

TABLE A-11

Case study: Google+

(Innovation failure summary)

Variable	Description
Innovation	A social networking site developed by Google that integrated many of Google's other services, to be in competition with Facebook and Twitter, launched 28 June 2011
Radical or incremental	Incremental
Category	Service
Sector	Media
Failure timing	Growth stage, failure in April 2019
Failure root cause	<p>No market demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed as a result of a corporate boardroom decision to compete in the social network space, rather than in response to an identified need or gap in existing social networking platforms • In search of a marketing focus, Google+ was marketed as a platform for engaging with strangers on a variety of topics/interests; most people want to connect with their friends, not strangers • Policy of signing up all Google account users of other Google services (such as Gmail) led to very large number of “ghost accounts” that people had not requested and did not use
Failure root cause timing	Product development
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average and shorter user sessions (90% lasted less than 5 seconds; Facebook sessions last, on average, 20 minutes) • The “ghost town” of inactive accounts encouraged more active users to engage with people they knew on established networks, like Facebook or Twitter, leading to growth in those competing networks • Google+ was shut down as a public social network and transferred to an enterprise-only suite of products • Google spun off many Google+ features into other Google programs (e.g., Photos, Hangouts)
Business insight into the innovation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcing customers to use a project they do not want does not drive commercially meaningful use
Pivot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split the useful non-networking features of Google+ into Streams and Photos; Hangouts • G+ Enterprise retains the core networking features for corporate use
Pivot enabler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some adoption of Google+ into corporate environment

Source(s):

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics and SRI International, special research (2020) of 2010–20 open-access articles, including *MIT Technology Review*, *New York Times*, *Fast Company*, U.S. General Accountability Office, and *Defense News*.