. The team has adopted a cautious approach, and in the not too distant future, the main issue that needs to be resolved is applicability in the information technology sector. The author will discuss what the successful outcomes of the project have been, how well the available resources have been utilized, the challenges that have been encountered, and what are the chances that the project will be able to deliver on the vision that was promised. Furthermore, the author will, throughout the course of this essay, reflect on the learning that came from the project as a whole.

Scrutiny of the Project

Opportunities and Achievements

Massive and larger-than-life ideas are the key motivating factor that the project has received so much attention from all over the world. The project is huge in quantity and quality and it took almost 10 years from conception to reality. Two of the renowned companies have taken the responsibility of designing the architectural infrastructure BIG and Heatherwick Studio, a wedge-shaped building that will stretch throughout the pedestrianised area of King's Cross station (Toherud, 2023). The whole project included amenities that were impressive and lavish. The 6,50,000 square feet arena will cover a 300-meter prolonged garden which is subdivided into different zones, a 200-meter trim trail for runners, a roof garden at the top, opportunity to grow plants that will allow altering the space requirements (Hayman, 2014). The 11 storey multi-purpose building is a hub for connecting knowledge, art and culture. the project after

completion will give 7000 workers a housing facility (BDP, 2023). One of the aristocratic and finest designs that will be implemented through Google's \$1 billion investment.

The inclusion of sustainability and innovativeness under one unified goal is another achievement yielded by the project. The project gave huge emphasis to the building materials to the shape of the office space. The idea is to ensure that employees are provided with the optimal working environment and can have access to all the daily necessities of life. The office area is more than just a working station. The commitment towards eco-friendliness was given the top priority when the BIG and Heatherwick Studio decided to design the building (MARTÍNEZ, 2023). The environmental statement has been delivered with clarity and the emphasis on sustainability is assured. The assurance of direct light availability on the desk with automated window shades gives the essence of rural life. The ventilation system uses 100% of the outside air without using recycled air (Parsons, 2022). The dwellers will be able to enjoy a much healthier and more enjoyable atmosphere. Apart from that the tiles to the pipings and paints used with furniture added have been placed by keeping in mind sustainability and durability. The integrated geothermal pile system will lessen the carbon discharge by 50% as a result the campus will be less heated and as a result the amount of water needed for cooling purposes will be reduced by 90%. The project will attain the International Living Future Institute (ILFI) LBC Water Petal Certification for keeping sustainability as the core of their planning (MARTÍNEZ, 2022).

The teamwork and collaboration shown by the team members can turn out to be powerful in the coming future and for a knowledge-intensive industry this can prove to be massive. The idea of combining top-notch amenities with sustainability along with the support of IT can prove to be a promising foundation for the UK in the coming years.

Challenges

Workers' Protest and Labour Union Strike: The lack of internal integrity in the management and the worldwide layoff instigated labour unions that led to the worker's protest. The workers decided to do a demonstration outside the King Cross in response to terrible treatment and union busting of staff facing swingeing redundancies. Many workers' jobs were at risk because of the Google announcement to make around workers redundant (Fletcher, 2023). Because of continuous overlooking and ignorance of the Google Human Resource Management team, the situation worsened and one of the biggest unions gathered before King Cross. A company that emphasizes employee well-being should never allow such cruelty and sacking of employees.

The image of the company has been tarnished and in response to the situation they later decided to have a one-to-one conversation. Human resources are the driving force behind any organisation doing well. If the workers get discontented this can have a long-lasting effect on the completion of the project. Google Corporation's rigidity towards not allowing union representatives to be present there worsens the situation to a greater extent.

Delay in Project Initiation and Completion: Initially the project experienced a delay of three years which led to a significant disruption in the way of leading towards a massive project (Hayman, 2014). The reason behind the delay was that the original plan did not seem to be exciting and the plan was altered with more natural substances and sustainability factors. As the project started late the initial planning came to termination and a prolonged timeframe was necessary. All this indicates the planning-related hazard faced by the company initially. In the meantime, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world and again the whole world shifted the way of working. All these phenomena lead to great uncertainties and challenges (Sawyer, Lindsay and Alaily-Mattar, 2023). The delay raises hurdles of increasing cost, stakeholder complaints and the goodwill of the company is sacrificed. As enormous the theme of the building infrastructure deal to buy 38 elevators and two escalators for the headquarters made one of the biggest expenses marked in the industry during the year 2019. Longer and prolonged processes also contributed to such delays as construction companies were asked to provide two-minute videos explaining why they were suitable for the job. For those who finally got the contract the pressure to work harder has created intense pressure on them for the tight schedule.

Ongoing Status of the Project

The current scenario observed from the given articles can be identified that the project is currently running smoothly with its opportunities and challenges. The overall planning is energy-efficient and eco-friendly, and the community is supportive and expected to play a massive role in creating a knowledge hub (Prynn, 2022).

One of the areas that are currently challenging and need attention significantly is the delay of the project. The project was originally slated to commence in early 2017, but due to modifications in the original blueprint's planning, it was postponed for a number of years. Consequently, the current progress is lagging behind schedule. Occasional scepticism was expressed by analysts and critics who found it peculiar. The additional challenges that arise as a result of the postponement could pose a problem in the coming years.

Another important issue revolving around the ongoing protest and labour union demonstration for employee sacking is image-killing for the company. Any company that is on the verge of launching a potential project should stay careful about its brand positioning and market fame but such disturbance happening before the launch of the project can leave a negative mark on the minds of consumers and employees which will be hard to remove (Sawyer, Lindsay and Alaily-Mattar, 2023).

The influence of big companies is huge on the people. The work and life opportunity the project is offering seems to be lucrative but there are chances that it may limit the ability to work where it is most comfortable to (Adamson, 2022). The project has its share of opportunities and challenges after the inauguration of the project the analyst may understand the significance of such a close-proximity working environment.

Success Evaluation

There is no doubt that the project is a milestone on its own. The giant project can prove to be a knowledge hub for those who want to explore and learn. The success of the project can be gauged by considering various factors from objectives to how well the project was managed and lastly how the economy of the UK will be benefitted. Aim, timeliness and scope are the boundaries of any project (Heagney, 2016).

In any sort of evaluation process, the ideal way is to measure the result with the original goals and objectives of the plan. The huge extravagant ‘landscaper’ is on the verge of its launch (Partridge, 2022). Before its proper implementation, it is quite subjective to assess the success. The aim was to create an environment that is environment friendly, that is congenial to boost employee morale and that the place will keep supporting the community. If the project has the potential to meet the larger-than-life vision the project can be believed to be successful in its mission. The wide array of purposes that the building has promised to keep will support and influence every person connected to the project. Another important aspect that is crucial to analyse project succession is devotion to the allocated budget. Budget overrun may lead a project to long-term loss. The estimated budget for the project was \$ 1 billion and because of the multiple delays and change in planning it may seem to be tough to stay within that budget. Recently, the labour union protest that occurred also created a challenge for the company (Fletcher, 2023). The demonstration put a halt to the ongoing work. Following the desired timeframe is the encounter for any project and crossing the time may create issues that will create challenges for the successful completion of the project. The Google headquarters project

was delayed by three years from its original planning (Hayman, 2014). Another important factor that is mandatory to gauge the success of a project is the ability to withstand an unusual challenge. Every project must have contingency planning to adopt if something goes out of the way and develop a cushion against financial or infrastructural damage. To be able to tackle a difficulty indicates the ability to sustain and thrive.

If the headquarters of Google in London are able to create an atmosphere that is friendly and nurturing while also offering comprehensive facilities, this may prove to be an enormous success in the information technology industry in terms of promoting and upholding growth, innovation, and modernism (Partridge, 2022).

Lessons learnt

- According to analysis, after the COVID 19 few companies have been coaxing their employees back to the premises Google is one of them. The project has been launched by keeping the concept of hybrid working in mind. for many analysts, this proved to be short-sighted as 585 of the workers reported lately that they feel productive when working far from the working station. the attempt to develop an epicentre will lose the progress that has been made in the previous few years of not trusting employees working from home. Apart from that asking employees to work and live from a specific location will bound the talent pool and despite being a magnet of skilled workers the company may lose efficient workers. The scope of the project is one of the important aspects to consider. The boundary of scope should be drawn with clarity.
- Maintaining timeliness is mandatory in such large-scale projects. The initial objectives and aims may fade away if a longer time is required to complete the project. A timelier implementation indicates greater success and greater performance.
- Another important aspect to keep in mind is the budget should be created with proper knowledge of expenses and resources. A resilient and contingency plan should be developed in case the project doesn't go down well. Possible challenges and risks should be precalculated that may hamper the progress of the project.
- Keeping stakeholders informed and content is another important lesson to remember otherwise agitated stakeholders may hamper the progress of the project. The labour union movement is one such example. Employees and staff are an important part of a project. Without their support and assistance, no company can win or sustain. making them suffer will ruin the company's image in the long run.

- Involving the stakeholders can be beneficial because it gives them the feeling that they belong to the company and gives them a say in the aspects of decision-making that they are responsible for.

Conclusion

Designed to be a knowledge hub, Google's London headquarters is a symbol of innovation and scale. The 60,200-square-meter building promotes collaboration and intellectual exchange by fusing sustainable architecture with state-of-the-art technology. It has, however, faced difficulties. Planning obstacles and managerial inconsistencies are exposed by employee protests against layoffs and project delays. Project timelines and the organisation's reputation are at risk due to these problems, which call for quick action. Because of this, the project's success is contingent upon achieving its initial objectives, staying within budgetary constraints, and addressing the concerns of its stakeholders. These results highlight the importance of precise budgeting, timely implementation, pragmatic working paradigms, and stakeholder participation. The project will be a success or a fantastic learning opportunity for future initiatives in related fields if it succeeds in overcoming obstacles, upholding sustainability, and fostering a positive work environment.

Recommendation

London's IT industry will grow if the project can overcome its obstacles and stay relevant to its objective. Some suggestions are as follows:

1. **Community Integration and Involvement:** Through the enhancement of integration, a mutually beneficial association is fostered between the inhabitants of London and personnel of Google, thereby encouraging a sense of collective accountability, aid, and reciprocal benefits. This ultimately contributes to the project's favourable results. By encouraging collaboration and connectivity across geographies, the adoption of a hybrid work environment enhances employee engagement and productivity at Google and facilitates smooth communication within the larger community (Prynn, 2022). This is accomplished by employing sophisticated collaboration tools and implementing a hybrid work model.
2. **Regular Monitoring of Goals and Employee Satisfaction:** Consistent oversight and emphasis on employee satisfaction ensure that the endeavour remains true to its inception, optimizing the substantial financial investment by fostering a positive and gratifying work environment, which ultimately drives productivity and success.

3. **Prioritising Sustainability:** One can ensure that the project continues to be relevant and is in alignment with the constantly evolving environmental demands by making sustainability the primary focus of attention. There are several essential goals that need to be accomplished, including ensuring the responsible restructuring of Europe's information technology infrastructure, encouraging innovation, and minimizing ecological damage.

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