Chapter VI

Successes and Failures in E-Partnering:
Multiple Case Studies

Introduction

The previous chapters have included a comprehensive discussion of general issues concerning e-partnership management from both technology and people perspectives, and, continuing this theme, this chapter presents extended and systematic multiple case studies which allow a more profound exploration of the way in which companies have partnered in e-business. It also contains an in-depth examination of specific issues and problems raised in e-partnerships. The cases selected for the case studies represent a broad range of interests, from big brand dotcoms like Yahoo! and Google to a small manufacturer that has embraced e-business and e-partnership technologies and practices. The case studies are followed by a cross-case analysis of the key issues in relation to the development of e-partnerships. Key successful factors are identified from the successful cases, along with the hard lessons learned from failure.

Case Study 1: Google

In his recent article, titled "Google Here, There, and Everywhere", Salkever (2003) illustrated vividly his early morning experience in an all-Google world:

I woke up this morning and Googled my dry cleaner to see if my shirts were done. Then I Googled the weather to see what to wear to work. Before breakfast, I Googled my stocks to see how they did yesterday, and then I Googled the supermarket for sale prices and to schedule a delivery, right from Google. I Googled the movies playing theaters near my house, and then I told Google to email me with travel itineraries to Paris…" (p. 1)

Google was named after the mathematical term "googol", meaning a 1 followed by 100 zeros. The founders of Google Corp. chose the word for the company because their aim was to organize the immense amount of information available on the Web (Google, 2004a). The company was established in 1998 after a US$100,000 donation from the co-founder of Sun Microsystems. Today, Google handles over 200 million search queries each day (Anonymous, 2004), and the Internet search engine giant is hailed by many as being a bright dotcom star that has expanded tremendously against the backdrop of dotcom disasters and collapses over the past few years. Google's incredibly powerful search engine uses 10,000 networked computers, which enables a search of 3 billion Web pages in an average of 500 milliseconds. At present, Google's share of Internet searches in the United States accounts for 49.7%, 4.3% more than Yahoo!'s associated search engine (*BBC News,* 2004). Google operates Web sites at many international domains and is widely recognized as being one of the best search engines in the world. This competitive advantage has won it millions of dollars in advertising business and numerous business partners who rely on Google for their business operations. Many big brand companies have chosen Google as their e-partner for advertising and search service, the two major sources of Google's revenue, including Yahoo!, AOL, Sony, Cisco, Amazon.com, Canon, Disney, General Motors, Volvo, Xerox, Alamo Car Rental, Forbes.com, USATODAY.com, and Washingtonpost.com (Google, 2004b).

Google is currently the search and search engine advertising provider of the United States **America Online**. This e-business partnership was formed in 2002 when Google beat Overture and Inktomi to win the partnership deal.

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