**Position Paper - Meredith Kent SA**

**Microsoft Board of Directors**

**Kathleen Hogan**

The issues that face the Microsoft Corporation as it evolves to merge with a new generation of consumers and global markets

1. Kathleen Hogan’s commitment to positively reflect Microsoft’s key ideals to consumers
2. Kathleen Hogan’s stance on Microsoft’s consumer mobile industry and what it means for company morality
3. Kathleen Hogan’s major role in shaping the dynamic of Microsoft’s ideals and aligning them to those of LinkedIn
4. Kathleen Hogan’s commitment to positively reflect Microsoft’s key ideals to consumers

Kathleen Hogan’s key focuses in her new role as Executive Vice President of Human Resources at Microsoft Corporation are those of internal betterment for external improvements. Having a deep understanding of the working environment of Microsoft and what drives employees to meet their greatest potential, Hogan is setting up greatness for the future potential of the corporation. Microsoft being the titian of the technological industry that it is, does not exclude it from falling profit margins; in recent years as other competitors, such as the Apple Corporation, dominate the consumer market. Hogan recognizes these fluctuations, such as the current destabilization of the Windows 10 fiscal reapings, as a way to pave a road for the new generations of Microsoft employees. At Microsoft, Hogan has spearheaded the *hackathons* sessions for new Microsoft employees to demonstrate their very own technological innovations, (known as *“hacks”)* to not only their peers, but to Microsoft itself. When one’s *“hack”* generates enough interest, teams of employees come together to collaborate on the idea and flesh it out. Once the *“hack’s”* main purpose comes into fruition, teams pitch their ideas for funding, and even get to oversee their product’s expansion into the consumer market. One of the most latest and, arguably greatest technological innovations to come out of the *hackathon sessions* has been the *Learning Tools for OneNote;* a feature of Microsoft’s *OneNote* collaborative user interface that aids in writing and reading skills. Hogan’s role as Exec. VP of HR and her previous eleven years of experience at Microsoft gives her an enriched point of view of success at Microsoft when it comes to the matter of employees being the driving forces of product and corporate innovation. Hogan encourages employees to take risks when pitching new ideas, in and outside the *hackathon* sessions; for example the *HoloLens* project. The *HoloLens* is essentially Microsoft’s business driven version of a virtual reality headset. A project that projected a “high risk and high reward” stigma within the company, that would normally lead the project to get shut down, got a full scale consumer expansion deal. Now, as Exec. VP of HR, Hogan reaffirms her point in the investment of high risk, high reward products as it is an invaluable aspect of company growth that will enable Microsoft to keep its place in the kingdom of technological titans. This massive influx of technological innovation from Microsoft’s future senior executives will only bring greater things to the cooperation. Hogan recognizes the current fiscal blunders of the Windows 10 revenue as a challenge to fodder the next big thing to come out of Microsoft.

**Therefore, Kathleen Hogan**

1. **recognizes Microsoft’s current fiscal escapades and believes they should be met with strategic risk taking opportunities from all Microsoft staff**
2. **reaffirms that her role is one that is crucial to shaping the future of Microsoft through the influx of support to consumer market innovations and consumer culture**
3. **will continue to enhance Microsoft’s future technological innovations by continuing to host annual *Hackathons***

II. Kathleen Hogan’s stance on Microsoft’s consumer mobile industry and what it means for company morality

At Microsoft, innovation within all aspects of technology, culture, and public perception are key. That is why in Microsoft’s Chief Executive Officer, Satya Nadella’s, company wide email this past summer, the aforementioned topics were at the forefront of the critical ideals laid out,

*“I believe that culture is not static. It evolves every day based on the behaviors of everyone in the organization. We are in an incredible position to seize new growth this year. We will need to innovate in new areas, execute against our plans, make some tough choices in areas where things are not working and solve hard problems in ways that drive customer value.”*

*Microsoft CEO,* Satya Nadella

This e-mail target’s all the major thematic points that Microsoft is striving to hit within the consumer cellphone market as their past acquisitions, such as that of the Nokia acquisition, have proven stagnant. The Microsoft cellular devices innovation team has seen a plethora of innovative and brilliantly designed smartphones for the ever changing public to consume and further brand trust, but with the cult following of the Apple corporation, Microsoft has been falling behind. With the innovations of Windows 8 to Windows 10 mobile, (even featuring a plethora of updates catering to a more “user friendly” interface brought into normcore by the Apple IOS operating system) Microsoft is still playing “keep up” culturally and fiscally. Even with the Nokia merger that was thought to prove prosperous (which in actuality it garnered massive losses) ; Microsoft is looking towards using it as their springboard to bounce to something even better in the technological innovations and new mergers such as LinkedIn. Hogan is now in the midst of reshaping Microsoft’s recruiting practices, as well as their performance-assessment curriculum as it searches for bright young minds to push Microsoft into a new mobile era. With her team of 1,500 in over 55 countries, Hogan is driven to find the new generation of Microsoft executives that will aid in the advancement of Microsoft’s tech market with a massive influence of the emerging Virtual Reality market (with products such as the aforementioned, HoloLens) and how it can tie into their other consumer products such as Xbox. Hogan reaffirms the point that at the moment, that Microsoft is in a status of bringing its products into even greater cultural significance. In order to do this, Microsoft is encouraging personal learning development, and overall contributions to other’s projects instead of pinning them against each other in terms of how well they are faring *against* each other in their success. By modelling their current tactics to garner greater growth in the cellular and consumer field, Hogan is preaching the Microsoft *"Empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more"* mantra of the Microsoft organization as a gospel. The mentality of Hogan’s brilliantly executed Human Resources contribution can be described by the words of former Microsoft COO, Bob Herbold, *“The primary ingredient for changing the culture is winning. The key is to get employees to realize that we’re having fun, I have stake in this, I feel part of it.”*

**Therefore, Kathleen Hogan recognizes:**

1. **that there is a great need for further innovation in the field of Microsoft’s commercial consumer products, with an emphasis on consumer products**
2. **that she therefore must continue on her current curriculum of growth and knowledge based encouragements for Microsoft employees**
3. **that the search for the world’s brightest minds to recruit to Microsoft is instrumental it’s growth in the tech market**

III. Kathleen Hogan’s major role in shaping the dynamic of Microsoft’s ideals and aligning them to those of LinkedIn

As stated by Hogan in an interview with Microsoft’s female driven talk show, *GALs*, “people are our product.” Along with Hogan’s aforementioned pioneering work in the fields of employee driven collaboration and innovation, what better company to reaffirm these ideals than LinkedIn? LinkedIn is a social network for professionals to show their preferred markets, their past accomplishments, and working career path. Hogan wholeheartedly concurs that the $26 billion dollar merger reaps great benefits to the Microsoft corporation, not only on a fiscal, but on a community level. Hogan is the figurehead of the Microsoft community’s state of employee affairs; her job is to create links between the creative geniuses that are the employees at Microsoft. Collaborative work is one of the key aspects of growth in the Microsoft community; this merger between Microsoft and LinkedIn is in itself a perfect marriage of the ideals pertaining to both companies. In a world driven by social connectivity through online media, it is paramount that Microsoft’s newest and most innovative merger be with a company that is emerging as one of the largest social media networks available to date. With this merger, Microsoft moves towards pandering to a broader demographic, the global working force. Hogan recognizes that this merger has no foreseeable public niche, it is available to all in the current workforce; to aid in headhunting, collaboration, or even personal connections. All of these crucial aspects of LinkedIn align with the sentiments of Hogan, and therefore she sees the massive benefits that will meet both companies in this merger. Hogan has already written an Op-Ed piece on LinkedIn’s blog titled, “*Investing & Harvesting—a tale about time*” in which Hogan links her upbringing in the farming state of Wisconsin to the roles of executive women in the work force. “I believe our career journeys follow a similar path. We all have periods when we’re able to go hard at our jobs; we have extra energy, vision, stamina, and vigor to outperform expectations. This extra effort often earns rewards, credibility, and recognition by our peers and leaders.”

* Kathleen Hogan for the LinkedIn blog

This clearly demonstrates that every aspect of Hogan’s working life at Microsoft blends perfectly with Microsoft's pending acquisition of LinkedIn.

**Andrei Soldatov therefore:**

1. **puts a great emphasis on the following through of the merger between Microsoft and LinkedIn**
2. **suggests that this merger be used in part with her search for finding the next generation of innovative employees**

**Bibliography:**

1. *SSUNS* “Microsoft Board of Directors” booklet
2. Bishop, Todd. "Interview: Microsoft’s HR Chief on the Company’s Changing Culture and New ‘growth Mindset’." GeekWire. N.p., 2015. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.
3. Dwek, Carol, and Kathleen Hogan. "How Microsoft Uses a Growth Mindset to Develop Leaders." Harvard Business Review. N.p., 2016. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.
4. Robinson, Jack. "Culture Change: Chicken or Egg? - HRE Daily." HRE Daily. N.p., 2016. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.
5. Robinson, Jack. "Culture-Change Agents." Human Resource Executive Online. N.p., 19 Sept. 2016. Web. 6 Nov. 2016.
6. Rosoff, Matt. "Microsoft Is Growing Its Cloud Revenue Faster than Amazon." Business Insider. Business Insider, Inc, 2016. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.
7. "Kathleen T. Hogan." Executive Profile. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.
8. "Interview with Kathleen Hogan (Channel 9)." Comment. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Nov. 2016.
9. Nadella, Satya. "Satya Nadella Email to LinkedIn Employees on Acquisition Read More at Http://news.microsoft.com/2016/06/13/satya-nadella-email-to-linkedin-employees-on-acquisition/#VYx8KR6EOsemu4rq.99." Microsoft. N.p., 13 June 2016. Web. 6 Nov. 2016.
10. Hogan, Kathleen. "Investing & Harvesting—a Tale about Time." LinkedIn. N.p., 2 Nov. 2016. Web. 6 Nov. 2016.

11. Jacobs, Sarah, Aine Cain, and Jacquelyn Smith. "A Look inside $23 Billion LinkedIn's New York Office, Where Employees Enjoy Perks like Free Gourmet Meals and a Speakeasy Hidden in the Empire State Building." Business Insider. N.p., 4 Nov. 2016. Web. 6 Nov. 2016.

12. Wingfield, Nick, and Katie Benner. "How LinkedIn Drove a Wedge Between Microsoft and ..." New York Times. N.p., 5 Nov. 2016. Web. 6 Nov. 2016.