

Term Paper On: My Favourite Leader – Steve Jobs

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Introduction

Many great leaders have led companies to growth and prosperity in various ways with different styles. In the technology sector, Steve Jobs is one of the most celebrated leaders. Steven Levy stated that Steve Jobs was the most passionate leader one could hope for, a motivating force without parallel (Markoff, 2011). His leadership, defined by his personality and traits, could be observed and evaluated from the perspective of several models and theories. Table A1, in Appendix A, lists several assessment tools that define Steve Jobs's leadership.

Jobs's leadership characteristics are especially evident, as he came back to Apple in 1996, when the company was in dire straits. He said that if Apple did not get the attention it needed, it could eventually die (Kahney, 2008, p 1). Currently, because of the leadership of Jobs, Apple is one of the leaders of innovations in the technology sector and one of the most esteemed brands (Myatt, 2013). Jobs has played an active role that has shaped Apple into the technology giant that it is today

Reason for Choosing Steve Jobs

Steve was motivated more than anything to feel he had made a solid and positive impact on the world during his lifetime. It was as simple as that. He would say, "I just want to put a dent in the universe." The funny thing was, that wasn't hyperbole. He really meant it. But at the same time, Steve was an aesthetic idealist in a very particular way. It was more important to him to create the best product than to sell the most. There's a certain snobbishness and elitism to this notion, but the second time around at Apple, Steve rarely failed to live up to the high standards he set for himself and others. And there is no question that he left his mark on the world.

He developed patience, which believe it or not, is a leadership skill. He learned not to rush things that needed more work. He also learned how to be more sensitive to the physical limits of how much his people could work and moderated his demanding behaviour. He still was a tough boss, but he got better at helping people share his high ideals for whatever Apple made.

He didn't care what the public thought of him. At times, he was surprised to have hurt someone's feelings. Ed Catmull, president of Pixar, took this as a sign of an occasional social awkwardness, rather than an innate meanness.

Steve spent months preparing for his product intros and other public appearances, and rehearsed them exhaustively. I once spent an entire day watching him run through multiple rehearsals of a single presentation, tweaking everything from the color and angle of certain spotlights, to editing and rearranging the order of the keynote presentation slides to improve

his pacing. He could get pretty petulant if some technical aspect went awry. In one instance that day, he just sat silently onstage with his chin in his hand, staring at the floor for nearly 15 minutes, out of frustration with a wrong lighting cue. He didn't yell this time, but just made everyone wait while he cooled down. Even before that stage, he would call journalists like me or Steven Levy who wrote for Newsweek and later Wired, to try out metaphors and lines he was thinking about using, just to see if we thought they resonated. This could be weeks and weeks before the actual event.

Biography of Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs was a computer designer, executive and innovator, as well as an all-around role model for many people in both their businesses and their personal lives. As the cofounder of Apple Computers and former CEO of Pixar Animation Studios, he revolutionized the computer and animation industries, amassing a fortune worth \$10.2 billion at the time of his death. Jobs passed away on Oct. 5, 2011, in Palo Alto, Calif., at age 56 after battling pancreatic cancer for eight years.

Born in San Francisco, Jobs was adopted by an encouraging and loving family. He developed an interest in computers and engineering at a young age, inspired by his father's machinist job and love for electronics. Growing up south of Palo Alto, Jobs was bright beyond compare — his teachers wanted to skip him ahead several grades to high school, which his parents declined. In high school, Jobs met his future partner, Steve Wozniak, whom he bonded with over their love for electronics and computer chips.

After dropping out of college in the first semester, Jobs explored his spiritual side while travelling in India. It was with this spiritual enlightenment that Jobs' work ethic and simplistic view toward life was developed. "That's been one of my mantras — focus and simplicity," he said. "Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it's worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains." Jobs began to move mountains at age 21, when he and Wozniak started Apple Computers in the Jobs family garage. To fund their venture, Jobs sold his Volkswagen bus and Wozniak sold his scientific calculator. This ended up being a good investment. Prior to Apple's rise, computers were massive, expensive, and not accessible by the everyday American. With Jobs heading up marketing and Wozniak in charge of technical development, Apple sold consumer-friendly machines that were smaller and cheaper, at only \$666.66 each. The Apple II was even more successful than the first model, and sales increased by 700 percent. On its first day of being a publicly traded company in 1980, Apple Computer had an estimated market value of \$1.2 billion.

Jobs Leadership Qualities

Steve Jobs is widely recognized as a 'strong charismatic leader' in the technology and entertainment industry. Charisma, a gift given to few people, nature bestowed that on Steve Jobs, along with a spellbinding ability to captivate a crowd. Born as an orphan, from the age of 17 Steve was constantly reminded - "If you live each day as if it was your last day, someday you'll most certainly be right." Since then, he questioned himself, "If today were

the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?” If the answer was “No” for too many days in a row, he knew he needed to change something. He said, “Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

When studying Jobs as a leader it is crucial to understand, or at least in part, his strategic leadership, which is defined as the ability to anticipate and envision the future, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and initiate changes that will create a competitive advantage for the organization in the future (Daft, 2011, p 396). Not knowing what a future may hold, especially in a field as technology, can be overwhelming. However, Jobs thrived on the unknowing because of his vision. He was able to see past the barriers, naysayers, incredible amounts of risk that were associated with some of the decisions he had to make. Vision is a necessary aspect of strategic leadership. The vision statement of Apple is to make a contribution to the world by making tools for the mind that advance humankind (Daft, 2011, p 398). Jobs had difficult decisions to make, where usually others hesitated. To address his critics, Jobs said that Dylan and Picasso were always risking failure (Kahney, 2008, p 153). Some ideas were so profound and radical that a former CEO of Apple said “our jaws dropped when we heard this, but it turned out to be brilliant” (Kahney, 2008, p 29). This vision is not crucial only to the leader but also the employees. Employees need to find dignity and meaning in their work, so that they can feel a larger purpose for what they do (Daft, 2011, p 401). Not only that, but vision provides employees with a challenge that pushes them to work their best (Daft, 2011, p 401). Additionally, because vision exists only in the mind, the future is shaped by people who believe in it, and a powerful vision helps employees believe that they can be effective, through their own commitment and actions (Daft, 2011, p 404). It was Jobs’s vision and calculated risks that helped him become one of the greatest leaders that led to success. Jobs experienced much success through his leadership capabilities. However, it is also important to note his weaknesses and failures as a leader. One of the weaknesses Jobs exhibited was the barring of third-party software, which resulted in many critics arguing that Jobs had lost out on potentially significant amounts of profit (Kahney, 2008, p 244). However, Jobs had always wanted to remain exclusive, which could also be seen in his controversial move to kill the clone business in 1996, when he initially took over Apple. Another weakness of Jobs, from a personality standpoint and a critic’s point of view, is his disregard for others. Critics say, it was part of the reason why Sculley, former CEO of Apple, had conspired to oust Jobs (Kahney, 2008, p 242). However, some critics say that such an autocratic and authoritative style can be perceived as strength, especially from some perspectives such as emerging markets.

Conclusion

Overall, Jobs was one of the strongest leaders of the past century. He is known as a hero, a legend, and a pioneer of the digital age (Vanacek, 2011). His personality, traits, and strategic leadership have helped shape one of the most profitable companies in the world. Without his vision, calculated risks, and collaboration, Jobs’ achievements would not be possible in such a short amount of time. Following Jobs’s death, Apple said that he really did “think different”

and his brilliance, passion, and energy were the source of countless innovations that enriched and improved many lives, which made the world immeasurably better (Forbes, 2011). Jobs did indeed touch many lives and will always be regarded as one of the greatest leaders that has ever lived.

Key source –

<http://www.wbs.ac.uk/news/why-steve-jobs-was-such-a-charismatic-leader1/>

<http://www.biography.com/people/steve-jobs-9354805/>