

Media coverage of the death of steve jobs essay examples

[Business](#), [Company](#)



The Wall Street Journal versus The Financial Times

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On October 5, 2011, Steve Jobs, the former CEO of the Apple Corporation, died at age 56. Given Jobs' persona as a prominent business leader, two business media organizations, The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) and The Financial Times (FT) were prime contributors to the media coverage of this event. This paper will compare and contrast the coverage from these two sources of media, one based in the United States, the other based in the United Kingdom. First, the two coverage collections will be analyzed as to the types of articles produced, the tone of the articles, noted focus of content, and discussion of the results of the event. After each collection is analyzed, contrasts and comparisons between the two coverage sets will be made, with conclusions as to how successful the two coverage collections were in documenting the event of Steve Jobs' death.

The Financial Times (U. K.) coverage

The media coverage provided by FT included a traditional obituary that highlighted a long quote by President Barack Obama about Jobs' innovative contributions (Menn, 2011). Death was said to be after an extended struggle against pancreatic cancer. As with several other articles, Jobs' storied history with Apple Computers was recounted as was his founding of the computer animation company Pixar and its sale to Disney. The article also discussed his business approach of producing technology products he would want, rather than necessarily serving the wants of his customers, and his personal focus on the marriage of design and function. The obituary article concluded with a stock update for Apple that was positive (Menn, 2011).

FT's coverage also included a group of articles with content centering about statistics about the volume of the world's reaction to Jobs' death, with a significant focus on the internet and computer-based reactions (Nuttell & Dembosky, 2011; Dembosky, 2011; and Palmer, 2010). These articles discussed both the massive volume of the grief expressed with the news through statistics such as computer search numbers and tweets. One article also included details, or really, the lack of details, in Jobs' net worth and estate arrangements at his death (Nuttell & Dembosky, 2011). One of these articles did discuss the UK flagship bricks and mortar Apple store, and included a short quote from an employee, with the observation that Apple corporate policy was that no comments should be made (Palmer, 2010). A third type of article was a personal impact description of Jobs and his work upon the writer personally or the world in general, both in laudatory (Wolf, 2010; Kay, 2010) and dismissive tones (Eyres, 2010). One of the articles discussed the fact that the writer was part of the "cult of Apple" and this was the source of his respect for Jobs, a person who could've only succeeded in America (Wolf, 2010). In another, the writer classified Jobs as a business genius that had changed the world on par with Edison, Ford, and Disney (Kay, 2010). The more dismissive article confessed an inability to see the appeal of the Apple products and closed with a discussion of why the orchestra conductor Claudio Abbado was more deserving of the visionary title than Jobs (Eyres, 2010). Jobs' death was also dubbed "Story of the Week" and this round-up type article reviewed various global publications reactions concerning the news (Nabi, 2010).

A fourth type of article in the coverage of Steve Jobs' death was the ultimate

impact of his death upon Apple and on the global business world. The general conclusion of the business analysis article was that Apple will continue to thrive because of Jobs' disciplined approach to creative company leadership, particularly after he returned to head Apple in 1997, and his excellent successor planning (Hill, 2010). An additional similar article stated his legacy was secure precisely because he was not a "company man" and had a unique self-centric approach to business (Steve Jobs: no company man, 2010). The third article on this topic discussed the search in China for who would play a "Jobs-like" role in the Chinese technology business, and discussed the significant differences between technology innovation in China and that in the United States. All of these articles focused on the legacy of Jobs now that he was gone, rather than details of his death.

The Wall Street Journal (U. S.) coverage

The centerpiece of WSJ's coverage of Steve Jobs' death was a lengthy traditional obituary that detailed the company's announcement and response to the news and an extended a step-by-step walk-through of Jobs' career (Kane & Fowler, 2011). The article including numerous reactionary quotes of those involved in his life such as Tim Cook, his successor at Apple, Bill Gates, his primary business rival, and Disney CEO Robert Iger. The article focused on the artistic image that Jobs cultivated for himself and the legendary business stumbles and recoveries that his career had taken (Kane & Fowler, 2011). As an obituary, the article had a clear focus on Jobs' personality and the personalities of others involved in his life and how this impacted his business, rather reporting from strictly a business-centric point of view.

WSJ also published a number of articles describing the impact of his death upon others, including an extended article with a focus on reactions at Apple stores (Clark, Woo, & Mattioli, 2011). This article described reactions from Apple store customers from around the world and reflected on the uniqueness of such a strong reaction for the death of a corporate business leader. Walt Mossberg, a technology writer for the WSJ, also published his personal reflections on Steve Jobs, based on his years of covering him and his companies (2011). This article was a series of personal stories told to reflect aspects of Jobs' personality beyond the public figure. The statement of John Lasseter and Ed Catmull, executives at Disney, was also published (Farley, 2011a) as were specific tweets of celebrities upon receiving the news (Steve Jobs Dies: Celebrities react on twitter, 2011).

Additional articles that were published discussed the unique leadership approach of Steve Jobs, which included a comparison to Edison and Ford (Jenkins, 2011), and one about the impact of Steve Jobs on the world through the technology innovations of his company (Wittkower, 2011). Interestingly, both of these articles had been first published at the time of Jobs' retirement approximately two months previously, but were updated to reflect the event of his death and republished. The tone of both these articles was uniformly positive, while the former focused on Jobs' rebound from being fired and amazing ability to leader Apple back to success, the latter took a higher-level, more philosophical world view of Jobs' impact.

Further articles included in WSJ's coverage were the production of Steve Jobs himself, including an article consisting of a list of many quotes (Valentino-DeVries, 2011) and the text of Jobs' well-known speech to the Stanford

graduating class of 2005 (Jobs, 2011). Finally, the coverage also included a short article about how Jobs' experience with the type of pancreatic cancer he had was medically unremarkable and his death was not unexpected at this time in the disease course, despite Jobs' rather unique position of having received a liver transplant (Winslow, 2011).

Compare, Contrast, and Conclusion

The coverage of Steve Jobs' death by these two business media organizations shared many common factors. They both centered on a traditional obituary article, although Menn's content for FT was business and monetary-focused. In contrast, Kane & Fowler's detailed examination of Jobs' career centered on Jobs' personality and the reaction of people he surrounded himself with on the job. Both organizations also described the volume of grief resulting, with Nuttall & Dembosky of FT generally being more technology and statistic-based, while Clark, Woo, & Mattioli of WSJ used more customer based quotes to describe the reaction. Highly laudatory, personal-reaction articles were published by both organizations, garnering the same comparisons of Jobs to Edison and Ford.

As for differing approaches, only FT chose to publish a negative, personal-reaction article to counter possible over-hype. Its articles also included more speculation as to the impact upon Apple as a company. WSJ published a wider variety of article types and topics, including two articles of Steve Jobs' own words and an article that looked into pancreatic cancer as the cause of death in detail, despite the fact that there was no official announcement of the actual cause. WSJ's coverage also appears to mention more often the

private nature of Jobs in regard to his personal and professional life and how difficult it was to get detailed information, although this was balanced by the stories provided by Walt Mossberg based on his journalistic relationship with Jobs. A unique aspect of FT's coverage was its generally more detailed global approach, including a specific article about China. Finally, WSJ updated articles that had been published several months earlier upon the news of Jobs' retirement, a coverage approach that was not taken by FT.

In sum, these two business media organizations provided in depth coverage of the death of Steve Jobs and the resulting reaction by associates and customers. The traditional obituaries and description of the reaction articles, although differing some in content, took similar approaches to reporting the event. Both organizations included personal-based reaction stories from those with a relationship with Jobs, either as covering journalist, business associate, or customer. Although slightly more business-focused and slightly more global, FT devoted considerable effort to the coverage, including comments that such a success could only come in America. WSJ provided perhaps less rigorous business reporting, but attempted to portray the business leader as fully as possible. In either event, both organizations provided solid coverage of the death of a prominent business personality, Steve Jobs.

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