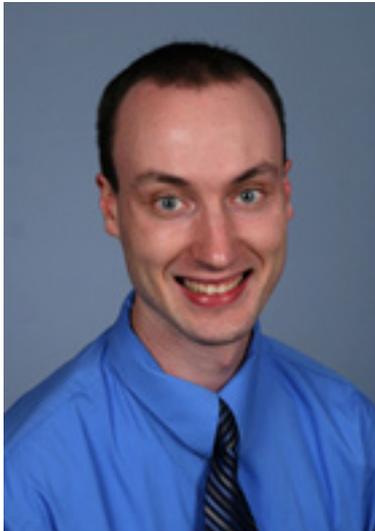


## Apple's Secretive Side

Mike Schmidt, Associate Editor, Manufacturing Business Technology



**I take no issue with Apple's unconventional business practices as long as the tech giant operates within the boundaries of the law. But I find it is interesting that arguably the most successful company in the world operates in such an unconventional and secretive way.**

More than three months have passed since the death of Apple co-founder and technology icon Steve Jobs. While many knew of his lengthy battle with cancer, it was no less shocking when he passed away. But as time has gone by, it has been getting easier for me to distinguish Apple as an entity separate from the individual who was long considered the face of the brand.

Even with its legendary leader gone, Apple's future appears as bright as ever and its products are immensely popular. The launches of iPhone 4S and iPad 2 were nothing short of smashing successes. When was the last time the Apple swung and missed with a product offering? Yeah, it's been awhile.

Jobs's magnetic personality and unceasing will to create and innovate led to Apple's meteoric rise in the early 1980s and its mesmerizing resurgence in the late 1990s. His unique blend of leadership, charisma, and foresight was a tremendous asset, but it's far from the only reason for Apple's unparalleled success as a corporate conglomerate.

There is definitely more to the story. [A recent article on CNN.com](#) [1] detailed Apple's... uhh... unique ways of conducting business when opening new stores. The article cited uncommon legal tactics such as Apple's unwillingness to name itself in public documents and hearings, as well as its practice of swearing government officials to secrecy. Furthermore, Apple has managed to secure leases without standard revenue-sharing provisions and has flown through some lengthy public-approval systems, according to the article.

## Apple's Secretive Side

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

---

But the incredibly unusual tactics don't stop there. The article also mentions Apple's practice of firing employees who leak internal memos and calling on the police to search the homes of people suspected of possessing lost Apple iPhone prototypes.

I'd like to say I find the contents of the CNN article surprising or troubling, but that's simply not the case. Some of Apple's practices have been well-documented in the past. Furthermore, it would be naïve for me to automatically assume companies like Apple ascend to the pinnacle of the business world through conventional methods, good old-fashioned hard work, and a little bit of luck.

So is there a connection between the tech giant's unconventional business practices and its popularity? If so, while it may be wise for the rest of the business world to consider Apple as model to be replicated, it's a tough pill for idealists to swallow. It seems a lot like suggesting the unpopular kid in class should model himself or herself after the school bully in order to gain widespread acceptance.

Nevertheless, it seems like an effective approach to conducting business affairs. Look at the results. Tech consumers fawn over Apple's products and services in the same way a film buffs act when the latest Quentin Tarantino flick debuts or music fans react to the release of the latest Kanye West album. They waste no time buying anything and everything Apple puts on the market.

I take no issue with Apple's unconventional business practices as long as the tech giant operates within the boundaries of the law. But I find it interesting that arguably the most successful company in the world operates in such an unconventional and secretive way. While it's still too soon to tell if the company will change its approach to its business practices in the post-Jobs era, I know I'll be watching the tech giant's future moves with great interest. But something tells me a company like Apple may be smart enough to leave well enough alone.

**Source URL (retrieved on 04/25/2015 - 12:37pm):**

[http://www.impomag.com/blogs/2012/01/apples-secretive-side?qt-recent\\_content=1](http://www.impomag.com/blogs/2012/01/apples-secretive-side?qt-recent_content=1)

### Links:

[1] <http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/08/tech/gaming-gadgets/apple-store-secrecy/index.html?iref=allsearch>