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Passing the Brand: Thoughts on Continuing Your Brand's Legacy

September 1, 2011 by [Laura Gutierrez](#)

Admittedly, I am not a branding expert.

I am, however, a huge advocate of having a culture that's brand-specific. Something along the lines of a *legacy*.

Can you imagine how hard it would be to pass the company you started to someone else, relative or not? Most can't, and a lot of companies don't. But when you're at the top, you must realize that your company will live on – but the question is *how*.



There are not a lot of companies like Apple, a brand we all know (and one that some of us love). Steve Jobs, the man behind the apple, is stepping down from its helm. The Kansas State *Collegian* calls it "[the passing of an era](#)," and they are right. Will we ever see startup companies built (or run) by "uneducated" young people (and by "uneducated," I mean not *formally* educated. That's a whole 'nother debate...)? Maybe. Most likely not, says [Rob Enderle](#) over at [TechZone 360](#), and that's going to be a big change for Apple.

Apple's brand *is* and has been Steve Jobs. Without him, what is left? Yes, computers. iPads. iPods. But who will have the authority, knowledge and leadership to get them through the next generation of Apples? Jobs would have been smart to find a protégé early on to hone into Apple's leader so that when he left, as is what happens as we age, there would be someone to carry out the legacy he started.

Is that what he wants? Who knows. Maybe he left a window (sorry, Apple) open so that someone else could creatively take control of the company in her/his own way. *Maybe*. Or, like so many of you who own businesses, he thought he'd live forever or that the business would go with him (not quite what Jobs did, but you get it). As a business owner, you need to plan for the worst. Do you have someone next in line who knows what you've envisioned for the future? Do they care about your brand, your products, the company's legacy? It's about time you started honing the next generations of leadership in your company – because who's going to take over it when you're gone? And the more important question – ***how are they going to run the company without you?***

You never know when "that time" will come when you have to turn your keys over to someone else – someone that isn't you. Make sure that the things you worked hard for aren't lost in transition.



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