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Book Review On *The Steve Jobs Ways*

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About the Author:

Jay Elliot is a former senior VP of Apple and first joined them some 28 years ago. He has seen the evolution and revolution created by Steve and provides an interesting insight and angle to working with this hugely innovative Entrepreneur. The former Senior Vice President of Apple Computer and close colleague of Steve Jobs's throughout his tenure, Jay Elliot takes readers on a remarkable tour through Jobs's astonishing career. From the inception of game-changing products like the Apple II and the Macintosh, to his stunning fall from grace, and on to his rebirth at the helm of Apple, his involvement with Pixar, and the development of the iPod, iPhone, iPad, and much more, *The Steve Jobs Way* presents real-life examples of Jobs's leadership challenges and triumphs, showing readers how to apply these principles to their own lives and careers.

Elliot was responsible for all corporate operations, including HR, Facilities, Real Estate, IT, Education, and Pacific Rim Sales, plus corporate business planning, reporting directly to Steve Jobs, Chairman of the Board. Also, as a member of the Macintosh organization he helped Jobs develop the Macintosh computer from development to introduction. Elliot's articles and interviews have been published in the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, and *Fortune*. He lives in California.

Introduction to the book:

The book is written in topic based chapters and is full of stories and insights to the journey and all employees in Apple and more importantly, Steve went through to reach the success they experience today.

After reading the book, *The Steve Jobs Way*, we will learn:

- Why Steve Jobs is in a class by himself.
- How Steve Jobs runs an organization that brings such convenience, time-saving and pleasure to so many people around the world.
- How Steve Jobs' unique leadership style has forever changed our everyday lives and the world around us.
- How to shift your paradigm and get your organization to shift with you.

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Macintosh, to his stunning fall from grace, and on to his rebirth at the helm of Apple, his involvement with Pixar, and the development of the iPod, iPhone, iPad, and much more, *The Steve Jobs Way* presents real-life examples of Jobs's leadership challenges and triumphs, showing readers how to apply these principles to their own lives and careers. Packed with exclusive interviews from key figures in Apple Computer's history, this revealing account provides a rarely seen, intimate glimpse into the Steve Jobs you won't see on stage, thoroughly exploring his management and leadership principles. From product development meetings to design labs, through executive boardroom showdowns to the world outside of Silicon Valley, you will see the real Steve Jobs, the Boy Genius who forever transformed technology and the way we work, play, consume, and communicate all through the eyes of someone who worked side by side with Jobs.

Summary:

In the first few pages Elliott describes how he first got the job with Jobs. Here's the plain, unvarnished truth about what Elliot has to say: "Steve Jobs is unlike just about everyone you'll ever meet. After founding Apple and wowing a bunch of venture capitalists and business people, Jobs had visions of a different kind of computer and become a disruption in his own company, and was eventually thrust out (first Icarus moment). Using the funds he received from his stock sale, he purchased Pixar and developed the Next computer. For a man who is supposedly a marketing genius, he misunderstood Pixar and targeted a tiny university market with a computer that was far too capable and expensive. Fortunately, due to his inability to recognize his failures, he stuck around and funded both long enough for the world to catch up to his technologies. Both Pixar and Next reached Icarus points of their own, and Jobs had the ability to reach deep into his own pockets to keep them float.

Jobs returned to Apple as an "advisor" to Gil Amelio and supplanted Amelio very shortly afterward. Amelio must have been the only person on the planet who didn't foresee this outcome. Jobs, having learned his lessons from his first stint at Apple and his near failures and spectacular successes with Pixar, determined to trust his vision and turn Apple into a customer experience company that happens to make electronics. And that's where we are today."

The Steve Jobs Way is mostly a biography about Jobs, which I've encapsulated above. Along the way Elliot points out the successes (in great detail) and the failures (in not so much detail). Elliot points out the things we should learn from Jobs, like his passion, his vision, his obsession with detail, his ability to create and share a vision and so forth. Frankly, most of us regular humans would find it hard to mimic Jobs in even one of these attributes, much less pretend to match Jobs in all of these attributes. Layer on top Jobs' first win at Apple which gave him deep pockets and staying power, and very few people can touch his success.

What strikes me most about the short biography is how much I think Jobs learned from his

own near failures that he now applies at Apple, including shortening the product offerings, focusing on customer experience and creating a mystique around the Apple brand and Apple products. Jobs knows, and I think increasingly Apple knows, that the expectations are now so high for Apple that one stumble could seriously damage the firm, so every new product must meet Jobs' vision and expectations, which will hopefully outstrip the expectations and needs of the customer base. Frankly, Jobs is in a competitive race by himself. Every other computer and electronics manufacturer has ceded the high ground to Jobs and Apple and are merely hoping they make mistakes.

While it probably won't be a surprise when I tell you this, perhaps the greatest impact Jobs has with Apple is that he is the de facto product manager for the iPad, and the iPod and the iPhone. I can think of no other significant consumer electronics manufacturer where the CEO is so involved in the design and development of the core products. It is his vision and involvement and his passion for the product and the product features and attributes that differentiates Apple.

All the stories and components defined as iLeadership can be pulled into a structure as follows:

Product & Details

At the core of the Steve Jobs Way is Product. The overriding belief that great products only come from people and teams that are totally passionate about the products they are creating. Jobs says "You have to be burning with an idea, or a problem or a wrong that you want to right." If you're not passionate enough from the start, you'll never make it as an entrepreneur. In addition to being a product Czar, Jobs was extremely detail focused. He had a fundamental need to focus in on a single aspect or detail, clearing everything from his vision and his mind until he arrived at the decision he was looking for.

Pirates! Not the Navy

Jobs recognized the critical need to build team spirit and motivation, and became famous for his team retreats and the culture he created within the product development teams. One of the early t-shirts distributed at a retreat held the slogan "Why join the Navy if you can be a pirate?" This was about capturing the outlaw of free thinking revolutionary spirit Steve wanted to harness.

Rewards for Pirates

The book paints a picture that building Apple was not about the money but about the vision of what they could create. Steve truly cherishes his people, and knows the great things could not be achieved without them. He goes to great lengths to shower them with recognition and reward.

Structure and holistic product development

The biggest lesson I learned from the book was about Apple's Product Driven organization structure and holistic approach to product development.

Before the rift in 1985, Steve created a structure around the Mac group central to product development rather than a typical org structure. When he left Apple, this focus was lost and over the following 10 years Apple stuttered along.

One of the first things he did on return was to drastically cut the number of products being produced, so that teams could focus on a few. He then structured people around products. Employees weren't a series of disciplines passing the product from one department to another, instead they worked with cross pollination or concurrent engineering. It was simultaneous and holistic with endless rounds of interdisciplinary design reviews. All team members made an investment into the product and stayed with it to the end.

Persuasion

Steve Jobs is not just about product development, he also had incredible skills in persuading markets, individuals and consumers about the way forward. He even managed to convince the music mogels to try i-Tunes for a year, rather than to continue with their diverse failing approaches. The iPod and iTunes of course changed the way we all listened to music and the rest is history. None of that would have happened if Steve hadn't been persistent when influencing the record companies.

Conclusion:

Some books are proscriptive, they tell you what to learn and what to do based on examples. Some books are descriptive; they tell you a story or describe an event. This is a book that seems to suggest it is a proscriptive book, but ultimately it is a descriptive book. However, it is a great read and perhaps one of the best I've seen about Jobs and what makes him tick. I recommend this book not only to Management faculty and students, but all those who have a passion for reading. All of us know that apple is a healthy fruit and the apple which fell on Newton's head but what about the apple of Steve Jobs? Happy reading!

The Steve Jobs Ways is Available at www.amazon.in/books

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