

Microsoft of the Future

It is no doubt that Microsoft has dominated the enterprise market. With its classic Word and Powerpoint, Microsoft has defined the enterprise-software brand. However, as is currently seen, such is becoming a thing of the past as companies such as Google and Apple invest heavily in this small market. Google especially has understood the need of a diversified portfolio, whilst connecting with a general niche. Should this company wish to succeed, it too must learn to adapt and redefine traditional products and services.

Microsoft needs, as Google is trying now, to connect the professional service sector to the general consumer market. By doing so, it will be able to diminish some of the risk and competition associated with that market. Providing professional-services, in an easy-to-use manner, to the general public will increase user awareness and perhaps loyalty. Consumers will now be able to use, practice, and familiarize with the Microsoft brand and its professional-software, one which will utilize skills demanded by many corporations. A key example of this is utilizing Microsoft's extensive cloud networks with current products and services, such as Microsoft Office. By linking Office to the cloud, it will become possible to offer Office products directly over the internet in a way never before possible. By investing in the cloud and Office, Microsoft could surpass Google in a growing collaborative environment, with its already impressive data-infrastructure and user trust. To complement the Office and cloud linkage, Microsoft needs and should increase consumer access to its products. This is to be done by providing better options over different platforms and Operating Systems. By doing so, Microsoft can expect stronger growth over the long-run and an increase in the overall connectivity of Microsoft users with its products and services.

Re-establishing the relevancy of Microsoft and using it to propel the company forward, will be key in order for the company to dominate both enterprise and general consumer sectors. The acquisition of LinkedIn, one which is currently on the table, should be prioritized in order to achieve the dream of keeping Microsoft a tough competitor in both markets. This deal, if approved, would push Microsoft beyond Google in the new professional-consumer market. With millions of registered professionals, entry- to executive-level, Microsoft has the opportunity of directly incorporating top business requirements and skills data into its services only to make them ever so appealing. This deal should prioritize synergism for key Microsoft services and offer a means developing and establishing a core business-elite niche. When this occurs, Microsoft will be able to develop a stronger, more established image. This deal's future should overall increase, in the hearts of novice and experienced professionals, the relevancy of Microsoft in a world dominated by online open source and free services. The goal of Microsoft in this deal should help the company re-establish its brand power and dominance in the business services sector. When that has been achieved, it will become easier to attract and incorporate the general consumer market and set about a growth strategy for the company.

The cloud and LinkedIn acquisition are both options and resources currently at the disposal of the company. These resources can help push itself into the future. A future in which incorporating general consumers and business spheres into one niche will be the determining factor for Microsoft in this field. If it wishes to remain at the forefront of innovation, bold and adapting moves need to be taken by its board members. Should it fail to do so, Microsoft can expect a growing Google to completely dominate both markets.

-Amy Hood, Chief Financial Officer of Microsoft

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