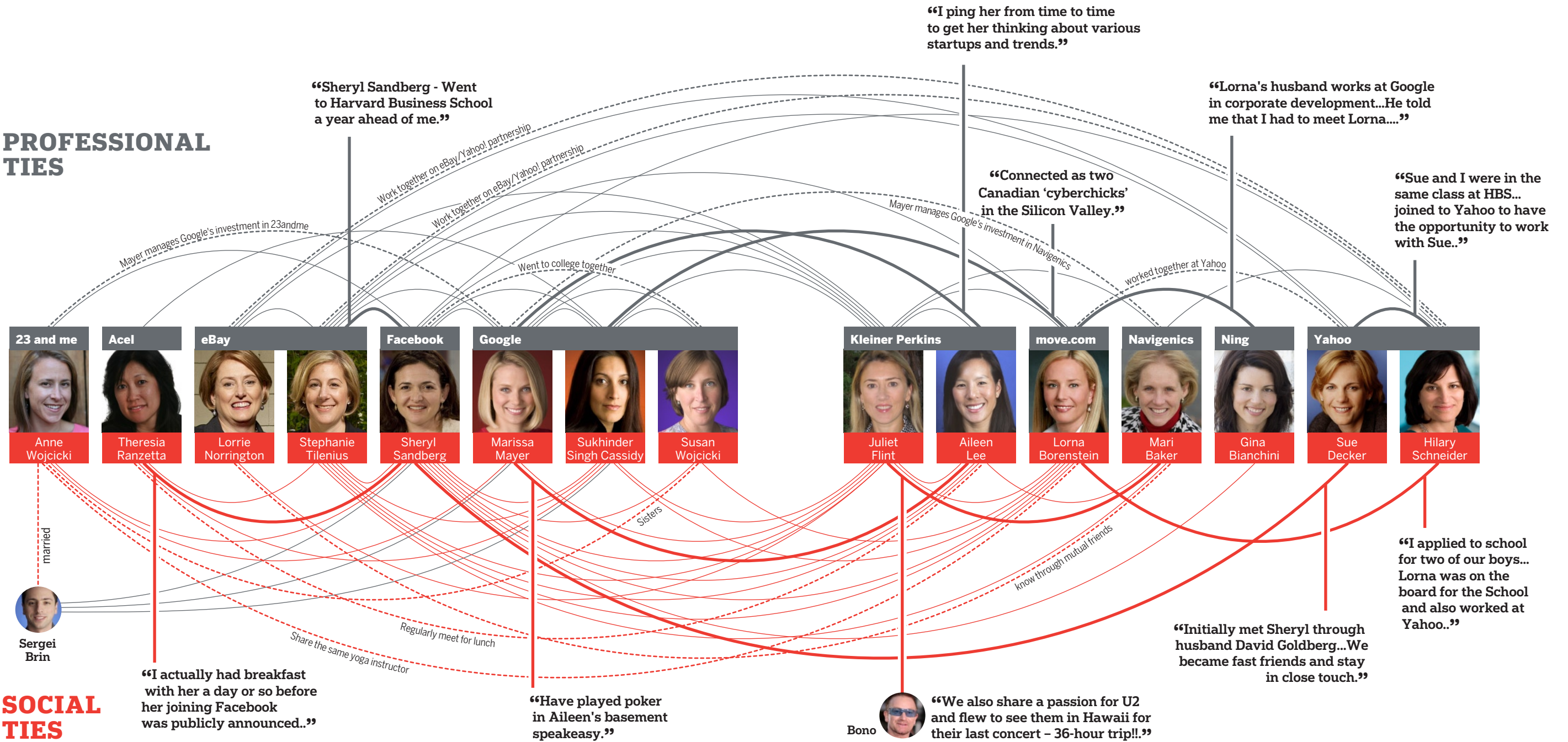


PROFESSIONAL TIES



SOCIAL TIES

Capital One Financial (complete list), says that new employees cite "job flexibility, development, and community" as other things, high-potential employees to the company's famed Crotonville, N.Y., leadership-development center 600 much earlier in their careers; in attracting top prospects, "that's a strong selling point." For example, alumni of Procter & Gamble (first list on our list) include Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, eBay CEO Meg Whitman, Intuit founder Scott Cook, AOL founder Steve Case, and even

GE chief Jeff Immelt. Hindustan Unilever (second number) has supplied nearly first CEOs to 350 other companies worldwide over the years.

GE alumni run scores of companies, including, besides GE itself, four of the first in the Dow Jones industrial average: Boeing (James McNerney), Home Depot (Frank Blake), Honeywell (David Cote). McNerney may hold a record, having worked for three companies in our top ten—400 GE, P&G, and McKinsey

(lesson learned). Of the many powerful forces driving companies to develop leaders more effectively, the most important is the world economy's long-term shift from dependence on financial capital toward human capital. Even given the credit crunch, money for investment is more abundant than ever. It isn't 450 the scarce resource in business anymore; human ability is. Hewitt global-practice leader Robert Gandossy, who oversaw the Top Companies for Leaders study, says, "Organizations need talented

people a lot more than talented people need organizations." Companies are finding that the advantages of building a reputation for developing talent are greater than they may have thought—"a first-pick advantage," as the RBL Group calls it, an edge in attracting the cream of 650 college and business-school students.

Says Hewitt's Gandossy: "Companies that provide people with opportunities to learn and grow become talent magnets, drawing scarce talent in droves." By continually attracting the