

5 Most Inspiring Steve Jobs Stories

Steve Jobs on the original iPod

When engineers were working on the very first iPod completed the prototype, they presented their work to Steve Jobs for his approval. Jobs played with the device, scrutinized it, weighed it in his hands, and promptly rejected it. It was too big.

The engineers explained that they had to reinvent inventing to create the iPod and that it was simply impossible to make it any smaller. Jobs was quiet for a moment. Finally he stood, walked over to an aquarium, and dropped the iPod in the tank. After it touched bottom, bubbles floated to the top.

"Those are air bubbles," he snapped. "That means there's space in there. Make it smaller."

Steve Jobs on dealing with a failed product

MobileMe was a dud. Users complained about lost e-mails, and syncing was spotty at best. Though reviewers gushed over the new iPhone, they panned the MobileMe service. Steve Jobs doesn't tolerate duds. Shortly after the launch event, he summoned the MobileMe team, gathering them in the Town Hall auditorium in Building 4 of Apple's campus, the venue the company uses for intimate product unveilings for journalists. According to a participant in the meeting, Jobs walked in, clad in his trademark black mock turtleneck and blue jeans, clasped his hands together, and asked a simple question: "Can anyone tell me what MobileMe is supposed to do?" Having received a satisfactory answer, he continued, "So why the fuck doesn't it do that?"

For the next half-hour Jobs berated the group. "You've tarnished Apple's reputation," he told them. "You should hate each other for having let each other down." The public humiliation particularly infuriated Jobs. Walt Mossberg, the influential Wall Street Journal gadget columnist, had panned MobileMe. "Mossberg, our friend, is no longer writing good things about us," Jobs said. On the spot, Jobs named a new executive to run the group.

Steve Jobs on simple design

Mike Evangelist (yep, that's his name) still remembers one of his first meetings with Jobs. It took place in the Apple boardroom in early 2000, just a few months after Apple purchased the American division of Astarte, a German software company where Evangelist was an operations manager.

Phil Schiller, Apple's longtime head of marketing, put Evangelist on a team charged with coming up with ideas for a DVD-burning program that Apple planned to release on high-end Macs -- an app that would later become iDVD.

"We had about three weeks to prepare," Evangelist says. He and another employee went to work creating beautiful mock-ups depicting the perfect interface for the new program. On the appointed day, Evangelist and the rest of the team gathered in the boardroom. They'd brought page after page of prototype screen shots showing the new program's various windows and menu options, along with paragraphs of documentation describing how the app would work.

"Then Steve comes in," Evangelist recalls. "He doesn't look at any of our work. He picks up a marker and goes over to the whiteboard. He draws a rectangle. 'Here's the new application,' he says. 'It's got one window. You drag your video into the window. Then you click the button that says BURN. That's it. That's what we're going to make.' "

"We were dumbfounded," Evangelist says. This wasn't how product decisions were made at his old company. Indeed, this isn't how products are planned anywhere else in the industry.
- from Fast Company

Steve's Reality Distortion Field

Bud Tribble, manager of the original Mac software development team:

"Well, it's Steve. Steve insists that we're shipping in early 1982, and won't accept answers to the contrary. The best way to describe the situation is a term from Star Trek. Steve has a reality distortion field. In his presence, reality is malleable. He can convince anyone of practically anything. It wears off when he's not around, but it makes it hard to have realistic schedules."

Steve's Spontaneous Generosity

Givens recalled one day when a secretary was late, and Jobs demanded to know why.

"(She was a) single mom, good secretary," Givens said. "She said, 'My car wouldn't start.' So, that afternoon, (Jobs) walks into her office, throws a set of keys to a brand new Jaguar and says, 'Here, don't be late anymore.' He was always doing things like that, surprising people."