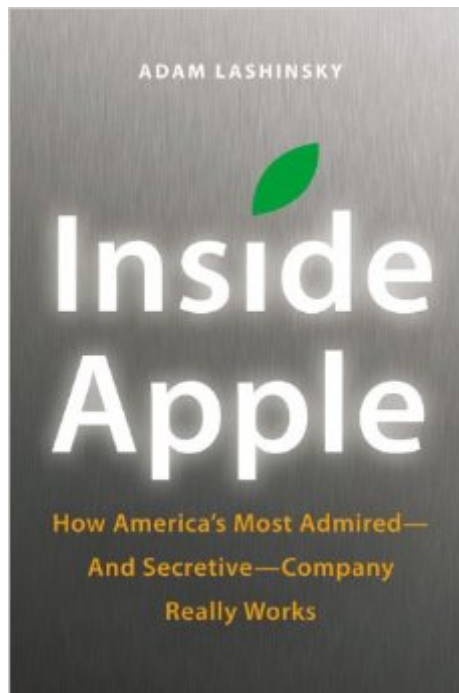


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Inside Apple: How America's Most Admired--and Secretive--Company Really Works



Synopsis

INSIDE APPLE reveals the secret systems, tactics and leadership strategies that allowed Steve Jobs and his company to churn out hit after hit and inspire a cult-like following for its products. If Apple is Silicon Valley's answer to Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory, then author Adam Lashinsky provides readers with a golden ticket to step inside. In this primer on leadership and innovation, the author will introduce readers to concepts like the "DRI" (Apple's practice of assigning a Directly Responsible Individual to every task) and the Top 100 (an annual ritual in which 100 up-and-coming executives are tapped a la Skull & Bones for a secret retreat with company founder Steve Jobs). Based on numerous interviews, the book offers exclusive new information about how Apple innovates, deals with its suppliers and is handling the transition into the Post Jobs Era. Lashinsky, a Senior Editor at Large for Fortune, knows the subject cold: In a 2008 cover story for the magazine entitled The Genius Behind Steve: Could Operations Whiz Tim Cook Run The Company Someday he predicted that Tim Cook, then an unknown, would eventually succeed Steve Jobs as CEO. While Inside Apple is ostensibly a deep dive into one, unique company (and its ecosystem of suppliers, investors, employees and competitors), the lessons about Jobs, leadership, product design and marketing are universal. They should appeal to anyone hoping to bring some of that Apple magic to their own company, career, or creative endeavor.

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...which is saying something. I haven't done that since I was a teenager and I'm in my forties. To compare this book to Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs, which is arguably the best biography I've ever read, would not be fair; although everyone is going to do that. I struggled with the comparison myself. Bottom Line: These are two very different books, and this is a great compliment to Job's biography. Did I learn anything ground breaking? I had hoped to, but I'm not sure I did. (Especially in the "Secrecy chapter - I wanted more!) Still, I did learn a LOT of small things that, added together, made the book feel groundbreaking. I've highlighted several passages in my kindle edition, but I feel like it would be cheating to share more than one with you. My personal favorite has to do with Apple's seeming lack of career paths for their employees; it goes like this: "...what if it turns out that all that thinking is wrong? What if companies encouraged employees to be satisfied where they are, because they're good at what they do, not to mention because that might be what's best for shareholders?" Well, what if? The Peter Principle is hard to fight against; even more difficult to compete with are the ambitions of people. Adam mentions a saying that I've heard before, "Everyone inside Apple is trying to get out, and everyone outside is trying to get in." Well, I'm both of those. After reading this book, I still would love to work for Apple; and I'd hate it too. What an exquisite company! Most revealing to me is that while employees who are entrepreneurs "typically don't stick around for more than a couple of years," the company still manages to thrive in an oddly entrepreneurial way.

Adam Lashinsky's book *Inside Apple; How America's Most Admired and Secretive Company Really Works*, is a fascinating look at the company that recently passed Exxon-Mobil as the world's richest private enterprise. The most significant aspect of the book is the delta between the company's public and private personas - much of it attributable to its late and iconic CEO, Steve Jobs. Publically, Apple is a forward leaning, socially responsible mega corporation that likes to be perceived as a small start up. Jobs grew up a political and social liberal who experimented with hard drugs before he dropped out of college; he was a vegan who studied Eastern mystic religions and supported Barack Obama in the 2008 election. Apple's early customers were a distinct minority of computer users who tended toward the eclectic and artistic. Its corporate image is often mistakenly compared to other Silicon Valley tech companies like Google and Facebook, where free gourmet food, collegiality, and an open campus are part of the cultural environment. Privately however, Apple rivals government agencies like the CIA and FBI for the way it controls information and personnel. "Need to know", "compartmentalization", and internal "non-disclosure agreements" are concepts very familiar to those who work inside the nation's intelligence community, but inside Apple?

Absolutely, claims Lashinsky who details how Apple's secrecy applies to every aspect of its business processes. Much of this makes sense; If your business model depends on flashy annual press conferences to launch the latest iPad, or iPhone, you better insure you're making the best use of that buzz as possible. The logic includes keeping your product completely under wraps until the big launch.

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