

APPLE CONCEPT: THE COMPANY'S LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY

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The paper analyzes the concept of Apple Inc. and the difficulties in managing such a large corporation. It navigates through Apple's evolution, elucidating how its leadership style has shaped the company's trajectory in the highly competitive tech industry. The analysis offers insights into the visionary approach of the key figures like Steve Jobs and Tim Cook, examining their distinct leadership philosophies and their impact on Apple's innovation and market positioning.

Key words: business strategy; the concept of leadership; phenomenon of Apple; company structure; organizational structure; cross-cultural structure.

КОНЦЕПЦИЯ APPLE: РУКОВОДСТВО КОМПАНИИ И ЕЕ СТРАТЕГИЯ

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В статье анализируется концепция Apple Inc. и трудности управления крупной корпорацией. В работе прослеживается эволюция Apple путём анализа, того, как стиль руководства компании определил траекторию развития компании в высококонкурентной технологической индустрии. Проведённый анализ предлагает понимание прогностического подхода, разработанного такими ключевыми фигурами ИТ-индустрии, как Стив Джобс и Тим Кук. Дополнительно рассматриваются различные философии лидерства и их влияние на инновации и позиционирование Apple на рынке.

Ключевые слова: феномен Apple; концепция лидерства; бизнес-стратегия; структура компании; организационная структура; кросс-культурная структура.

Apple Inc. is known to be a multinational corporation renowned for its innovative consumer electronics, software and digital services. Founded in 1976,

according to a short history retrospect, Apple excels in designing and marketing iconic products like the iPhone, iPad and Mac computers.

Its success is driven by its structure and leadership [1]. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, along with Ronald Wayne, introduced the Apple Computer Company (now known simply as Apple) in 1976. Wozniak suspended his studies at the University of California at Berkeley to found a company and then returned to pursue a degree in electrical engineering. Wozniak, whom technicians affectionately called Woz, was the engineer inspiration for Jobs' creative genius. He himself designed and built the first Apple computers.

Regarding the execution of a presentation, nobody else in the computer industry or any other industry for that matter, could match Steve Jobs, Apple Corporation CEO. Apple founder has won an international recognition for his unique style of business produce presentity.

Mr Jobs had become something much more significant than just a clever money-maker. He stood out in three ways – as a technologist, as a corporate leader and as somebody who was able to make people love what had previously been impersonal, functional gadgets. Strangely, it is this last quality that may have the deepest effect on the way people live. The era of personal technology is in many ways just beginning [2].

When Jobs came to Apple in 1997, the company had a traditional corporate structure commensurate with its size and scale. The company was divided into business divisions, each responsible for its own income statement. Jobs, in his first year as CEO, fired all the division heads, consolidated the entire company under a single income statement and integrated the different functional parts of the business units into a single functional organization.

Apple today is almost 40 times larger in terms of revenue and much more complex than it was in 1998 and still has a functional organization. Senior Vice Presidents are responsible for functions, not products. Apple is based on a structure centered on functional expertise.

Its core belief is that those with the most expertise and experience in a field should be the decision-makers in that field. While the basic principle of traditional departmental structure is to match accountability with control, the basic principle of functional organization is to match expertise with decision-making authority.

Since Steve Jobs introduced the functional organization, Apple executives at all levels, from Senior Vice President on down, have been expected to possess three key leadership qualities: deep expertise to engage meaningfully with all work done within individual functions, deep immersion in the details of the function, and a willingness to consult with other functions in shared decision-making [3].

Apple is a company run by experts who are experts. The premise is that it is easier to train experts to manage well than to train managers to be experts. At Apple, hardware experts manage the hardware and software experts manage the software. One of the principles that permeates Apple is that leaders need to know the details of the organization three levels down. This is because it is essential for fast and effective cross-functional decision making at the highest levels. Apple has hundreds of specialized teams in-house, and a single critical component of a new product offering can require dozens of teams: At Apple, this is called “accountability without control”.

Even if you can’t control all the other teams, you are still responsible for the success of the project. Apple’s functional organization is unusual, if not unique, among very large companies. It goes against the prevailing management theory that the larger a company gets, the more it needs to reorganize into divisions or business units.

What was perhaps most astonishing about Mr Jobs was the fanatical loyalty he managed to inspire in customers. Many Apple users feel themselves to be part of a community, with Mr Jobs as its leader. And there was indeed a personal link. Apple’s products were designed to accord with the boss’s tastes and to meet his obsessively high standards.

Every iPhone or MacBook has his fingerprints all over it. His great achievement was to combine an emotional spark with computer technology, and make the resulting product feel personal. And that is what put Mr Jobs on the right side of history, as the epicentre of technological innovation has moved into consumer electronics over the past decade [4].

The gap between Apple and other tech firms is now likely to narrow. The announcement of a new iPhone by a management team led by Tim Cook, who replaced Mr Jobs as chief executive in August, was generally regarded as competent but uninspiring. Without Mr Jobs to sprinkle his star dust on the event, it felt like just another product launch from just another technology firm.

At the recent unveiling of a tablet computer by Jeff Bezos of Amazon, whose company is doing the best job of following Apple’s lead in combining hardware, software, content and services in an easy-to-use bundle, there were several swipes at Apple. But by doing his best to imitate Mr Jobs, Mr Bezos also flattered him. With Mr Jobs gone, Apple is just one of many technology firms trying to invoke his unruly spirit in new products [5].

Apple Inc. has long been synonymous with innovation, sleek design, and cutting-edge technology. At the core of Apple’s success lies a unique concept that encompasses not only its products but also its leadership ethos which are different from each CEO.

While the company has faced challenges and criticism along the way, its ability to stay true to its core principles while adapting to a rapidly changing

world is a testament to its enduring relevance and influence. As Apple continues to shape the future of technology, one thing remains clear: the Apple concept is here to stay.

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