

Apple's mystique may grow with Steve Jobs' death

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A portrait of Steve Jobs hangs on the window of an Apple Store, Thursday, Oct. 6, 2011, in Las Vegas. Jobs, the Apple founder and former CEO who invented and masterfully marketed gadgets that transformed everyday technology, from the personal computer to the iPod and iPhone, died Wednesday. He was 56. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

(AP) -- In the end, Steve Jobs left the world to his own devices. As macabre as it might seem, Jobs' death Wednesday will only add to the Apple mystique - and profit. The iPhone, iPad, iPod and Mac will, no doubt, get a sales boost as consumers pay the ultimate tribute to one of America's creative geniuses.

That could be especially true for the latest [iPhone](#), scheduled to go on sale Oct. 14. The lines were going to be long anyway, but now there are

bound to be even more people clambering for the iPhone 4S - the last device to be unveiled while Jobs was alive.

It's a commercial phenomenon that has happened many times before, most recently when Michael Jackson's album and song sales rocketed after the pop singer died in 2009.

"[Steve Jobs](#) was a rock star, someone on the scale of [Benjamin Franklin](#) and [Thomas Edison](#)," said Steven Osinski, a marketing professor at San Diego State University. "I think it's very likely there is going to be an upsurge in Apple's sales for a while."

Anything designed by revered figures invariably become hotter commodities after their death, said Michael Bernacchi, a marketing professor at the University of Detroit Mercy.

"These products have significant emotional value, they have sentimental value, they're connected, if you will, to the [bloodstream](#) of the person who's likely to be the purchaser," Bernacchi said. "There's a certain nostalgic value attached to that."

"Mr. Jobs really continues to exist in a much different manner through these products," Bernacchi said.

It can't hurt that many of Apple's 357 stores already have turned into shrines, attracting people who want to mourn together. It's not hard to imagine some of them wandering into the stores and buying an iPad or Mac.

Consider the scene Thursday at Apple's San Francisco store.

A memorial of flowers lined the sidewalk and handwritten notes were plastered on the window. One note read: "You made the world a better

place." Another proclaimed "hungry and foolish 4 ever," a nod to one of Jobs' favorite sayings.

Inside the store, it was business as usual. Upbeat rock-and-roll music played, and shoppers clustered around the iPad display.

Javier Martinez, a medical doctor vacationing from Spain, passed by and snapped pictures of the scene with his iPhone 4. Although he has no immediate plans to buy the new version, he is committed to continue buying the products that are a testament to Jobs' genius.

"He's dead, but his soul is alive," Martinez said. "He was the soul of an idea for many people who want to do things better, differently."

Investors believe it will remain business as usual at Apple. Apple Inc. shares dipped only slightly on the first day of trading after this death, down 88 cents Thursday to \$377.37.

The sedate reaction represents a vote of confidence in the management team that Jobs assembled to carry out his vision. In his final years, Jobs increasingly shared the stage with his lieutenants in a move that telegraphed Apple wasn't just a one-man show.

Jobs also had ensured an orderly transition by resigning as CEO six weeks ago and turning over the job to his protege, Tim Cook.

As soon as he took the job, Cook vowed to maintain "a company and culture that is unlike any other in the world." He will have plenty of help from Jobs-groomed executives dubbed a management "dream team" by some analysts.

The other key players include marketing guru Phil Schiller, design chief Jonathan Ive, software mastermind Scott Forstall and the head of

finance, Peter Oppenheimer. Nearly all the key Apple executives have been at the company for years, many of them joining around the time of Jobs' 1997 return.

It's widely believed that Apple's plans for the next two or three years already had been largely worked out before Jobs died.

It's a given that a third-generation iPad will be released next year, but most analysts believe the logical next step will be for Apple to introduce a large-screen television that runs on the same operating system as its computer tablet, phone and touch-screen iPod.

The only question seems to be whether the still-hypothetical iTV will hit the market next year or 2013.

"Steve's style and his vision will live on, and it could soon permeate the living room," predicted Sterne Agee analyst Shaw Wu.

After Walt Disney died in December 1966, the company seemed to be in good shape. Within a few months, Disneyland opened another popular attraction - the Pirates of the Caribbean - and released a hit movie, "The Jungle Book."

But Walt Disney had approved and was involved in both projects before he died.

After the pipeline went dry, Walt Disney Co. went through a long creative malaise that lasted until it hired Michael Eisner in 1984 to engineer what proved to be a successful turnaround.

Forrester Research CEO George Colony is worried that Apple will eventually lose its way, causing historians to look back on Jobs' tenure as a golden age of technology.

"I hope that I am wrong," Colony wrote in a Thursday blog post. "My hope is that Steve inspires all of us in the technology business to stop creating confusing, poorly-designed, slow, complex, ugly, maddening products that weigh down rather than lift up the work and souls of people."

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