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### Steve Jobs – i for inspire      04 September 2011

Since Steve Jobs announced his retirement as CEO of Apple, the internet has been awash with memorials to the man dubbed the Master of Innovation. Even those who dislike the invasion of such products into our lives have to admit that Apple's success has been a phenomenon.

The story of Steve Jobs as a college dropout who invents some whizzy technology is not particularly extraordinary. We've heard similar stories about other billionaire dropouts like Bill Gates (Microsoft), Larry Ellison (Oracle), and Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook).

What is more extraordinary is the range of innovations that emerged under Steve Jobs' stewardship and his tenacity in focusing on new ideas even after previous ideas failed.

And the fact that he was fired from his own company by the guy hired to help run the business, only to return years later to lead the company's rebirth ... now that's extraordinary.

Many entrepreneurs are credited with one invention or great idea that makes them successful.

With Steve Jobs, there is an extensive list of creditable achievements. Jobs was the visionary behind the company that launched the Apple computer then the Macintosh, a reinvention of the personal computer offering functionality and design.

A year after the successful Macintosh launch, John Sculley, the man hand-picked to work alongside Jobs, staged a coup and (with the assistance of the board) stripped Jobs of his responsibilities.

Jobs picked himself up and launched a new computer products company, NeXt, which he hoped would compete head-on with Apple. Unfortunately NeXt failed, so Jobs took the helm at Pixar animation studios, and within a decade turned it into a film-making powerhouse.

It must have felt good to be asked to return to Apple after eleven years, during which time the company had struggled and was close to bankruptcy.

In relatively quick succession, Apple launched the "i-series" of products that, in Jobs' words, 'changed the way we work and play'.

The iMac was launched in 2001, followed closely by the iPod and the accompanying music library iTunes. In 2005, Apple introduced the iPod Nano, the video iPod and the iPod Shuffle. In 2007 the world was treated to the iPhone followed soon after by the Apps store which gave us more things to do with our phones. And of course last year we had the launch of the iPad, a tablet that has in a short space of time become indispensable for millions of enthusiastic users.



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The pages of glowing testimonials about Steve Jobs point to a few key traits that have made him such an extraordinary leader. Co-workers and Apple fans talk of his unwavering vision – he wanted to make great products that would change the world. He was tireless and refused to be deterred by obstacles – a back-stabbing mate and serious illness being just two of the hurdles he’s faced.

Without wanting to eulogise the man too much – these are phones and music players we’re talking about after all – the Steve Jobs story is one of determination and the pursuit of innovation, and he has indeed changed the world.