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Today, the name Steve Jobs probably passes as one of the most recognizable, especially among the youth. Taking the world to a new dimension of a line of gadgets, Steve Jobs made sure that Apple made its mark. The iPod, iPhone, iPad, and all other things that he created have become common words used in a household. However, despite all the success he has achieved with his life (eventually leading to his death last year) and despite being the genius that he is, he has faced many challenges and roadblocks, as well. In this discussion, Jobs’ life and tribulations will be the focus, leading to his success stories and what can be considered as the most impactful deaths of 2012.
Born on February 24th, 1955 to two Wisconsin graduate students, Jobs was given up for adoption – with the reasons unknown. As an infant, he was taken in by Clara and Paul Jobs. During his younger years, he would spend time with his father working on electronics. Here it is seen how the seeds of technological innovation have been implanted and germinated inside of him. Despite being a very intelligent student (one who was up for skipping grades), he was probably more of a boy than one who is a thinker. He didn’t take his studies very seriously and was even called a prankster.
When Jobs reached high school, he was then introduced to Steve Wozniak (his future partner in brilliance) by a common friend. And even though there was a significant age gap between them (Wozniak was in the University at that time), it appears as though they clicked so well mainly because of their common interest in technology and electronics. They probably gelled so well because of how they see the world and how they think. And, similar to one called Bill Gates, he was a College dropout. He eventually worked for Atari as a video game designer, but left after only a few months to pursue enlightenment in India.
Apple Computers began with the joint effort of Wozniak and Jobs in a garage while using funds from selling their valuables. Their vision was to make computers cheaper, compact and practical. And true enough they were able to sell this idea through the Apple I and II which enabled them to become a highly recognized company worth a billion dollars. However, the next iterations of the Apple computer were not received as well. And in a business that was slowly being dominated by the IBM PC, Jobs’ ideas were overlooked because of the fact that “ Macintosh was not compatible with IBM” . This event lead to him stepping down as Apple’s CEO in the year 1985 (and the company, entirely) and not letting anything stop him, he created a new company called NeXT, Inc.
A fact probably not known enough about Jobs was that he was a big part of Pixar Animation Studios. Investing his own money in it, Pixar grew into one of the most popular animation studios producing movies with amazing graphics; such as, Toy Story 1-3, A Bug’s Life, Monster’s Inc., Finding Nemo, etc. which are very popular names among the kids of the 2000s. His efforts with NeXT, however, paled in comparison to the success of Pixar as he was unable to sell his idea of an operating system to the people. Eventually, he reclaimed his position as the Apple CEO and restructured the company. This was the time he imposed a 1$ annual salary for himself. He gets the company back on track with innovations in design starting with the iMac which fared well with consumers.
But alas, a man can only do so much with his life. In 2003, he discovered that he had a rare kind of pancreatic cancer. At this time Apple was probably still in a delicate state and was afraid that stockholders would back out upon learning that its CEO and backbone was ill. And so, the whole thing was successfully kept a secret. And it’s amazing how Jobs continued to deliver amazing ideas which lead to innovations and an inevitable global following of consumers. See, Jobs was different from other geniuses. When he has a goal he does not waver. If he faces a roadblock, he pummels through it like a bull seeing the red flag. And maybe this is something that grew in him upon realizing that he might die at any moment. Quoting his speech during the 2005 Stanford Graduation ceremonies:
Remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything – all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment of failure – these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lost. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.
True enough, with innovations such as the iPod, iPad, iPhone, MacBook, and all other Apple products, Steve Jobs seemed fearless and unstoppable. The idea of the iTunes Store paved the way for easier selling and purchasing of merchandise. It also is an indirect effort to save raw materials as well as production costs. He gave a new definition to the laptop, with one of his unforgettable presentations of the Macbook Air where he walked in holding nothing but an envelope which, to our surprise, contained a fully functional laptop. He may not have discovered the mp3 or the laptop, but his contributions to making things even more appealing and convenient to the public proves how someone can be a smart businessman in the world today.
However the inevitable fact that he was, indeed, ill was something he could not (as well as the people of the world) ignore. On October 5, 2012, Jobs finally passed away having fought with pancreatic cancer for nearly ten years. Some people have called his death “ the end of Apple”, but honestly it’s hard to say. He was a very influential man and it is possible that his way of thinking may have been passed on to the people in Apple. Nevertheless, Steve Jobs can be considered as a great thinker, an innovator, a mastermind, or just a guy that makes good decisions without being influenced by external forces. May his enigmatic existence be an example to those who think differently, to those geeks who are engrossed in whatever they’re interested in, and to those who think they can make a difference in this rapidly evolving world.

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