

# Larry Page

*"Always deliver more than expected"*



Lawrence "Larry" Page is a computer scientist and internet entrepreneur. He is one of the co-founding members of the world's most popular search engine 'Google', the designer for the 'PageRank' algorithm and is currently Chief Executive Officer of Google's parent company Alphabet Inc. I am totally fascinated with the power, speed and capability of 'Google'. It was for this reason, that I was inspired by Larry Page.

## Early Childhood Life

Larry was born in 1973, East Lansing in Michigan. Born to parents, who were both involved in the computer science industry. His father a professor, with a PH. D in Computer Science, at Michigan State University and his mother a computer programming instructor. There is a clear indication how he was influenced to get involved in the computer science and engineering industry. His parents, Carl and Gloria, enrolled him in a Montessori educational centre from a young age. These were designed for independent and creative thinking. Larry gives positive credit to this early learning experience.

From the age of 12, Larry had the urge to own his own business. From a young age, Larry would read computer and science magazines and enjoy inventing. He read an article about a famous inventor, Nikola Tesla, who also worked briefly with Thomas Edison during the late 1800's and early 1900's. Having read the article to find Nikola dying in debt and obscurity, it opened his eyes. He wanted to not just invent, but also to have the business and innovation skills to allow them to spread. Around this time, 1980's, would have still been considered early stages in the computer industry compared with today. As the industry grew, so too did Larry's interest.

## Education

Graduating from East Lansing High School in 1991, his true path to computer science began. Larry attended University of Michigan where he successfully obtained a bachelor's degree in computer engineering. While at university, Larry invented an inkjet printer made from 'lego bricks'. From this, he saw how cheap he can print pages/posters and reverse engineered it and built the electronics and mechanisms. Page had a keen interest in tinkering and inventing, while at university he also joined up with the solar-car team. This looked at the future for transportation. One of his ideas was to construct a monorail-like machine which transported you from campus to campus at an effective rate. Alphabet Inc have been working on self-driving cars, which Larry has yet to leave his youthful interests behind.

In 1995, after graduating, Page began a new adventure and enrolled in a computer science PhD program at Stanford University. Larry based his dissertation around the world wide web, from here he began to understand its link structure. This is where he began to study the structure of websites and their links. Other research interests of Page also included human computer interaction, search

engines, scalability of information access interfaces and personal data mining. It was through this research he met Sergey Brin. Sergey Brin was also studying a PhD at Stanford. Sergey was more concentrated on developing data mining systems, they did not always see eye to eye. Through their disagreement on certain subjects came a friendship. They were both 'burners'. Is the eponym for those that attend the annual Burning Man festival in Black Rock City, Nevada.

### **PhD Research Project**

In 1996, at the age of 23, Larry's focus was to see if he could download the whole web. This was the beginning of his first online search engine. Both him and Sergey worked together on this to create 'BackRub', which operated on Stanford servers. The search engine was named because it analysed the web's "back links". It only lasted on the Stanford servers until it took up too much bandwidth. Through this they developed an algorithm called 'PageRank' which is stated in a paper by Sergey Brin and Larry Page that it is "an objective measure of its citation importance that corresponds well with people's subjective idea of importance". Basically, ranking pages that people will be more interested in given their history of previous searches. It only lasted on the Stanford servers until it took up too much bandwidth. Soon after it became known as 'Google'. Page suspended his PhD studies to pursue this project. They converted 'Google' from a research project to a company.

### **Birth of 'Google'**

Where did Google get its name? Explained in the business insider while interviewing Lawrence Page, he said that he was brainstorming a name to take over from 'BackRub'. During the brainstorm, between him and a fellow graduate student at Stanford named Sean Anderson, they came up with the name "Googol". Googol is a mathematical term which refers to the digit 1 followed by 100 zeros. When Anderson was checking the availability of the domain name, he accidentally searched for "google.com". Page liked this name better and registered it for Brin and himself on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1997. The company was financed by the Sun Microsystems co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim. He funded \$100,000 just for the idea, before anything even existed.

This did not take away from his socializing, which came the creation of the first google doodle. This was an indication that while they were at the Burning Man festival there will be no damage control done on the website if it was to fail.



### **Early Career Life**

Page was the active Chief Executive Officer for this new start up. He admits his management skills were not as good as his vision. He was a leader that focused on results and new ambitious ideas. He did not favour having to deal with people. Page had a set of rules that guided him:

- Don't delegate – he felt if he did all he can, it would go faster.
- Don't get in the way if you're not adding value – His view was if they didn't need help, to focus on something else.
- Not to be a bureaucrat.
- Ideas are more important than age – respect all levels within the workplace.
- Not to stop someone from doing something, help them find a better way.

Page has always wanted to play by his own rules, like any leader would. It came to a shock for him when he was asked to step aside as CEO by investors. They suggested a more senior member would better suit the company, they stated it as "adult supervision". In 2001, Larry Page was replaced by Eric Schmidt as the acting CEO. Page was not overly happy about the action but once he got to know Schmidt, they formed a strong bond. Schmidt was also a programmer and a 'burner'. He gradually got used to dealing with less management issues of the company and took the role of President for

Products. While at this position he set up a charitable company, 'Google.org', in 2004. This charitable company focuses finding technological solutions to some of the world's leading problems such as hunger and poverty. This same year, the company held its Initial Public Offering and made both Page and Brin millionaires.

Although taking a back seat to the head position, he was still very much involved in the products and vision he saw for 'Google'. However, in 2007, he felt he was too heavily involved in meetings and wanted more time to work. Page ditched his assistants, this made it more difficult for him to be found. He would have individuals physically seek him out to make it capable for getting in touch with him. Still living by his own rules. Another stage in Page's career was the acquisition of the company Android Inc. He sealed the deal with the company by dealing directly with the co-founder and CEO, Andy Rubin. Page kept this a secret from Schmidt until the deal had been clinched.

### **Awards & Achievements**

After Page stepped down as acting CEO, he was named as the Global Leader for Tomorrow in 2002 by the World Economic Forum. In 2004, they were awarded the Academy's Golden Plate Award while attending the Academy of Achievement's International Achievement Summit in Chicago. Page was also a recipient of the Marconi Foundation Prize and elected fellow of the Marconi Foundation founded in Columbia University. Page was still enrolled as a PhD student, but could never continue due to the demands and focus he had on his visions for the company.

### **Later Life**

In 2007, Larry Page married Lucinda Southworth. Lucinda was a research scientist and a sister to actress Carrie Southworth. They had their first child together in 2009, a son and 2 years later another child was born in 2011. At their home, in California, Page began buying houses around his own just to knock them down. He wanted to have space to build a large eco-house. He wanted his house to have as little impact on the environment as possible. This is a famous trait of his, Page insists on donating his money and efforts to his beliefs.

In 2011, Larry took back the title for CEO. He restructured the senior management within and launched the 'Google+'. In 2013, Page opened up about suffering from vocal-cord paralysis. He was not known to be a man that would share his personal life, and this came to a shock by others hearing this. In 2015, came the restructuring of the company. Due to the interests of both Page and Brin wanting to invest and focus on their visions they decided to create a parent company for 'Google'. They called this new company 'Alphabet', Page stepped down as CEO for 'Google' and became the new CEO for 'Alphabet Inc' and Brin served as President. This corporate change gave 'Google' the ability to focus on just itself and 'Android' rather than the other projects that Page and Brin were so heavily devoted to. The new parent company would include 'Google' and many of the other ventures that are in place.

Page is currently investing in many projects that he is passionate about. His two strongest passions are connectivity and innovation of future transport system. Both include some of the topics such as smarter home appliances, spreading connectivity through the Project Loon balloons and, of course the vision everyone has wished for, the flying cars. Page is a huge fan of the work done by Elon Musk, who also is a friend of his. Page believes his money should go to Musk if anything was to happen to him. He has Page is currently worth 48.6 billion dollars, and invests a lot of his own money into these projects.

**Famous quotes by Larry Page that I found interesting:**

"It's very hard to fail completely if you aim high enough."

"Have a healthy disregard for the impossible."

"If you're changing the world, you're working on important things. You're excited to get up in the morning."

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Details of Larry Pages Life Story

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