Innovation Fallacy #9 - We’re The Apple Of…

by Bill Poston

No. You’re probably not. And you might not even know what that means.

Every once in a while when discussing the need for portfolio committees or gated development processes, a client will tell me “we don’t need those, Apple didn’t need them, and look how successful they’ve been.” Maybe so, but Apple had Steve Jobs, and you don’t. Unless you really are that good, you’re going to need to substitute his brilliance and foresight with better information, strategy formulation processes, governance structures, and decision support tools.

In reality, Apple had all of these things plus Steve Jobs. What he was able to do was define innovation strategy at the ecosystem level and force teams to design beautiful and functional products. His gift was being able to combine big picture strategy with an incredible eye for detail and an insistence on great design. That is a rare combination of skills that typically takes a cross-functional team of seasoned pros to emulate.

Your organization may be special, and you may be really good at your job, but holding up Apple as a benchmark, and using their success as an excuse for spurning structure, is not likely a winning strategy.

If you are betting that you are the next Steve Jobs, I suggest you hedge your bets.

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About the Author

Bill Poston
bill.poston@kalypso.com
For the past 30 years, Bill has helped executives in technology-driven industries transform their competencies to deliver results. He is a highly regarded consultant, speaker, and writer on the topics of innovation strategy, product development, portfolio management, technology commercialization, and the software systems that enable innovation. Keep up with Bill's latest research and thoughts on innovation and the rising role of the Chief Innovation Officer at www.TheChiefInnovationOfficer.com.