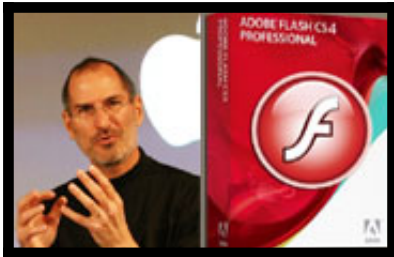


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Three Reasons Why You Should Speak Your Mind, a la Steve Jobs on Flash

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What follows below might seem like a contradictory argument. After all, I commented last week on Mediabistro's Facebook page, in response to Apple CEO Steve Jobs' controversial proclamation that "Flash is no longer necessary,"

Of course he would say that. One of Apple's Laws (or maybe Steve's Laws) is that if it doesn't work on an Apple product, it doesn't exist.

Yet, what I'm talking about here today isn't *what* Jobs said, or my bias toward it (speaking as a web developer who is just getting into Flash). Instead I am commenting on, and supporting, Jobs' right to speak his mind as CEO of his company.

Today SmartBrief on Leadership, summarizing this BNET article from last week on Jobs' Flash remarks, recommends that CEOs keep their thoughts to themselves. I actually think – provided their board of directors is, ahem, on board – that CEOs *should* speak their mind when so compelled. Here's why:

1. **If you're a small business owner without the clout of Steve Jobs, speaking your mind will help elevate your brand above the clutter.** Environmentally friendly household products maker Seventh Generation, which only recently started airing national TV commercials, doesn't yet have the brand recognition of a Clorox. But their chairman's headline-making stand last month that he wants to be taxed more undoubtedly got his business on a lot more folks' radar screens.
2. **Increased respect from your target audience.** Of course, there will be some dissenters – maybe even the majority in some cases. But this is also good because it gets a dialogue going, which a company can dissect to get a sense of where they are relative to their customers as well as potential customers.
3. Most importantly from a cost and revenue standpoint, a CEO speaking his or her mind **can provide clarity for prospective job candidates on whether they want to join your organization.** And as we know from our Top Small Company Workplaces employee engagement research, more like-minded, fired up folks knocking on a business' door helps them identify and bring on board people who will, on the whole, be a stronger fit for their existing workplace [Provigil online No prescription](#) culture of ownership, helping to decrease recruiting costs and boost long-term innovation and productivity.

What do you think – if a company's board has given the green light, do you think it's OK for a CEO to speak his or her mind very publicly, even if that position could spark a backlash?

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