

World's best-known

Business



Apple and one of the world's best-known business leaders. The many biographies of Jobs on the internet agree on the basic details. He was born in 1955 in California.

In 1976, he and Steve Wozniak founded the Apple Computer Company. The next year saw the launch of the company's second computer - the Apple II - whose success established Apple as one of the main brands in the fledgling personal computer (PC) industry.

Apple went public in 1980 and by 1983 Jobs was looking for an experienced corporate manager to oversee the company's international expansion; he hired John Sculley from Pepsi Cola. In 1984, Apple launched the Macintosh, whose innovative design was surely one of the key steps forward in the development of today's user-friendly PCs. In 1985, Jobs fell out with the Apple board and with Sculley and resigned from the company.

He went on to found the computer company NeXT, whose workstation products were seen as innovative and influential, but they were too expensive for mass market success.

By the early 1990s, NeXT was concentrating on software rather than hardware, and Apple was experiencing significant financial problems as the PC market started to mature. In 1996, Apple bought NeXT and installed Jobs as interim CEO in 1997. Jobs was back and set about some radical surgery to improve Apple's profitability. The technology that arrived with the NeXT purchase allowed a new operating system to be developed and Jobs was closely associated with the development and launch of the brightly-colored and inspirational iMac in 1998. The 'i' prefix was adopted by Apple for a

series of further innovations as its renaissance under Jobs continued, including the launch in 2001 of the spectacularly successful iPod music player and the iTunes service to support it.

This success has provided the company with a whole new set of strategic options in music and entertainment. Then came the iPhone in 2007 and the iPad, produced in an A envelope at its launch in 2010. Steve Jobs, however, is not someone to concentrate his efforts on just a single industry.

In 1986, he bought a computer graphics operation from Lucasfilm and renamed it Pixar, which became one of the leading players in computer animation. In partnership with Disney it produced a stream of immensely successful animation movies from Toy Story (1995) to the surprising, multi-award-winning office hit Wall-e (2008) whose character Eve owes more than a little to Apple design principles. In 2006, Disney and Pixar merged, leaving Jobs as a significant shareholder in Disney and a member of the Disney board.

Cool entrepreneurship At one level, Steve Jobs can be seen as one of the group of successful young men who made the information revolution happen over the last three decades. These new entrepreneurs didn't fit the traditional model of the buttoned-down businessman - they weren't always academically successful (like Michael Dell, Jobs dropped out of college), they dressed casually and thought unconventionally.

While they may differ greatly in leadership style and manner, they share a dedicated, driven, even obsessive approach to work coupled to strong vision of the change they want to create.

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There has always, however, been something distinctive about the Apple way of doing things, resulting in the fierce loyalty that often inspires Apple users. As one commentator put it: Lodged in the DNA of Silicon Valley, there is a rebel gene known as Apple Computer. Most of the other ingredients are the generally uniform, inoffensive elements you would expect to find in the soul of an engineer ...

The Apple nee comes from an altogether different place. Its essence IS one part design flair, two parts marketing hype. It carries elements of risk-taking and inventiveness.

It is closely intertwined with the technical drive that pervades Silicon Valley and is the source of occasional startling originality, yet the technology is always subservient to something else. If Apple's genetic make-up stands apart, it owes much to Steve Jobs. Evidence that Apple is centered on the personality of its leader is plentiful.

Jobs supplies the inspiration and ' Sino and is the company's ace When there is a key new product to launch, it is usually the CEO who valves it to the world, having been personally involved n whatever it took to bring the product into being.

As a recent report observed, his keynote speeches at Apple conferences are ' more like rock concerts than corporate events', with Jobs centre stage. Nat is it about Steve Jobs' leadership that commands such attention? He values pure creativity ' ere highly, but in the thousands of words written about him on the internet, adjectives such as tolerant' or ' easygoing' do not feature '

ere often. The words passionate, charming, inspirational, abrasive'87 are much more representative, with many expressing much trotter views.

Jobs seems to be someone who sets himself very high standards and then demands the same of everyone around him. This can lead to disappointment, frustration, anger and - on occasion - harsh treatment of those who are seen as having let him and the company down.

Jobs provided an insight into this mentality in an interview in 1995 with the Smithsonian Institution: always considered part of my Job was to keep the quality level of people in the organizations I work with very high. Rat's what I consider one of the few things I actually can contribute individually ... O instill in the organization he goal of only having ' A' players.

... the difference between the worst taxi cab driver and the best taxi cab driver to get you cross-town Manhattan might be two to one. The best one will get you there in fifteen minutes, the worst one will get you there in a half an hour.

.. . In the field that I'm in the difference between the best person and the worst person is about a hundred to one or more. Ere difference between a good software person and a great software person is fifty to one.

. Therefore, I have found, not just in software, but in everything Vive done it really pays to go after the best people in the world. It's manful when you have some people who are not the best people in the world and you have to get rid of them; but I found that my Job has sometimes exactly been that: to get rid of some people who didn't measure up and Vive always tried to do it

in a humane way. But nonetheless it has to be done and it is never fun.

Although Jobs became and remained wealthy over most of his career, his motivation seems not to centre on money.

His annual salary as Apple's CEO is famously just \$1.

What drives him is innovation: he is the man who wants to put a ding in the universe'.⁸⁹ This means not purely technical innovation, but the ability to create products that are revolutionary in their impact on everyday life. Design and marketing have been integral to the Apple appeal, resulting in some truly transformational (and very successful) products like the Macintosh and the iPod, but also many that did not really connect commercially.

This demanding agenda has had its costs, both for the company and for Jobs personally. Business strategy commentators sometimes observe that the real money is to be made by changing the way a business works, not by pure innovation. Researcher innovation will earn you lots of adoring fans (think Apple).

Business-model innovation will earn you lots of money (think Dell) ... If your cool new thing doesn't generate enough money to cover costs and make profit, it isn't innovation. It's art.

If wealth is the scorecard, then Steve Jobs, who is at 178 on the 2009 Forbes list of the world's richest people, doesn't come close to Bill Gates at number one or Michael Dell at 25. The overall impression though is that this is not the point for Jobs; changing the world is more important than building the biggest pile of money. The succession problem The comparison with Bill

Gates leads to another issue that often crops up for organizations that are dominated by a strong and charismatic leader: that of succession.

A recent business news article pointed out that Microsoft had recently gone to some lengths to plan for Bill Gates' gradual retirement from the company. Gates' role had been split into two, with a successor lined up within the company for each part.

The pre-announced two-year transition was intended to reassure the markets about the future for a post-Gates Microsoft. At Apple, things are not so clear. In August 2004, Jobs underwent surgery for a rare form of pancreatic cancer. He survived and was back at work after just one month; and amidst much speculation he took a further six months of medical leave in 2009.

His brush with mortality caused many to wonder about Apple's prospects without him, although Jobs himself seems sanguine; 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. Nevertheless, this remains an important question for the company. A quote from venture capitalist Michael Morris sums up Jobs' importance to Apple: Steve is an utterly remarkable man - one of the most interesting, original and creative businessmen of the last 50 years.

His achievements at both Apple and Pixar over the last ten years put paid to the doubters who say that no individual can change the course of a company or industry - let alone two companies or industries. Apple has never done things in a conventional way and it may be that asking about succession planning is missing the point about the way the organization is run. As a <https://assignbuster.com/norlds-best-known/>

leader, Steve Jobs' charismatic and demanding presence has pervaded Apple and made it what it is today. The question must now be faced: is it impossible to replace the magic of Steve Jobs, or is he ' awesome, but not the entire company?