

Steve jobs' leadership style research paper samples

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Jobs was a unique leader and a vivid example of the role of personality in history. He has already entered the history of management as a lone hero. Director of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California of Los Angeles Warren Bennis says that this is one of the few cases where the code of the company is wired in the brain of one person. It is not that Apple is not able to create outstanding market developments. The point in the presentation, product philosophy, which was translated to buyers and investors by Steve Jobs. According to Burrows, Grover & Green (2006), “ The one-time enfant terrible of the technology world has calmed down considerably en route to becoming a 50-year-old billionaire” (p. 62).

Bashing Apple dominance that we see today can be explained by someone as the merit of many active and dedicated fans of the brand. But it's not that Apple customers immediately organized a flash mob and went to vote for their favorite company. Apple is just an undisputed leader by such criteria as included loyalty. Fans of mass brands are divided into several groups. Traditionalists prefer certain brands of habit. Practitioners select product for its specific properties, quality and low cost, and then identify brand with them. Fashionists make choices focusing on trends in their social group (Johnson, 2005). Finally, there is the so-called "involved snobs", usually the smallest group. Snobs are not just buying the company's products, but identify themselves with it: watch the news, participate in discussion of products, know the details of the product line, etc.

The combination of fanaticism and rationality is a unique quality. In most cases, it is inherent in not more than 3-6% of loyal customers of brands. In the case of Apple, the part of involved snobs is no less than 30% of the total

number of regular customers. This elite guard is the main capital of Apple. The company operates in a niche that is not cheap, but still the Apple Guard is so loyal that in the regular mode is buying expensive goods (Koehn, 2009).

This army was created by Jobs. Not only by the brand philosophy, which he shared with buyers, but also rigid technological setting to dissidence, abandonment of support for many industry standards, of cooperation with third-party developers. It is so far from the open philosophy of Google and even from platform approach of Microsoft. But it definitely works.

The leadership style of Jobs is comprehensive and it is difficult to define it by some common standards. He was informal and formal leader with an authoritarian approach and legendary despotic nature. Former employee of Apple, one of the many observers of Jobs management style, wrote that external consultants were shocked by the lack of freedom to make decisions at Apple. According to Leonard (2010), " Shortly thereafter Jobs was fired, and the company floundered for 12 years, losing its mystique as well as its profits" (p. 1). Steve could cancel any decisions. This is normal in the company of a few products, but it cannot work in a company where a lot of products are made, consultants said. Another former engineer admits that he had never feared dismissal more than in Apple.

Usually, leaders of corporations popular with the public represent the ultimate democracy and try to adhere to democratic management style. Jobs was a unique case: authoritarian leader with dominant marketing competence, which he did not share with anyone. His charisma compensated authoritarianism (Samuelson, 2005). Jobs could smear against the wall

anyone, but also force engineer to take a routine task of designing the power supply as a mission sent from above. It is rather a style of industrial tycoons of the past than soft and flexible leaders of modern technological companies.

Today it is clear that Apple will not go away and is likely to remain a dynamic company, which regularly throws to market innovative products and actively develops the old developments. But keeping a special audience and limiting the detuning from the competition without Jobs is much harder. Strong and unique leader is not only an advantage, but also a problem. Analytics conclude that management style of Jobs cannot be copied by anyone else. According to Burrows, Grover & Green (2006), "Jobs certainly has much to offer. The past few years have been a thorough vindication of his ideas and leadership" (p. 62).

One of the most well-known behavioral theories of leadership is "x" and "y" by Douglas McGregor. American social psychologist distinguished two theories of human behavior in the field of management and Jobs style is more relevant to the first of them. According to it, the head due complacency of his employees (or other reasons) constantly monitors their actions (Kotter, 2000). Workers, according to this system, do not have autonomy in decision-making. Ambitions of employees are not disclosed, as the leader does not trust them by circumstances. From the point of view of this theory, people need coercion and motivation on the part of the leader. At Apple Jobs created a special culture. Despite the fact that Jobs appreciated the talents and skills of his team, he preferred not to encourage initiative on the part of employees. Since the structure of the company is

located hierarchically with vertical center of this system being directly Steve, he was its authoritarian leader. According to Leonard (2010), “ Jobs may be the last true descendant of Bernays, the last great pitchman capable of making vast swaths of the fractured American public take notice of his latest wares all at the same time” (p. 1). Workflow from start to finish was under strict control. Apple CEO was in all senses of the word micromanager and he personally approved everything – from posters to the list of those present at the top-secret retreat.

Jobs did not give authorities even to the board of directors. He used their meetings only to generate new ideas and discuss strategy. Strict secrecy, control by management, a small amount of career opportunities, many deadlines - all this affects the behavior of the employees who are afraid to take the initiative, fearing liability to such an authoritative leader (Gomes, 2010). However, this approach does not prevent the company to be the first in its market. Moreover, such a culture allows you to work on time and do it as efficiently as possible.

Of course, this management style has its drawbacks, among them employees' dissatisfaction, limitation of some possible ways of development, too much dependence on the leader. But Jobs knew that this way of leadership is the most appropriate for him and his company and was not afraid to try such an unconventional approach to it.

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