

# Steve Jobs

*"Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." -Steve Jobs*

Steven Paul was an orphan, adopted by Paul and Clara Jobs of Mountain View, California in February, 1955. Unhappy in school in Mountain View, the family moved to Los Altos, California. He was characterized as a loner with a different way of looking at things. While in high school, Jobs had genuine "knack" for technology and attended Hewlett-Packard seminars. After school, Jobs attended lectures at the Hewlett-Packard electronics firm in Palo Alto, California. There he was hired as a summer employee. He met another employee at Hewlett-Packard, Stephen Wozniak a recent dropout from the University of California at Berkeley who was an engineering whiz with a passion for inventing electronic gadgets. The two teamed up to market ideas. Steve graduated from High School in 1972. He attended one semester of college at Reed College in Portland, Oregon before dropping out.

In 1974 Steve became a video game designer for Atari, Inc., a leader in the electronic gaming and recreation industry. He was not really interested in creating electronic games, but his passion and innate ability for marketing these products was the defining moment of his life. He approached his old friend Wozniak to help him build a personal computer. Using capital from selling scientific calculators the two set up a production line. He convinced his friend to quit his job with Hewlett-Packard to become the Vice President of Research and Development for the new enterprise. They named the garage-started company "Apple" for a summer job Steve had working in an Oregon orchard. Jobs was able to reduce the computer to the size of a small box. It influenced the Xerox Corporation to re-introduce their idea of the mouse. Many companies used their interface to develop their own software. Their greatest achievement during this period was the introduction of the Apple MacIntosh Computer on Super Bowl Sunday, 1984. It competed with the IBM Personal Computer.

Other executives at Apple began to force Steve into less influential roles and he found himself being exited out of leadership in the company. One day, in 1985, Steve surprised everyone by stating, "I've been thinking a lot and it's time for me to get on with my life." He resigned from Apple and began a new company that developed computer hardware, called NextStep. There he continued his forceful way of creativity mixed with hard-nosed perfection. Jobs' drive for perfection often lead him to be ignorant to other people's ideas. One ex-employee recalls how Jobs was demanding that, on principle, he would often reject anyone's work the first time it was shown to him. NextStep proved to not be as successful as Steve intended, so in 1993, he eliminated the hardware division of the company and concentrated on software development. His software was paired with Intel's 486 processor, but most consumers preferred other operating systems.

In 1986, Steve purchased George Lucas' animated division of Lucasfilms production company. Now Steve turned his attention to developing animated feature films to rival industry leader Disney Studios. The new company was called Pixar and in 1987, it produced its first feature-length film, Toy story. The move was groundbreaking in its style of animation and special animated effects and broke box office records. It was soon followed by box office record breakers: "A Bug's Life," "Toy Story 2" and "Monsters, Inc." With each new film Jobs' company set new records and changed the face of animation. It was felt, for instance that only Christmas releases would succeed. This was proven wrong with the smash release of "Finding Nemo" in 2003.

Steve helped launch the personal computer revolution with the introduction of the Macintosh, the first graphical user interface operational system we are now so accustomed to, along with introducing the mouse and laser printer to the general public. After a very public exit from the company he loved and founded, he returned triumphantly in 1997 to rescue a struggling Apple and turning it into the vibrant company it is now. This began the development of the revolutionary iMac personal computer.

Steve became interested in music as a new marketing vehicle. When asked why he never became involved with the handheld computer device (PDA's), he said that if you go back hundreds of years, you find people in business not looking for methods of data entry, but loving music. Steve wanted to find a way to bring music to

everyone through computer technology. Internet companies like Napster and Kazaa had revolutionized music file-sharing but done so illegally. The music industry was hurting from free file sharing so Steve sought to find a method of internet music downloads that satisfied both the artists, the industry and consumers. This became the birth of the iPod, Apple's device to play MP3's (Music files) downloaded exclusively through Apple's iTunes music store and software.

At first only a few music companies signed on but eventually Jobs secured contracts with the five major production companies. First the iPod played songs. Then it displayed photos. Then podcasts. In its latest incarnation Apple released the latest iPod which allows consumers to download not only music files, but music videos and television programs from ABC/Disney. The company says it will change the way we experience music and more. Steve said at the introduction, we will see how the consumers use the new device to drive future development.

It was an apt description. In 2007, Apple reinvented the mobile cell phone with the release of the iPhone. Now in its fourth reinvention, the cell phone dominates the market and has people lining up for days to get the newest version every year. Applications for the phone are being released every week and the public cannot get enough of them. Not bad for a company that doesn't have a factory dedicated solely to producing its phone. Motorola, Nokia and Blackberry should be so popular!

Steve lived with his family in Silicon Valley, the area of Southern California that was transformed from an apricot orchard to what is now known as the creative center of computer technology. He was a visionary in the world of personal computers that changed the industry from top to bottom. The moment there were rumors that Steve Jobs was returning to Apple, the stock price shot up almost 100% in value. His charisma was unrivaled. When he spoke at a MacWorld convention, his onstage presence had the crowd greeting him with standing ovations and listening intently. If a businessman's talent is measured by his success, Steve Jobs talent was unsurpassed. His ability to transform Apple from a company who was losing \$1 billion a year, to one making \$1 billion a year, is enough to prove his worth and why he is hailed as a genius.

\*Steve Jobs passed away on October 5, 2011.

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