

# 21st century leadership essay sample

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



Steve Jobs is a name that all of us would know since he was the co-founder of Apple Computers with Steve Wozniak. Under Jobs' guidance, the company pioneered a series of revolutionary technologies, including the iPhone and iPad. Even the critics would not be able to dismiss his achievements. The passion and the aspirational levels that are attached to Apple as a brand is not seen for any other firm has been able to amass in this era of international competition.

There are a lot of leadership articles and books that have cited in order to be a great leader, the person needs to be nice, polite and humble. But those were not the qualities one would associate with Steve Jobs, still no one can deny that Steve Jobs was a leader, with a leadership style of his own. But, if we go by the experts, a person like Mr. Jobs should not have become a leader. He achieved those leadership qualities as learned from his employees. No leadership style is set in stone, it is situational. One link of leadership style that would work great in one situation, but when the same is applied to another it would fail completely. While this situational leadership idea has been around for leadership, there are still people who claim on crafting universal leadership characteristics as well as behavioral patterns.

Most of the companies now work across global boundaries. Those who handle teams across multiple countries know that they need different leadership styles according to different cultures. Mr. Job's leadership style was integral to success of Apple to make it the company it is today. The management style that he used for example the small animation company called Pixar became wildly successful thanks to Jobs' tenacity and evolving management style. Jobs pushed its progress along by encouraging

and prodding his team in critical and often abrasive ways. While some found his management style caustic, he also developed loyalty from many team members. “ You need a lot more than vision, you need a stubbornness, tenacity, belief and patience to stay the course,” said Edwin Catmull, co-founder of Pixar.

“ In Steve’s Jobs case, he pushes right to the edge, to try to make the next big step forward.” Jobs emphasized the importance of teamwork to his employees. Though he made the final decision on product designs, he knew that the right people would be a company’s greatest asset. “ That’s how I see business,” he said. “ Great things in business are never done by one person; they’re done by a team of people. At the same time, Jobs knew that he had to be the best leader possible to his teams. According to Jobs’ work mantra and ethic, innovation is what distinguishes a leader and a follower. Some people aren’t used to an environment where excellence is expected. Thanks to Jobs’ expectation of high quality, almost every product he’s turned out has been a huge success among consumers and businesses.

I believe without a vision you do not have goals or success, you just have a dream of being successful. Steve Jobs was determined into achieving what most people could only imagine, He put words into action to make Apple one of the best technology companies in the world. He was a transformational leader who brings about major, positive change for the company, organization or society. Mr. Jobs had transformed several companies over the years which he made Pixar into a success story. He has all the necessary attributes to be considered one, based on some requirements, he leads by

example, he practices empowerment, and he has a vision and as mentioned he can be perceived as charismatic.

The leadership traits that Steve Jobs demonstrated was a different way of thinking, he wanted the best so you had to strive to be the best. Jobs used his experiences, such as growing up in the San Francisco area in the '60s and his world travel, to shape the way he designed the products that made Apple synonymous with success. He criticized the sheltered lives that characterized many in the computer industry. “ They haven’t had very diverse experiences,” he said. “ So they don’t have enough dots to connect, and they end up with very linear solutions without a broad perspective on the problem. The broader one’s understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have.” The core of Apple’s success and intense customer loyalty isn’t just the great products but great people who are informed, empowered, and motivated to deliver an unbeatable customer experience.

Steve Jobs focused on ensuring that no element is overlooked in creating an immersive retail environment where customers can see, touch, and learn about your products. He said that even if have the people and the communication right, poor packaging will actually detract from the experience you worked so hard to achieve. “ Poor packaging” in this case can refer to your digital presence (or lack thereof), your branding efforts, and your physical spaces. Steve Jobs might have been an arrogant man, but he had three personality traits that are critical for effective leadership: a sound and clear vision, the ability of the person to inspire trust in themselves and a

passion for the company and the products (Ryan Guenette, 2012). Steve Jobs had a vision for apple, and he managed to convince everyone about this vision.

He was able to gain this trust by consistently displaying high marketing and product development acumen. Mr. Jobs showed the employees how much he believed in his vision, through his dedication to the work, and not by being driven by the money or ego. Which is why, his employees stuck with him, learned from him, as his leadership and commitment towards the work which was more than an occasional snide remark or a rude behavior.

If we look at Steve Jobs leadership style, it is very clear, that leadership is situational. A leader is also a human, and no human is perfect. But as long as he had a vision, and was committed towards that vision, people would be attracted towards him in seeing those qualities of what makes them a leader.

Steve jobs, the co-founder, chairman and CEO of Apple Inc., is one of the most renowned American entrepreneur, marketer and inventor. He was born on 24 February, 1955 in San Francisco, California. He is known as the pioneer of Apple (Kyle Murray, 2010). He also had made remarkable contributions in fields like computer, consumer electronics, Pixar animation studios, Walt Disney, Apple Lisa, Macintosh, Laser printer etc. Along with Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Walt Disney, Steve Jobs is one of the America's greatest innovator whose name will always be cherished in future as the one, who transformed his imagination into business and technology.

Jobs was globally recognized for his influence in the field of technology and music industries. He was honored as “legendary”, “futurist”, “visionary” and was titled as the “father of digital revolution”, “Master of innovation” and a “design perfectionist”. He kept that innovation of where Apple was heading with new technology and products, the company increased sales well beyond \$74.6 billion in revenue. The international sales accounted for 65 percent of the quarter’s revenue. Apple will continue their growth in the future with its upcoming new mobile devices, this can only improve as the productivity increases.

The organizational structure has a great influence on the future of a company. The organizational structure varies from one organization to another (Horace Dediu, 2013). A strong and committed organization structure can lead to the success of an organization. To achieve the goals of an organization, its structure has to be done in a proper manner. It determines the accountability and authority of the employees working in an organization. A good organization structure is goal driven and is focused towards the coordination of the workflow which leads to the ultimate success. A sincere planning is required for formation of an organization structure.

Steve Jobs had led the organization structure of Apple Inc., being its CEO, he has influenced the company by its dedicated contribution and had helped the company to achieve its targets by his innovation. The organization structure at Apple Inc., is collaborative which is designed for long term relationship to achieve the targets. A collaborative environment help the

employees to work cooperatively, being unaware of the locations. As a result collaboration led to more new ideas and innovations. In Apple Inc., the big targets are broken down and distributed among the talented groups so that they can their expertise can be utilized for achieving the set targets.

The company has a policy of everyday spending three hours by talking with each other about everything going around in the world. The company uses Matrix Structure as its organization structure, where in under Steve Jobs who was the CEO of the company, there were ten Senior Vice Presidents, positioned as CFO, COO, Operations, Hardware, Engineering, iOS, Software, Worldwide product marketing, Industrial Design, Retail and General Counsel. However as per the Annual Report of the company, it is organized in five segments which are America, EMEA, Japan, Retail and Others.

Apple is known worldwide for its corporate culture. It is passionate of new products and grabs all kind of challenges and opportunities (Katherine Yang, 2013). The working environment at Apple Inc., appears to be very casual and relaxed but they are very strongly committed to deadlines. The company has a culture of maintaining a high degree of secrecy from its incorporation. It is casual on attire but completely formal in work. Apple Inc., is highly productive and a place where one can exploit its potentials and grow in line with the growth of the company as the company focuses on continuous learning and innovation. The company is also customer centric, as its primary focus is on the satisfaction of the customer and the employees try to learn from the customers and serve them in a better way.

Apple Inc. follows a plain employee development policy wherein, the company does not ensure a lifelong employment and employee's own dedication and drive towards the company is responsible for his growth and development (Katherine Yang, 2013). The company by following such a policy does not withdraw itself from responsibilities related to employee development, rather it provides all the required resources for the growth of an employee so that he can manage his career. Through this policy it helps its employees to identify their skills and abilities and be ready for current and future opportunities.

Apple Inc. provides its employees several resources for their career management such as a career resource library, brown bag seminars, assessment and counseling, networking groups etc. Our experience with organizational change management suggests that there are three major hurdles to overcome. The first is to change fatigue, the exhaustion that sets in when people feel pressured to make too many transitions at once. Fatigue is a familiar problem in organizational change management, especially when initiatives are driven from the top. The second practice of leadership is when companies lack the skills to ensure that change can be sustained over time. Leaders might set out eagerly to raise product quality, but when production schedules slow and the pipeline starts looking sparse, they lose heart and determination. (Aguirre & Alpern, 2014)

Lacking an effective way to deal with production line problems, they decide their targets were unrealistic, they blame the production technology, or they accuse their frontline people of not being up to the task. A much better way



to solve the problem is to invest in operational improvements, such as process design and training, to instill new practical approaches and give people the knowledge and cultural support they need. The third major obstacle is that transformation efforts are typically decided upon, planned, and implemented with little input from those at lower levels. This filters out information that could be helpful in designing the initiative while also limiting opportunities to get frontline ownership of the change.

Steve Jobs provided a blueprint to follow for not only Apple though other businesses. He had a great imagination about building his company under the assumption that Apple's products and services would change the world. His ability to develop and design technology products (now everyday products) that people love was like no other entrepreneur's before, during or after his time. He focused on design and was insistent that it be absolutely perfect. It was his belief that design is a critical component to developing next-generation products that people love. (Himmel, 2013) There is a lot to be learned here from Steve Jobs, which made one aspect of building his business very important as opposed to other areas. This evolved into Apple's competitive advantage and the company's brand. (Himmel, 2013)

He was also extremely passionate and fearless when it came to growing Apple. Many actions in his career were controversial and at certain points risked the future of the company. He had an extraordinary ability to push his company and employees to the limits without going over the edge. In addition, if you were a potential customer or an existing one, he made you understand why you had to have Apple's products or services. These are

just a few of the many traits Steve Jobs left for us to learn from and embrace with our own companies. Your business journey won't be the same as his, but you can certainly follow many of his revolutionary ways of building a great company. (Himmel, 2013)

#### Reference:

Ryan Guenette (2012) retrieved from: – <http://beta.fool.com/makinmoney2424/2012/10/31/apple-strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-and-threa/15405/> Kyle Murray (2010) retrieved from : – <http://hbr.org/product/strategic-planning-at-apple-inc/an/909A26-PDF-ENG> Horace Dediu (2013) retrieved from: – <http://www.asymco.com/2013/07/03/understanding-apples-organizational-structure/> Katherine Yang (2013) retrieved from: – <https://prezi.com/ew2h9-8rmefb/the-organizational-structure-of-apple-inc/> Steve Jobs. (2015). The Biography. com website. Retrieved 09: 43, Mar 01, 2015, from: – <http://www.biography.com/people/steve-jobs-9354805>. Elaine J. Hom (2013) Business News Daily. Steve Jobs Biography. Retrieved from: – <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4195-business-profile-steve-jobs.html> DeAnne Aguirre and Micah Alpern (2014) Strategy+Business. 10 Principles of Leading Change Management. Retrieved from: – <http://www.strategy-business.com/article/00255?pg=all> Ryan Himmel (2013) Entrepreneur. What Personality Traits Made Steve Jobs Successful? Retrieved from:- <http://www.entrepreneur.com/answer/226410>