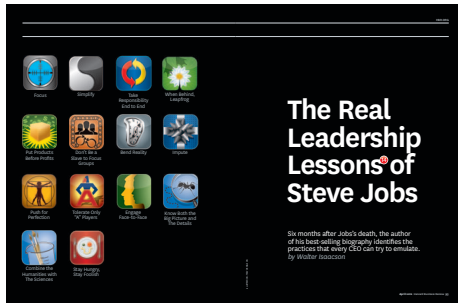




The Real Leadership Lessons of Steve Jobs



HBR article by **Walter Isaacson**,
April 2012

What are the characteristics and best practices of the late Apple CEO that every manager can try to emulate? Commentators have fixated on the

rough edges of Jobs's personality, but biographer Walter Isaacson contends that "his personality was integral to his way of doing business." In this article, Isaacson offers 14 lessons that will help leaders manage effectively and follow Jobs's career mantra: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish."

I knew Steve Jobs well for more than 30 years, and Isaacson misses *how* Steve led. The essence of Steve's approach to leadership is contained in Apple's two-word tagline, "Think Different." Steve introduced me to meditation and Buddhism when I was 18 and he was 26. And what Steve meant by "Think Different" is the source of all wisdom in Eastern traditions—mindfulness. Mindfulness means paying attention to your present-moment experience. "Think

Different" means: "Drop all your theories and preconceived ideas. Pay attention to the raw reality coming in through your five senses and your mind. This is where you will find insight and wisdom." Isaacson's view is merely that of an outside observer capturing the story of Steve's life and its stressful, difficult circumstances. Steve's real leadership lessons are yet to be written.

Jonathan Rotenberg,
president, Centriq Advisors

Jobs personified Machiavelli's *The Prince*. To achieve results, he knew when not to be good. He also made sure that although many saw him, few were able to touch him. In the end his success will be the company's failure. No disrespect to Apple's new CEO, Tim Cook, but I cannot see him creating that same intense loyalty.

Lawrence Serewicz, principal information management officer, Durham County Council

By nearly any standard, Jobs's results were exemplary. But is it fair to gauge Jobs's leadership—or anyone's leadership—only by results? As our current economy shows us, equally important are the means to achieve the results. Isaacson is notably silent on a range of other leadership elements, such as serving others, integrity, and personal sacrifice. Imagine how much more influential Jobs would have been if he'd had a strong sense of empathy and humility.

Jeffrey M. Ducklow, MBA student,
Bethel University

I would have been honored as an employee to be clobbered by Steve over work I had done (or not). The man was the whole package and would have achieved less if he had behaved differently.

Eric William Daly, director of business intelligence, Enertiatech Integrator

What is it about Jobs that affects people so deeply? People hang on to the idea of



Job Descriptions and the "Experience Needed" Syndrome

HBR blog post by **Tammy Johns**, April 2012

An overly exacting job posting can cost an employer the best candidates.

You raise, between the lines, two major issues: First, do corporations lack confidence in the ability of individuals to adjust, learn, and develop into a job? Are companies covering this perceived risk to the point of absurdity? If a candidate

really has all the required experience, why would she want to do the job again instead of developing further? Second, have corporations given up their responsibility as developers of talent? It seems that by always asking for "job ready"

individuals, they leave development to the market. This practice creates a high level of frustration and a low level of loyalty.

Dominique Turcq, president,
The Boostzone Institute

Johns responds: *There is no question that there is a lot of work to do to fix broken labor markets. All stakeholders—governments, individuals, educators, and, yes, employers—need to change.*



Interact with Us

The best way to comment on any article is on **HBR.ORG**. You can also reach us via

E-MAIL: hbr_letters@hbr.org

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/HBR

TWITTER: twitter.com/HarvardBiz

Correspondence may be edited for space and style.

Apple as a counterculture company, but it no longer is. Apple made the rules for playing in the consumer technology market. Your Woodstock free-for-all has turned into a well-planned Madison Square Garden concert.

Jonathan Homan, partner, high-tech company

Steve Jobs was a role model of courage and discipline: courage to get through multiple failures and discipline to learn from them. He stayed focused and worked hard, even in the face of illness and death.

Gilberte Houbart, director, Media and Product Design, Delta Capital Partners

The media is only now covering Jobs's controversial management style, which most of us knew nothing about when he was alive.

Fadi El-Eter, owner, PM Hut

If the man weren't a genius, none of his bullying, perfectionism, or abuse would have meant a thing. He would have been the middle manager from hell, the horrible boss, the shortsighted CEO. It is genius that makes us forgive those personality traits we would not tolerate in most people.

Pamela Turley, freelance writer



Many of those "experienced" candidates must be retrained anyway. Their experience is so tied to their previous employer's methods and needs that they are not functional for months. Give me a "good learner" any day, regardless of experience.

Rachel Williamson, webmaster and blogger, WealthBizNetwork



STANFORD
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Executive Education

DON'T JUST REACT TO CHANGE. CREATE IT.

Instead of being surprised by change, be ready to lead it. At Stanford, you are immersed in an environment that is continually focused on the future, so you gain the vision, skills, and tools to lead change and drive innovation in your organization. Join us and start realizing tomorrow's successes today.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Advanced Leadership Program for Asian-American Executives
July 29 – August 3, 2012

Executive Program in Leadership: The Effective Use of Power
July 29 – August 3, 2012

Strategic Marketing Management
August 19 – 29, 2012

Managing Talent for Strategic Advantage
August 26 – 31, 2012

Visit stanfordexecutive.com to learn more.

Change lives. Change organizations. Change the world.



Copyright 2012 Harvard Business Publishing. All Rights Reserved. Additional restrictions may apply including the use of this content as assigned course material. Please consult your institution's librarian about any restrictions that might apply under the license with your institution. For more information and teaching resources from Harvard Business Publishing including Harvard Business School Cases, eLearning products, and business simulations please visit hbsp.harvard.edu.