

# Steve Jobs

Biography by Walter Isaacson

**This is the official  
biography. Isaacson is ex  
managing Editor Time and  
chairman CNN. He has done  
biographies on Benjamin  
Franklin and Einstein.**

**I have picked the sentences,  
paras, that give us a glimpse of  
this genius. I enjoyed reading  
the book, hope you enjoy the  
summary**

**‘I always thought of myself as a humanities person as a kid but I liked electronics. Then I read what my hero Edwin land of Polaroid said about the importance of people, who could stand at the intersection of humanities and sciences and I decided that’s what I want to be’-**  
**Steve Jobs**

**This is a book about the roller coaster life and searingly intense personality of a creative entrepreneur whose passion for perfection and ferocious drive revolutionized six industries – PCs, animated movies, music, phones, tablet computing, digital publishing and maybe retail.**

**He was not a model boss or human being, tidily packaged for emulation. Driven by demons, he could drive those around him to fury and despair.**

**Abandoned.Chosen.Special.**  
**Those concepts became part of**  
**who Jobs was and how he**  
**regarded himself.**

(Ref : Jobs was adopted)

**Jobs grew up in a home developed by real estate developer Joseph Eichler. Eichler homes were smart and cheap and good. They bought clean design and simple taste to low income people. The homes had awesome little features. Jobs early thinking on simplicity and design came from here.**



**Don Hoefler of Electronic News began a series in January 1971 entitled Silicon valley USA. Don coined silicon valley!!**

**Jobs was a bright school kid always up to pranks. His teacher Imogene Hill bribed him with lollipops to do well and he excelled. He was selected for a double promotion and always regarded Ms. Hill as a saint.**

**Bob Dylan's lyrics  
struck chords of  
creative thinking in  
teenage Jobs.**

**His lifelong experiments with compulsive diets started in 1972. He had an odd mixture of intensity and aloofness. He oscillated between charismatic and creepy.**

**Jobs was one of the first 50 employees of Atari, working as a technician for \$5 an hour. He was hired despite being a dropout from Reed college, he was put on the night shift because he wasn't friendly and had Body odour**

**Jobs on the Apple brand name-'I was on one of my fruitarian diets. I had just come back from the apple farm. It sounded fun, spirited and not intimidating. Apple took the edge off the word 'computer' plus it would get us ahead of Atari in the phone book'**

**Apple the brand name was a smart choice. The word instantly signaled friendliness and simplicity. It was off beat and normal as a pie. There was a whiff of counterculture, back to nature earthiness. Yet nothing could be more American.**

**Apple Computers was profitable  
thirty days after starting the  
company!!**



**Mark Markkula, the first Apple Chairman predicted that Apple would be a Fortune 500 company in two years in a pitch to investors. It took Apple seven years**

**Markkula came from a marketing background. He wrote the one page “Apple marketing philosophy”. He stressed on three things: *Empathy, Focus, Impute* (it implied that people form an opinion about a company or product based on the signals that it conveys.**

**Mike Scott was the first president of Apple. Jobs' desire for control and disdain for authority was destined to be a problem with Mike. An early showdown was about employee badge numbers. Mike allocated # 1 to Wozniak and # 2 to Jobs. Jobs threw a tantrum and cried. He wanted # 0. Since these employee badge numbers are used by banks to pay salaries, #0 could not be registered and Jobs ended up being employee # 2**

**An independent developer came up with Vis calc , a spread sheet and personal finance program. It was available only on Apple II. More than any other machine Apple II launched the PC industry.**

**In the annals of Innovation, new ideas are only part of the equation. Execution is just as important. Jobs was good at this.**

**In Jan 1977, Apple was valued at \$5309. Less than four years later when it went public, it was the most oversubscribed IPO since Ford Motors in 1956.**

**‘Steve is the opposite of loyal’  
according to Andy Herzfeld, an  
early Apple engineer. ‘He is anti  
loyal, he has to abandon the  
people he is close to’**

**Steve Jobs' attitude to wealth was complex. He was an anti materialistic hippie to start with. He loved material objects that were finely crafted like Porsche and Mercedes cars, Braun appliances, BMW motorcycles. Yet he lived in very simple houses with sparse furniture and never had a security guard. He never had a chauffeur.**



**He never allowed a craving for profits take precedence over his passion for building great products. He never wanted money to ruin his life.**

**‘Jobs seems to introduce tension, politics and hassles at work. He doesn’t provide the trusting, supporting, relaxed environment needed’- ex employee**

**Jobs referred to computers as the bicycle for the human mind. At one point, he wanted to call the Macintosh a bicycle for the mind! His team rejected the thought.**

**Steve Jobs had a reality distortion field. At the root of it was Jobs' belief that rules didn't apply to him. So, he would twist facts, everything to suit himself**

**Jobs had an uncanny ability to know what your weak point is, know what will make you feel small, to make you cringe. It is a common trait in people who are charismatic and manipulative.**

**Every year since 1981, the Mac team gave an award to the employee who stood up to Steve Jobs.**

**Steve motivated people by looking at the bigger picture.**

**Jobs emphasized that apple products would be clean and simple. ‘We will make them bright and pure and honest about being hi tech, rather than a heavy black industrial look of Sony. We are shooting for the Museum of Modern art quality’**

**‘Great art stretches the taste, it doesn’t follow tastes’. He admired Mercedes. ‘Over the years, they have made the line softer but the details starker.’**



# Jobs' maxims

- **Never compromise**
- **It is better to miss than turn out the wrong thing**
- **It's not done till it ships**
- **The journey is the reward**
- **Consumers don't know what they want until we've shown them**
- **Real artists ship**
- **It's better to be a pirate than join the navy.**

**Sculley who Jobs hired from Pepsi, offered this advise ' invest in in store merchandising that romances the consumer with Apple's potential to enrich their life.**

**After thirty years Bill gates would have a grudging respect for Jobs. 'He never really knew much about technology, but he had an amazing instinct for what works'**

**Jobs had a poor view of Bill gates.  
'Bill is basically unimaginative and  
has never invented anything, he  
shamelessly ripped off other  
people's ideas.'**

**Jobs philosophy on employees...’You have to be ruthless if you want to build a team of A players. It’s too easy as a team grows, to put in a few B players, B players attract C players and before long you have an average company.**

**Apple stock went up 7 % when it was announced that he was sacked from Apple by Sculley. Jobs never spoke with Sculley after that.**

**One of Jobs' management philosophies was that it was crucial, every now and then to roll the dice and 'bet the company' on some new idea or technology.**

**His sister Mona Simpson developed a deep affection for him and wrote a edgy novel about him, *A Regular Guy*, that described his quirks with discomfoting accuracy.**



**When it came to women, Jobs could be deeply romantic. He tended to fall in love dramatically, share with friends every up and down of a relationship, and pine in public whenever he was away from his current girlfriend.**

**Jobs had a up down relationship with the daughter he denied, Lisa. He named a model after her! They would fight over small things and not talk to each other for weeks and months. She did not invite him to her Harvard Literary graduation in 2000.**

**Jobs returned to Apple in January 1997, as part time advisor and iCEO- interim CEO.**

**He did not like to wrestle with complexities or make accommodations. This was true in product design, furnishings in the house etc. It was also true of his personal commitments. If he knew for sure, a course of action was right, he was unstoppable.**

**When he had doubts , he withdrew, preferring not to think of things that did not suit him. This attitude was because he saw the world in binary terms, a person was a bozo or a hero, a product was amazing or shit,he would be foxed by things that were more complex, marriage, buying the right sofa or committing to run a company.**

**He didn't care what people thought of him. He would cut people off from his life, never to speak with them again. Sometimes , he would try and explain himself.**

**Jobs could be cutting and cold ,  
especially towards people who  
crossed him. He could also be  
sentimental about people who  
started with him from the early  
days.**

**Over the years, Jobs would bring some strong leaders to the Apple board, Al Gore, Eric Schmidt, Art Levison, Andrea Jung. But, he always wanted to make sure they were loyal, loyal to a fault. Despite their stature they seem to be intimidated by Jobs.**



**Apple is about people who think outside the box, who want to use computers to help them change the world.**

In the Apple **THINK DIFFERENT** campaign, Apple used Einstein, Gandhi, Lennon, Dylan, Picasso, Chaplin, King, Ansel Adams, Martha Graham, Amelia Earhart, Frank Lloyd Wright. Most were Jobs' personal heroes. They were all creative people who took risks, defied failure and bet their careers on doing things differently.

**‘Steve created the only lifestyle brand in the tech industry’ Larry Ellison said. ‘There are cars people are proud to have , Porsche,Ferrari,Prius-because what I drive says something about me.People feel the same way about an Apple product.**

**‘I discovered that the best innovation is sometimes the company, the way you organize a company’-Steve Jobs**

**In 1997, Apple lost 1.04 billion \$.** They were 90 days away from being insolvent. **In 1998, they turned a profit of 309 million \$**

**Jobs' management mantra was focus. He cut product lines and extraneous features in operating systems. He enforced a rigorous discipline on suppliers. When he started, Apple had more than 2 months inventory more than any tech company. The value of that was 500 mln\$. He cut that by half, Tim cook cut it down to a few days.**

**Under Steve Jobs  
there is zero  
tolerance for not  
performing.**

**Tim Cook reduced the number of Apple suppliers from a hundred to 24. He cut better deals and brought down inventory to 6 days. He convinced many of the suppliers to keep warehouses next to Apple's plants and closed ten of the company's nineteen warehouses.**



**Many companies pride themselves on having FEW meetings. Jobs had many. Executive staff session every Monday, a marketing strategy session all Wednesday afternoon, endless product review sessions.**

**He wanted all departments to work together, he would talk of deep collaboration and concurrent engineering. He got some of his team to always meet and select new hires along with him.**

**In July 2011, there were 324 Apple retail stores. The biggest was in London Covent garden. The average annual revenue per store was 34 mil \$. Total Apple retail sales was 9.8 Bln \$, accounting for 15 pc of Apple revenues.**

**Once a year, Jobs took his most valuable employees, The Top 100 on a retreat. They were picked on a simple guideline, they were the 100 people you would take on a lifeboat to your next company.**

**At the end of each retreat, Jobs would stand in front of a whiteboard and bring down the whole exercise to **three things.****

**In August 2001, the Apple stock price was at 18 \$. Today , ten years later it is near 350 \$.**

**Jobs wanted to do a music+camera +voice product and worked with Motorola. He was so disappointed with the ROKR that he decided to do a phone himself. That was the genesis of iPhone.**

**‘I am about 50-50 on believing in god. For most of my life I’ve felt that there must be something more to our existence than meets the eye’.**



**‘I think that something survives after you die. On the other hand it is like an on-off switch, click and it’s gone. Maybe that’s why I never liked to put on-off switches on Apple devices.’**