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August 26, 2011

What Makes Steve Jobs Great

By JOE NOCERA

"I think I have five more great products in me," Steve Jobs said a very long time ago.

He was 31 at the time and barreling up Route 101 in Silicon Valley, en route to a meeting in San Francisco. Having been kicked out of Apple, which he'd co-founded a decade before, Jobs was wholly engaged in the act of starting up a new company, which he had named — of course! — NeXT.

As it happens, I was in the passenger seat, interviewing him for Esquire magazine. I was never one of the journalists who was close to Jobs. But that long-ago assignment came at a time in his life when he must have wanted to unburden himself.

For nearly a week, he allowed me to sit in on meetings and engaged in long, introspective conversations over dinner. And he took me to his house, where we leafed through a photo album with pictures of the team that created the Macintosh computer, his last big accomplishment before his exile from Apple.

Wednesday's sad, but unsurprising, news that Jobs was resigning as Apple's chief executive — presumably because of his deteriorating health — got me thinking about that old encounter. The businessman I met 25 years ago violated every rule of management. He was not a consensus-builder but a dictator who listened mainly to his own intuition. He was a maniacal micromanager. He had an astonishing aesthetic sense, which businesspeople almost always lack. He could be absolutely brutal in meetings: I watched him eviscerate staff members for their "bozo ideas."

The Steve Jobs I watched that week was arrogant, sarcastic, thoughtful, learned, paranoid and "insanely" (to use one of his favorite words) charismatic.

The Steve Jobs the rest of the world has gotten to know in the nearly 15 years since he returned to Apple is no different. He never mellowed, never let up on Apple employees, never stopped relying on his singular instincts in making decisions about how Apple products should look and how they should work. Just a few months ago, Fortune published an article about life inside Apple; it opened with an anecdote in which Jobs cut his staff to ribbons for putting out a product that failed to meet his standards. But his

instincts have been so unerringly good — and his charisma so powerful — that Apple employees were willing to follow him wherever he led. Apple will miss those instincts.

Most of the articles written in the past few days about Jobs's resignation have tended to focus on the iPhone and the iPad. But if you take the long view, they're just the icing on the cake.

Have we forgotten already that Jobs virtually invented the personal computer, with the introduction of the Apple II, when he was barely 21? That a few years later he saved Apple from near-disaster by creating the Macintosh — the first machine with a mouse and windows, and all the other features we associate with modern computing? That the NeXT operating system was critical to the next generation of Macintosh computers after Jobs returned from a 12-year exile in 1997? And, yes, then came the iPod, the iPhone and iPad — all of them so elegant in their look and feel that they became more than devices. They were objects of lust.

There's more, of course. Steve Jobs persuaded the recording industry to use his iTunes to give consumers an easy alternative to stealing music online. The iPhone completely upended two industries: computing and cellphones. The iPad is in the process of doing the same to the written word. And let's not forget Pixar, which Jobs bought at the same time he was starting NeXT, and which has become the greatest maker of animated films in modern times, steeped in Jobs's aesthetic and attention to detail.

Five more great products, he said 25 years ago? When you look at the list, you realize that he sold himself short. It is almost not believable that one person could have affected such a large swath of American culture and industry.

In recent days, Jobs has been routinely called a business genius, and who can disagree? I've been a critic at times of some of Apple's practices, starting with its excessive secrecy, but there is no denying that Jobs is on a very short list of greatest American businessmen ever.

In many of the recent articles, he's been mentioned as a modern-day Henry Ford, who, of course, built the first automobile the middle class could afford. On that ride to San Francisco all those years ago, Jobs himself compared the still-young computer industry to Henry Ford's automobile industry, when anything still seemed possible. "It must have been the most incredible feeling to know that this was going to change America," he said. "And it did!"

As he steps down as Apple's leader, at the too-young age of 56, Steve Jobs has known that feeling more than anyone else alive.

STEVE JOBS

A. True/False

1. Twenty-five years ago Jobs said he had five more products in him. ^T
2. No one can agree that Jobs is a business genius.
3. The author denies that Jobs is a great American business man.
4. Jobs was always respectful of the opinions of others.
5. Jobs has had a huge effect on culture and industry.
6. Jobs has a fine aesthetic sense.
7. Most business people have a similar aesthetic sense to Jobs.
8. Jobs usually trusted his intuition.

B. Definitions

1. barreling	A.
2. bozo ideas	B.
3. anecdote	C.
4. icing	D.

5. swath	E.
6. sussing	F.
7. unsung	E.
8. eviscerate	F.

B. Synonyms

1. kicked out	A. contemptuous
2. assignment	B. softened
3. maniacal	C. broke
4. violated	D. looked
5. leafed	E. taunting
6. arrogant	F. task
7. sarcastic	G. rejected
8. mellowed	H. obsessive

STEVE JOBS

Read the article "What Makes Steve Jobs Great" and then answer the following question using complete sentences and your own words.

1. What is the main idea of the article?

2. Do you agree or disagree with this idea?

3. Why does the author claim Jobs violated every rule of management?

4. According to the author what are Jobs' strengths as a business leader?

5. Do you think Apple has a future without Jobs?

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The Amazing Steve Jobs Story*He ranks in the industrial pantheon along with Edison and Ford.*

By HOLMAN W. JENKINS, JR.

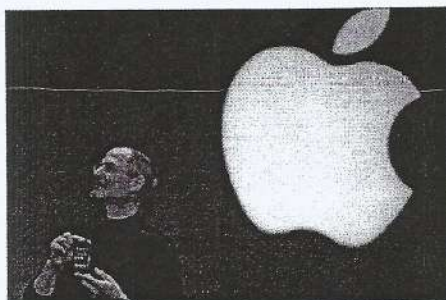
People will be trying to isolate and bottle the "leadership secrets of Steve Jobs" till the end of business time. But of course it's impossible.

His story isn't just the story of a person, but the combination of time, place and person, spawning a career in industrial design of awesome proportions. Mr. Jobs founded two pivotal companies in American history. Both happened to be named Apple. One was the Apple of the Macintosh, the other was the Apple of the iPhone.

From the beginning, he saw the human possibility in the extraordinarily complex hardware and software engineering of digital devices. The Macintosh should work in a way that's intuitive, that doesn't require an owner's manual. And today you only need to survey the blogosphere or friends with toddlers to hear stories of 3-year-olds picking up an iPad and quickly sussing out what it's for.

Then there's the business story. The first Apple had become, in the minds of the people running it and its investors, a computer company—one riven over whether to follow Bill Gates's advice and license the Macintosh operating system and make a living raking in fees from clone makers.

That's the Apple that spit Mr. Jobs out. The second Apple—the Apple of the iPod, iPhone and iPad—was the noncomputer company that Mr. Jobs perhaps instinctively intended all along. A decade after his return, he made it official and changed the name from Apple Computer to Apple. His purpose wasn't to fill a niche in an industrial landscape, but to realize the full potential of the medium to which Apple had committed itself.



AFP/Getty Images

But let's also acknowledge that coupled with vision and the pursuit of excellence was hard-headed business strategizing. The triumph of iTunes, the App Store and the incipient Apple Cloud ushered in the era at Apple of network-esque complexity as well as the possibility of network-esque revenues. It made Mr. Jobs, despite himself, an empire builder. Success brought rivals like Google and Amazon. There came the need to anticipate moves and countermoves, the need to play defense. This was an unsung part of the Jobs C.V. in later years. And almost tactless to mention is the garish side effect: the rise of Apple to exceed Microsoft and on some days Exxon Mobil, as

the world's most valuable company.

Now this was an almost inexplicable business success, a miraculous reversal of fortune of the sort that inspires banner headlines and hyperventilating on cable TV when it happens on the ball field. It was an astonishing achievement, emblematic of a man meeting his moment *completely*, when few men get a chance to meet their moments even partially.

Mr. Jobs's negotiation of personal relationships has been, by reputation, fraught and idiosyncratic. But whose isn't? And whatever his interpersonal challenges, a different kind of warmth is also apparent. An image that will become part of the Jobs lore, inevitably, is his extraordinary determination to cling to life, at least partly for the benefit of the company he created and the customers he accrued. His unpathetic willingness to show his withered self in order to introduce to the world the latest wonders of Apple product development was painful and glorious to watch.

What comes to mind now is a forgotten PBS show in the 1980s that tried to explain what was then known as the "quality revolution" in business. Interviewed was some wise old MIT professor who said, if memory serves, "Quality is love." Mr. Jobs's determination to make superb products was, one likes to think, an expression of love for the world, life and possibility.

"I believe Apple's brightest and most innovative days are ahead of it," he said in his announcement this week, perhaps his one concession to ordinary sentimentality, for it seems impossible that Apple, or any company, could anticipate another run like Apple's in the 10 years since the iPod's introduction.

Indeed, it seems unlikely that even Mr. Jobs, had he remained healthy and in charge, wouldn't eventually have met a technological wave or strategic development that he couldn't understand quickly enough and react to. Possibly it's already here: Television in the age of the digital cloud, a puzzle now taxing many of Silicon Valley's most creative minds.

And that would have been fine, preferable to the medical torture and premature professional swansong that have been his lot. The legend did not need this almost sacrificial ending to secure for him a place in the industrial pantheon with Edison, Ford and (though it might cause him to curl his lip slightly) Gates.

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MUTI-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Read the article "The Amazing Steve Jobs Story"

and answer the following questions by selecting the best single response.

1. Steve Jobs

- a) designed the Macintosh
- ☒ b) believed that operating digital devices ought to be intuitive
- c) once owned two companies both called Apple

2. When Steve Jobs returned to Apple

- ☒ a) he wanted to make it a great computer company
- b) he immediately changed the name to Apple
- c) he turned it into a noncomputer company

3. Steve Jobs became an empire builder

- a) in order to defeat Amazon and Google
- b) despite himself because of the success of iTunes and the App Store
- ☒ c) because that was always his vision

4. Apple became

- a) more valuable than Microsoft but less valuable than Exxon Mobil
- b) less valuable than Microsoft but more valuable than Exxon Mobil
- ☒ c) more valuable than Microsoft and sometimes more valuable than Exxon Mobil

5. Steve Jobs met his moment completely

- a) on the ball field
- b) through his miraculous reversal of fortune
- c) by inspiring banner headlines and hyperventilating on cable TV

6. Steve Jobs willingness to display the latest Apple products to the world despite his illness was

- a) painful and glorious to watch
- b) pathetic and painful to watch

c) unpathetic and painless to watch

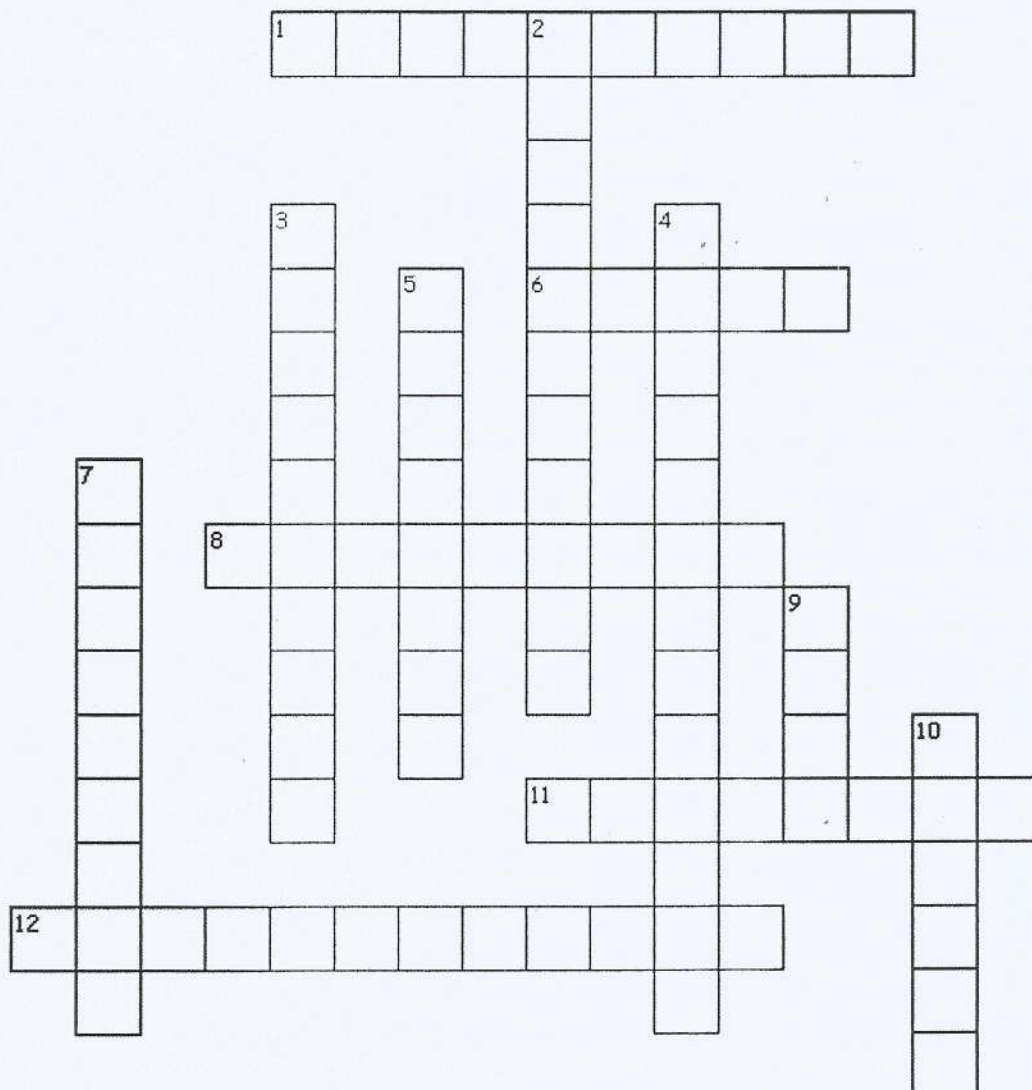
7. Since the iPod's introduction

- a) Apple has had ten good years
- b) Apple has had ten mediocre years
- c) Apple has had ten terrible years

8. Jobs is in the industrial pantheon

- a) because of his medical torture and professional swan song
- b) because of his almost sacrificial ending
- c) along with Ford, Edison and Gates

Steve Jobs



Across

1. what Jobs would do to people in meetings
6. found on the tops of cakes
8. what jobs liked to listen to
11. Jobs never did this
12. when the boss tries and look after everything

Down

2. an asset for leaders
3. how you come to understand
4. where Jobs did most of his work
5. the iphone is loaded with them
7. Jobs helped him make computers beautiful
9. a bit of a clown
10. many people think jobs is one

Steve Jobs

EATCHEIT	A E T H E T I C	I A L S N N A B N E Y L L T I R
TARNAORG	A R R O G A N T	
CULETRU	C O L T U R E	
DEIAS	I D E A S	
MAZIXMIA	M A N I A C A L I	
NSUUNG	U N S U N G	
EOCTNAED	A N E C D O T E	
BEUSINSS	B U S I N E S S	
RETVEISACE	E V I S C E R A T E	
RIUDSTYN	I N D U S T R Y	
MEODEWLL	M G L O W E D	
PELAP	A P P L E	
CTREPSUOM	C O M P U T E R S	
EIGUNS	G E N I U S	
TITNUNOII	I N T U I T I O N	
TAISACRSC	S A R C A S T I C	
~~S I L I C O N V A L L E Y~~		
A L S N N B	M N E Y L L T	
	N E Y L L T I R	

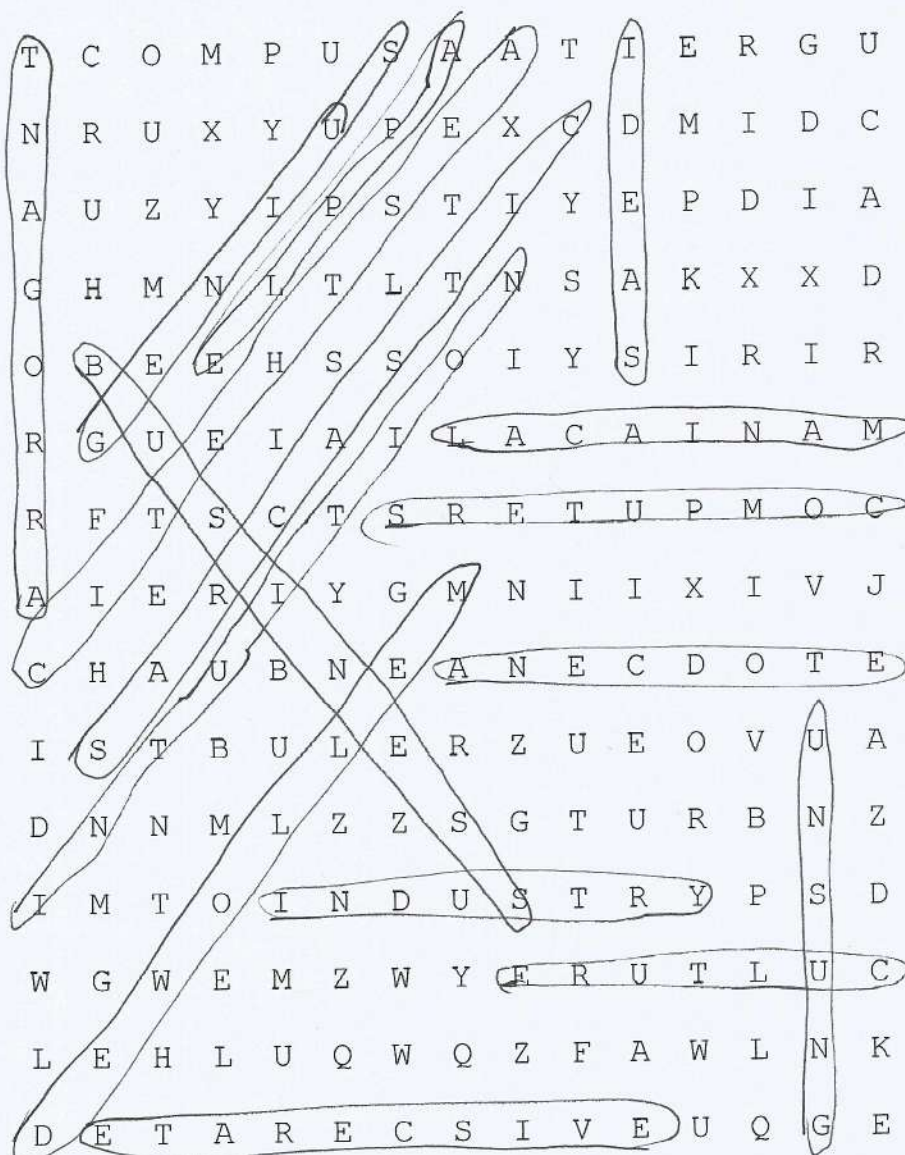
Unscramble each of the clue words.

Take the letters that appear in ☐ boxes and unscramble them for the final message.

Created by Puzzlemaker at DiscoveryEducation.com



Steve Jobs



AESTHETIC
ARROGANT
CULTURE
IDEAS
MANIACAL
UNSUNG

ANECDOTE
BUSINESS
EVISCERATE
INDUSTRY
MELLOWED

APPLE
COMPUTERS
GENIUS
INTUITION
SARCASTIC

C O M P U T E R G U R U

16 of 16 words were placed into the puzzle.

Solution