

Intelligent Business

New Boss Worksheet

A Before you read. Discuss.

- 1) How important is the boss in a company?
- 2) What does a good boss actually contribute to the success of a company?
- 3) Think of international companies whose success is linked to one specific boss.
- 4) What may happen after that boss leaves or dies?

B Gist Comprehension

Read the headline and subhead. Predict what the article will be about.

Apple

A good Cook

Tim Cook's first year as the technology giant's boss has been a success. But the toughest test lies ahead

C Comprehension

Read the whole article quickly. Were your ideas correct?

Now read more carefully. Are these statements true or false?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1) Tim Cook became the boss of Apple after Steve Jobs died. | T/F |
| 2) Tim Cook has now been the boss for one year. | T/F |
| 3) Four days before Tim Cook became boss, Apple was the world's most valuable company. | T/F |
| 4) Previously, Microsoft had been the world's most valuable company. | T/F |
| 5) Tim Cook developed the iPhone and iPad. | T/F |
| 6) Apple was attacked because of poor working conditions at Foxconn in China. | T/F |
| 7) Conditions improved after Cook visited the Foxconn factory. | T/F |
| 8) Cook's prompt response was similar to Jobs' management style. | T/F |
| 9) Apple says Samsung copied its patents for smartphones and tablet computers. | T/F |
| 10) Apple plans to produce a combined toaster and refrigerator. | T/F |
| 11) George Colony thinks Apple is surviving because of Steve Jobs' ideas. | T/F |
| 12) He says Apple will fade unless Tim Cook can inspire new ideas and products. | T/F |

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D Vocabulary

Find the words in the box in the text. Deduce the meaning from context. Use the words to complete the sentences below.

phenomenal	hiccups	ailing	helm	humble
lambasted	pithy	patents	penchant	put-down

1. Who was at the _____ of the Titanic when it hit the iceberg?
2. Thomas Edison filed _____ for hundreds of inventions.
3. The erupting volcano produced _____ amounts of lava, dust and gas.
4. She's going to the hospital to see her _____ grandmother.
5. The millionaire said he came from a _____ background West Africa.
6. "Say your lines and don't bump into the furniture," was the advice of the _____ actor.
7. There were a few _____ during the elephant's sea voyage to New York.
8. The government's economic policies were _____ by economists.
9. Susan Mendes, the new CEO, has a _____ for Thai restaurants.
10. "I met my new wife in Norfolk." "Very flat, Norfolk," was my ex-wife's _____ .

E Discussion

Do you think that George Colony's prediction of Apple's decline will be accurate?
What do you think will be Apple's future?

Apple

A good Cook

Tim Cook's first year as the technology giant's boss has been a success. But the toughest test lies ahead

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TALK about a hard act to follow. When Tim Cook replaced an ailing Steve Jobs as Apple's chief executive on August 24th last year, he took over from the nearest thing the tech world had to a rock star. Some people wondered out loud how Jobs's more humble second-in-command would fare in the absence of the firm's brash and brilliant co-founder, who died in October. They need not have worried. As Mr Cook celebrates his first anniversary at Apple's helm, the company continues to smash records.

On August 20th Apple's market capitalisation reached over \$623 billion, making it the most valuable listed company (if you ignore inflation) of all time. That title was previously held by Microsoft, another tech titan, whose market worth hit \$615 billion in December 1999. Much of the credit for Apple's phenomenal success goes to Jobs, the father of the iPhone and the iPad tablet computer. But Mr Cook also deserves praise for the way he has handled a tricky transition.

The process has not been without hiccups. In July Apple's share price fell sharply after the company's quarterly earnings disappointed investors, even though its net profit rose by 21%, to \$8.8 billion. And earlier in the year Apple was lambasted for its use of Foxconn, a supplier under fire from labour activists for failings such as excessive working hours at its Chinese facilities. Mr Cook promptly went on a highly publicised tour of a Foxconn factory in China. Apple and Foxconn subsequently pledged to improve workers' conditions there. This week the Fair Labour Association, a non-profit group that audits workplaces, said progress had been made, but more still needed to be done to cut overtime hours without unduly harming workers' incomes.

Veteran Apple-watchers say this and other episodes are a sign that Mr Cook is more likely to pay attention to opinions outside Apple than his predecessor. "I think he's a little bit more sensitive to criticism than Steve Jobs was," says Tim Bajarin of Creative Strategies, a consultancy. Apple's

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boss has certainly listened to calls from Wall Street for the company to hand back some of its cash hoard, something Jobs was notoriously reluctant to do. Earlier this month, Apple paid its first dividend since 1995.

In addition to disarming critics and delighting investors, Apple has been dishing out lawsuits. As *The Economist* went to press, a testy court battle in America between the firm and Samsung over various patents connected with smartphones and tablet computers was drawing to a close. Like his mentor, Mr Cook is clearly not afraid of a fight. He also seems to be developing other Jobs-like traits, including a penchant for pithy put-downs. Asked on an analysts' call whether personal computers and tablets could one day merge into a single device, Mr Cook shot back: "You can converge a toaster and a refrigerator, but those things are probably not going to be pleasing to the user."

The big question is whether Apple's boss has also learnt enough from his predecessor to keep the creative juices at the company flowing freely. In a blog post earlier this year George Colony, the boss of Forrester, a research firm, noted that the fortunes of companies such as Sony and Disney faded after their charismatic founders departed. He predicted that Apple would suffer a similar fate after coasting for a while on the back of existing products. But if Mr Cook can keep the firm's talented senior executives on board and inspire them to conquer new markets like digital TV, where Apple has yet to make much of an impact, the firm could buck this trend. His big screen test awaits.

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Key

A Open answers

B Open

C 1F, 2T, 3T, 4T, 5F, 6T, 7T, 8F, 9T, 10F, 11T, 12T.

(You might ask students to find evidence in the text to justify their answers and rewrite to false statements to make them true.)

D 1 helm, 2 patents, 3 phenomenal, 4 ailing, 5 humble, 6 pithy, 7 hiccups, 8 lambasted, 9 penchant, 10 put-down.

E Open answers.