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## *Outstanding Academic Paper by Students*

Title : Steve Jobs vs. Bill Gates: Which one is the Better Executive?

史帝夫·賈伯斯 vs. 比爾·蓋茲: 誰是最好的經營者?

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Academic Year: Semester 2, 2015



## **Abstract**

Steve Jobs and Bill Gates are both well-known geniuses in computer business. Born in 1955, they have different backgrounds as well as distinct personalities. However, they both make a great revolution and impact on the Information Technology. They separately bring successes for the company of Apple and Microsoft. Wilson and Skovgard (2011) used a metaphor of the famous fable, “The Hare and the Tortoise” to compare the competitions and personalities between Jobs and Gates. He thought Jobs is a gifted leader and wins on charisma when compared with Gates. Meanwhile, He is the central core in Apple as well. However, Gates cannot to be taken lightly. By analyzing the lead enterprise and improved the original product to defeat the competitor, he has made Microsoft successful through working in a steady way. In conclusion, there is no denying the fact that Jobs has always given an eye-opening revolution; nevertheless, the stable executive like Bill Gates seems to be more suitable for a company.

## **Keyword :**

Information Technology, Real executive, Leadership, Enterprise Competence



## 中文摘要

賈伯斯與蓋茲在資訊電腦界都是無人不知、無人不曉的兩大天才領導人物。同樣生在 1955 年的兩人，不僅成長背景大不相同，個性也大相逕庭；但都為資訊科技產業帶來重大變革，分別為蘋果與微軟公司帶來前所未有的佳績。有學者將兩人之間的競爭與人格特質比做龜兔賽跑，認為賈伯斯屬天生型領導人，相較於蓋茲，在領導魅力上略勝一籌，同時也是蘋果公司的主要核心人物，但蓋茲也不是省油的燈，他透過分析對手的產品並將其缺點改善，進而從中奪得客戶，使微軟公司邁向穩定成功之路。整體而言，雖然不能否認賈伯斯經常為科技業帶來重大革命，總是有讓人為之一亮的創舉，但蓋茲的沉穩步調對於公司似乎才是較適合的經營者。

關鍵字：資訊科技產業、真正經營者、領導、企業能力



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## **Steve Jobs vs. Bill Gates**

### **Which One is the Better Executive?**

By Jamille Wu

May 18, 2015

As is known to actually everybody, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates are both well-known geniuses in computer business. They both make a great revolution and impact on the Information Technology, IT. Steve Jobs, as a CEO of Apple, used iPods to revolutionize the music and took iPhone as a fresh air to the cellphone world. Indeed, in 2009, the economic journal, *Fortune* selected him as the best CEO in the past decade (cited in Adam Lashinsky, 2009). On the other hand, Bill Gates cultivated Microsoft as the first software enterprise around the world. He had become the richest person in the world since he was 37 years old and lasted for thirteen years. If we say that Jobs and Gates are representatives of executives in the world and one quarter of the century, then which one is more outstanding? Who is the strongest warrior as a CEO?

Coincidentally, Gates and Jobs were all born in 1955. Both of them dropped out of college and launched their own businesses almost at the same time. Besides, they both have marked individuality. For instance, their clearly loving and hating can be seen from their schooling and working attitudes. Regarding the unsatisfactory things or disinterestedness, they both showed in a direct way without hesitation. Of course, as successful people, a hard-working attitude and being persistent in details are their common features. For example, Jobs would command the technical staff to make the size of Mac smaller than the yellow pages; likewise, Gates would yell and fly into a rage for too many lines of a program. As for their leadership, they would be troublesome executives for workers on the spot. Unlike the former who never watch on the scene and even use products from their companies, Jobs and Gates are both the “Real executive.” They love their products deeply in mind, work with excellent members, enjoy their jobs and always stand in the front to undertake the risks as well as battle with enemies. Such two people, fortuitously finding opportunity and rushing out for one piece of day in computer business as well as in the same period of time then become the reason why most people try to compare them.

Born in the same year, Gates and Jobs have different family backgrounds. Steve Jobs, a bastard from a mother of an unwed college graduate student, was brought up by blue-collar adoptive parents. As for Bill Gates, whose father was a lawyer, he grew up in a rich family. At school, Jobs was a troubled kid far away from the top student; however, Gates graduated from a well-known high school and then attended the famous university, Harvard. About personality, Gates is a realist. He firstly focused on

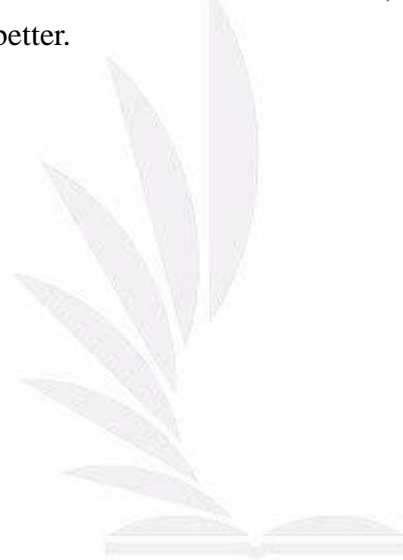
the business opportunity whether it was a finished product or not. In *Bill Gates Speaks: In Sight from the World's Greatest Entrepreneur*, Janet C. Lowe (1998) noted, "Critics have said that Microsoft is quick to spot good work by others and convert it for its own use" (p. 72). That is, emphasizing the trend of customer demand, Gates worked in a steady way by analyzing the lead enterprise and improved the original product to defeat the competitor. Compared with Gates, Jobs would be a perfectionist influenced by his father, and even extended his perfectionism into the unseen parts. He thought that a true artist like carpenter should do perfectly in every detail even though nobody would see it. Even, his persistence in the best quality gambled his life on innovation. Laying stress on product more than profit leads him to once be fired by Apple. According to Walter Isaacson (2012), in "The Real Leadership Lessons of Steve Jobs," Jobs said that our task is to read things that are not yet on the page. Focusing on the creative spirit, he employed his finely honed intuition to guess the potential desire from the customers in preference to relying on market research.

The different personalities in Jobs and Gates can be easily described in phrases. Jobs is always considered as a gifted leader while Gates seems to be a computer nerd. Entertainingly, in "Steve Jobs vs. Bill Gates: the hare wins in the end," Andrew B. Wilson and Robert O. Skovgard (2011) said, "Of the two, the late Steve Jobs was always the quick, live-for-the-moment hare, while Bill Gates was the dispassionate, lawyerly, bide-your-time tortoise" (p. 50). The authors used a metaphor of the famous fable, "The Hare and the Tortoise" to compare the personalities between Jobs and Gates. Moreover, by analyzing their commencement addresses further from Jobs now-famous 2005 commencement address at Stanford and the one Gates gave in 2007 at Harvard, we can clearly see their distinct characteristics. In the opening and final words, Jobs used short words to quick start his topic directly and ended in a simple, powerful and brief way while Gates told a series of remarks filled with self-directed but self-congratulatory humor to open his speech and finished in a characteristically preachy note. As for the structure, Jobs talked about his three stories in life step by step; however, Gates used much drivel in his speech. Last, the content, of course different in their speech. Jobs told his three stories about connecting the dots, love and loss, and death yet Gates emphasized inequities. Gates seems to be quite inferior to Jobs on charisma, attraction and extraordinary ability, but he does sometimes come to life as a real person and astuteness. (cited in Wilson & Skovgard, 2011)

As for their different styles of the leadership, Jobs' idea was the central core in the company yet focusing on the relationship of cooperation between employers and employees was Gates's main point. Microsoft focused on training its staff and usually limited the work teams to 35 people (cited in Lowe, 1998). Hence, there were fewer gaps between superiors and inferiors, and the operation was highly efficient. In

Microsoft, employees had more freedom on proposing their ideas but it also made potential risk on integration and was lack of consistency. On the other hand, Apple had the superiority of a “walking billboard”, Jobs. Following his step, the company went on with uniformity and was aiming for R&D like iPod, iPhone, and iPad.

Based on Kazumasa Takeuchi (2010), in *Steve Jobs Vs. Bill Gates: The Enterprise Competence Of The Two CEO Geniuses*, he tried to judge them by analyzing their twelve types of operating competence: CEO, foresight, management, humanity, growth process, brain gain, creativity of new products, negotiation, defeating the competitor, communication, marketing, and concentration. He concluded, “If we considered the results only, in fact, the stable executive like Bill Gates seemed to be better for a company.” (p.217) In his analysis, Gates won overwhelmingly seven out of twelve. Jobs only defeated him on creativity of new products and communicative competence. Actually, there is no denying the fact that Jobs has always given a big shock as an innovationist. However, for a company, the stable executive like Bill Gates is better.



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