

Keeping It Simple Is An Understatement

When we are looking at our business, it seems completely obvious we should just keep it simple. While this may seem obvious, it is much more difficult to accomplish in a complex world filled with complex processes, complex rules, complex people, and complex competitive forces. If we could be more disciplined and keep it simple in our businesses, would we have more success? Well, that is what [Ken Segall](#) says in his new book that explains how [Apple's](#) success was based on not just simplicity, but the Insanely Simple.

In the book "[Insanely Simple: The Obsession that Drives Apple's Success](#)," Segall explains how simplicity was the connecting theme between all the great things they did with hardware, software, strategy, and other areas, thus making them the most valuable company on the planet. Segall's observations are particularly intriguing because he worked at an ad agency as creative director for companies like [IBM](#), [Intel](#), and [Dell](#) as well as with [Steve Jobs'](#) other company [NeXT](#).

I have been saying this for a while now about the things we do and the products we create, so my interest was piqued. It was very clear that we had not gone to the extremes discussed in this book. I would like to thank my friend Paul Sponcia, a fellow entrepreneur in technology, for sending me this book. He knew it would resonate with me.



Segall says, "Whether you're a person, dog, fish, or ameba,

you will respond more positively to the simpler solution – even if it isn't a conscious response." Knowing, embracing, and leveraging this as a business person, especially one creating the new web and mobile apps, will achieve greater success than those that do not.

Segall gives several examples, including limiting the number of people in a meeting to the few that really need to be there. More people create more complexity. When Jobs came back to Apple, they had about 30 products, and he simplified it down to 4. The iPhone has only one button because Jobs wanted complete simplicity. He rejected many versions before he got to the one button design.

The power of simple not only made amazing products, it became a key value at Apple. I see the power of simple and understand better why the opposing force of complexity gets in the way. I will be more relentless going forward with making simplicity a mantra of what we do.

What are you doing to incorporate simplicity in your business as well as other areas of your life?

[Steve Jobs And The Power Focus!](#)

I am writing this week's blog on Friday, October 5, which has great significance for me. My partner of 20 years back in my investment days was born on this day, along with my lifelong best friend Ronald Poles. It is also one year from the day that Steve Jobs passed away. [Verne Harnish](#) reminded me of this

in his [blog](#), and he shared this [video put out by Apple](#). It is a nice tribute and a great reminder of what he and Apple have done for our everyday lives.

[Steve Jobs](#) is an icon of our time. In this country, we all love the story of the underdog or a great comeback story! That is the story of Steve Jobs. The board of the company that he started himself removed him, but then they asked him to return when things went bad, and he turned Apple into the most valuable company on the planet.

I also find it interesting that a man who demanded so much from his people and was considered so difficult to work with managed to accomplish so much. [Walter Isaacson](#) discusses the details in his book about Steve Jobs. Jobs pushed his people further than they thought they could go. I remember this saying I came across many years ago: When you look back over your life, the people that you will remember the most outside of your immediate loved ones are the ones that got the most out of you.

If I think back, that is true for me. The teachers and the coaches that pushed me to do more than I thought I could do are the ones that stand out in my mind. Jobs was that type of person. Even though I am sure many people got frustrated with him, those same people remember going to the next level because they were around someone that pushed to get the most out of them.

Steve Jobs also focused on one key priority and spent three hours a day on that issue. He considered this to be vital to moving forward and creating successful products. He also had lunch most days with [Jonathan Ive](#), his chief designer. During this time, they discussed the areas Steve thought mattered most and decided how to move forward with those ideas to create the great experiences we have today with Apple products. [Adam Lashinsky](#) outlined this in his book "[Inside](#)

[Apple.](#)”

That type of time takes a lot of energy to get the [“Flywheel”](#) spinning, as discussed by [Jim Collins](#). And what a Flywheel and legacy Steve has created! It still pushes out “gee-whiz” products that will have people standing in line for hours just so they can be one of the first to buy them.

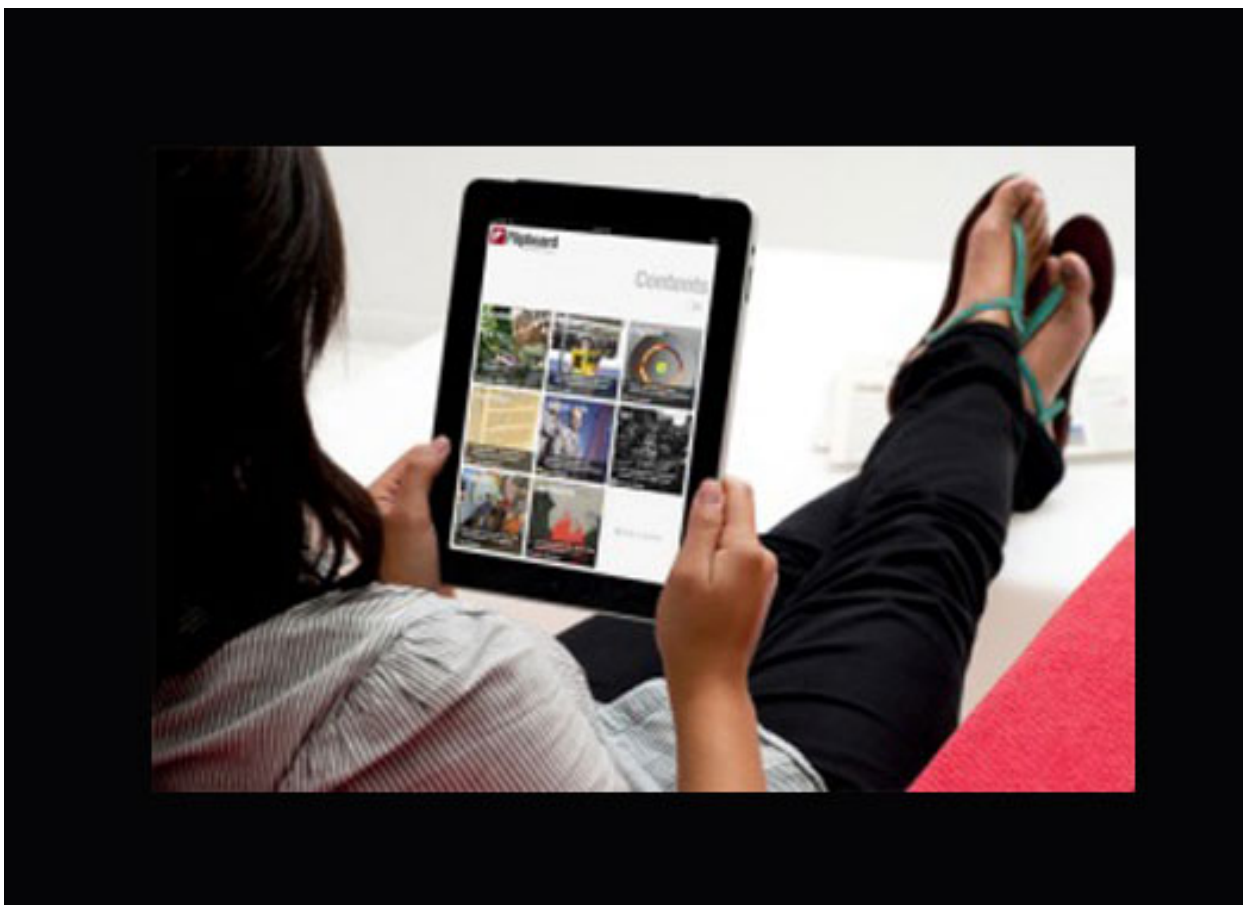
I know I could definitely be more focused in my efforts. How much focus and effort are you putting on the most important areas of your company and your life?

[The Mobile Future is Right Before Our Eyes!](#)

Last week, I traveled to Dallas, TX for a guys’ weekend with my son Tony, his close friend Steven, and my brother Mark. While there, we also attended the Bills vs. Cowboys football game. Having grown up in Rochester, NY, I am a Bills fan, which is often difficult to endure. That weekend was no exception. Even after a great start to the season, the Bills lost 44 to 7. Other than that, we had a great time, and the Cowboys’ stadium is off the charts!

You seem to open your eyes more to what is around you when you’re in a new environment, so being a bit more observant, I watched the nonstop mobile usage around me. These observations made me want to share some recent research that has been released. Based on the research and my own thoughts, mobile devices are becoming a powerful force in our lives.

As we went to restaurants, the social watering holes, the tailgate party, and even in the stadium, I noticed how many people were using their mobile devices to stay in touch, update Facebook and Twitter, and take pictures to upload or send out to everyone. Sitting in Cracker Barrel next to a table filled with the 60 plus crowd waiting on their food, I watched all of them tapping away, or reading what was on their phones. This is universal and will expand as speed increases and apps are introduced, making our lives easier as well as more resourceful and connected.



In a previous [blog](#), I discussed the research of [Mary Meeker](#), a leader in mobile technology research. She released new data at the [Web 2.0 Summit](#) recently, and it showed the continued surge of mobile usage, traffic, and e-commerce.

In the area of e-commerce, she discussed how [eBay](#)'s mobile sales have reached \$4-billion, [Paypal](#) has hit \$3-billion, [Amazon](#) has made \$2-billion, and [Square](#) is at \$1-billion. All had big increases with Square up 20,000% year over year

growth! From what I observed, it is just going to continue to be off the charts!

Meeker explained that over the past year, the use of mobile search has increased four times, and the mobile app and advertising revenue combined has been growing at 153% annual compound rate since 2008. At that time, the revenue was at \$700-million, and now it has hit \$12-billion! This is amazing growth!

For internet services like [Pandora](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#), a large portion of their traffic is from mobile devices. Actually, for Pandora and Twitter, the majority of their traffic is mobile with Pandora generating 65% of traffic and Twitter gaining 55% of traffic this way. Approximately 33% of Facebook traffic comes from mobile devices, and it is increasing dramatically.

This all means we are entering a world much different from where we have been, and it is changing fast. We will be doing so much more on our mobile devices, and this will drive how we work and play. How does this affect you and your business? Can you improve your service to allow easier access to your products and services over mobile devices?

As I contemplated these questions over the weekend, I had an idea dealing with mobile devices and connecting people that has been brewing for awhile now, but it was solidified in Dallas. What ideas do you have to connect people, share information, or simplify things? The next [Gates](#), [Jobs](#), or [Zuckerberg](#) is brewing and will show up soon. Why not you?