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# Houston reacts to death of Apple cofounder Steve Jobs

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Houston entrepreneurs and business leaders felt a strong reaction Thursday to the death of **Apple Inc.** cofounder **Steve Jobs**.

Jobs, 56, stepped down from his CEO position at Apple (Nasdaq:AAPL) in August, saying he could no longer fulfill his duties. He had been suffering with a rare form of pancreatic cancer for many years, and passed away Oct. 5.

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*Click on the slideshow at right to see how four Houston entrepreneurs and business owners were inspired by **Steve Jobs**.*

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"It's a sad day for the technology industry," said **Lee Orsag**, president and CEO of **Altex Business Solutions**, one of the [Houston Business Journal's Fast 100 companies](#) this year.

Orsag was inspired by Jobs' determination to not give up, even when tech experts and the public mocked his technology.

"He didn't let the failures stop him," said Orsag. "He changed the way we do things on a day-to-day basis, and his products changed the way everyone communicates."

**Stephen King**, president and CEO of **Growthforce**, also an HBJ Fast 100 company in 2011, said Jobs inspired him to look at the world not as a future extension of what it is, but as a view of what it could be without any limitations.

"What **Steve Jobs** did was to create tools that became critical parts of our lives when we didn't even know we needed them," said King. "I can't imagine living life or running my business without an iPad now."

King said he runs his company on an iPhone and is currently running 238 tasks across 12 departments on the task manager of the device.

"Without him, I wouldn't have found a way to electronically and seamlessly run my business," he said.

**Albert "Bo" Bothe**, CEO of **BrandExtract LLC**, noted that Apple inspired him on his application to the HBJ's Fast 100 list.

"Our values are very similar in that they stand behind their products and develop products people actually want and need," he said. "They're constantly innovating and planning for their own obsolescence; they take great care of their people and the world they live in through various charity and community service efforts. Plus they run a very smart, profitable business."

Another Houston-area business owner greatly influenced by the rise of Apple is **Brian Fielkow**, president and CEO of JetCo Delivery LLC, and another of the city's fastest-growing private companies in 2011.

"Where do I start? They have done a wonderful job anticipating what the customer needs before the customer even knows he needs it," he said. "Apple is guided by who they are and what they want to be instead of relying on focus groups."

In the past 10 years, Apple has never had to compete on price because it offers superior products, Fielkow noted.

"Apple also has rock star loyalty with customers," he said. "People aren't just customers, people are fans. Crazy fans, and we want to admire that."

Fielkow said his son dropped his Macbook one time, and even though there was no question it was damaged because of the accident, Apple fixed it for free.

"Though that was many levels removed from where Jobs sat, all the aspects of the company have his fingerprints and his philosophy on them," he said. "**Steve Jobs** has left an imprint on his business and his industry."

For more coverage of the reaction to Jobs' death and the legacy of the Apple cofounder, [follow this link](#) to the Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal, an affiliated publication of Houston Business Journal.

Allison Wollam covers health care, retail and sports.