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Microsoft Board of Directors

Jean Philippe Courtois Position Paper

Jean-Philippe Courtois has held the position of President of Microsoft International since 2005. He was the former CEO of Microsoft EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa)[[1]](#footnote-1), which paved the way for his promotion to manage Microsoft’s interest on the global level. Courtois places a priority in using technology to promote social and economic development[[2]](#footnote-2). His role as the President of Microsoft International involves managing “sales, marketing and services in all regions outside of the United States”[[3]](#footnote-3). He is dedicated towards improving customer satisfaction and connecting with governments around the world to promote regional integration[[4]](#footnote-4). Neil Holloway, the current CEO of Microsoft EMEA, reports to Courtois; Courtois reports to Kevin Johnson, Vice President of Worldwide Sales, Marketing and Service[[5]](#footnote-5).

Topic 1: Strategic Placement

Currently, Microsoft has a plethora of products in the server, business and entertainment/device divisions. This includes the Windows 8 server, Microsoft Exchange Server, Microsoft Office, Azure Services Platform, Windows Mobile Operating System and Xbox 360[[6]](#footnote-6). The question at this key crossroad between the company’s past, present and future is which division to invest its resources in. Even though it may seem like focusing on all divisions may be taking away from future company development, there should be strategic investment in each division, and reinvention of these divisions to target different areas of the world. With immense competition from Apple, Samsung and other mobile device manufactures using the Android operating system[[7]](#footnote-7), the direction of the mobile division should shift gears to target different audiences. There are several possibilities for reinventing the mobile division, both internationally and domestically, which could trigger further revenue growth (these possibilities will be mentioned under Topic 2).

Out of all three divisions–mobile, tablet and cloud–it would be most pragmatic to invest in the cloud division, as its Azure cloud is considered the second-place option behind Amazon Web Services[[8]](#footnote-8). The use for this cloud services is quite prevalent, especially amongst enterprises using Microsoft technology. There is a lot of potential and room for improvement internationally, specifically expanding the cloud services in consumer use in developing countries. It is also important to help enterprises transition to cloud services, because it offers flexibility and security with regards management and administration using the cloud datacenter[[9]](#footnote-9).

Topic 2: Mobile Space

Courtois, as the leader in worldwide sales, marketing and services, will be supportive of the Board’s decision on revamping the Microsoft mobile space. However, it is important to realize the potential of the international market in ramping up the global revenue. There is a lot of room in developing countries for mobile phones, due to less branding from Apple and Android in developing countries in comparison to their market in the U.S.

Cell phone use in Africa is increasing rapidly, and since 2002, cell phone ownership in South Africa has been on par with the U.S., both with 89% of adults who own cell phones[[10]](#footnote-10). U.S. cellphone ownership increased 25%, South Africa 81%, and Ghana 75%[[11]](#footnote-11). There is a large market in places like these, because as education level increases, cell phone ownership also tends to be higher[[12]](#footnote-12). In Uganda, 93% of those with secondary education and more own a cell phone, in comparison to “only 61% of those with less education”[[13]](#footnote-13). However, the smartphone ownership in Uganda is only in the single digits in terms of percentage[[14]](#footnote-14). Therefore, the statistics are in favour of introducing affordable smartphones in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, Microsoft has an opening in the market for professionals, who need user-friendly phones offering large storage space, and easy access to common office applications. This is an area in which Microsoft can compete with Apple and Android. However, if the objective is to create a phone targeted towards professionals and people in the business world, then it is imperative to ensure that the software functions smoothly and that the Windows app store offers a variety of apps.

Topic 3: LinkedIn Acquisition

There has been a history of “not-so-successful” acquisitions, including Nokia and aQuantive Inc.[[15]](#footnote-15). It is of utmost importance that the integration of the two companies is through a novel approach, to ensure the success of this integration.

Microsoft can utilize its cloud division to reassure LinkedIn users of secure data storage in the cloud. This may draw more users to the program, without them worrying that their personal and professional information may be compromised.

Another potential form that the integration could take would be to join information between LinkedIn and Microsoft Office 365 and other communication applications[[16]](#footnote-16). The information from LinkedIn profiles would be added to the Office pages, so that people working on a project would have the opportunity to connect with professionals in the field one is researching.

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