

INSANELY SIMPLE

The Obsession That Drives Apple's Success

KEN SEGALL

KEN SEGALL is a creative consultant who writes, speaks and blogs. He worked closely with Steve Jobs as ad agency creative director for NeXT and Apple. He was a member of the team which created Apple's legendary *Think Different* campaign. He was also personally responsible for the "i" nomenclature which is used on Apple's product lines including the iPod, iPad, iMac, etc. He has also served as creative director for IBM, Intel, Dell and BMW. He is a graduate of Penn State University.

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MAIN IDEA

Simplicity works.

It is the obsession which has driven Apple to its stunning success – thanks to the fact that to Steve Jobs, simplicity was a religion. He personified and preached simplicity and was its most fervent and consistent advocate within Apple’s management team. Jobs was famous for wielding the “simplicity stick” within Apple. An insistence on and obsession with simplicity in Apple’s hardware, software, manufacturing, business strategy, product launches, marketing and more were inspired and guided by Steve Jobs. Simplicity is now so embedded within Apple’s DNA it will continue as a guiding philosophy even though Jobs is no longer around.

So why does simplicity work? The fact is people prefer it. Human beings are predisposed to like simple solutions to their problems. They crave simplicity and respond positively to it whenever and wherever they see it. The funny thing is even though everyone likes simplicity, most firms end up going out of their way to make things more and more complicated for their customers.

If you can enshrine the pursuit of simplicity at the center of everything you do, you’ll find this philosophy will power your company to great heights. Even better, if you become skilled at developing simple yet elegant solutions, you’ll be in demand wherever you choose to work. Simplicity works.

“By no means am I saying that Simplicity is the sole factor behind Apple’s success. Leadership, vision, talent, imagination, and incredibly hard work may have just a bit to do with it. But there’s one common thread that runs through it all. That’s Simplicity. It’s what drives Apple to create what it creates and behave as it behaves. It’s Apple’s devotion to Simplicity that forms an unbreakable connection with its customers and inspires customers to evangelize to colleagues, friends, and family.”

– Ken Segall

The Ten Core Elements of Simplicity

1. Think Brutal	Page 2
To keep things simple, you’ve got to be prepared to be blunt when people stray into complexity. You have to be honest 100 percent of the time, even if that’s impolite.	
2. Think Small	Pages 2 - 3
Small groups of smart people always do better work than large groups. To keep things simple, the only people in the room should be those who are there for a reason.	
3. Think Minimal	Page 3
Focus on what you already do well and figure out how to give people more of what they want. If you can stick to what you’re great at and focus, the sky is the limit.	
4. Think Motion	Page 4
Get a plan into motion and improve it on the fly rather than endlessly analyzing what you should be doing. Simplicity loves motion so feed the flames.	
5. Think Iconic	Page 4 - 5
When you market, create material which communicates what you stand for – your core values. Do that in a memorable and graphic way and you will stand out.	
6. Think Phrasal	Page 5
Product naming is an art in and of itself. If you can come up with something simple and memorable – like iMac and iPhone – your marketing will get off to a good start.	
7. Think Casual	Page 6
Big formal meetings are an incredible drain on resources, especially time. Apple runs by informal, casual meetings where you have to cut to the chase.	
8. Think Human	Pages 6 - 7
The most powerful form of simplicity connects directly with your humanity. If you appeal to people’s emotions, they will respond with passion and enthusiasm.	
9. Think Skeptic	Page 7
To genuinely keep things simple, you’re going to have to take the advice of experts with a grain of salt. By all means take their advice but never their orders.	
10. Think War	Page 8
When your ideas are facing a life-or-death challenge and you have to go to war, use everything you have. Don’t look for a fair fight – use extreme force.	
Conclusion – Think Different	Page 8
If you believe in and seek the power of simplicity, you will by definition be “thinking differently” to everyone else. Companies which leverage its power always stand out from the crowd. Get good at it.	

