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sums

**Insanely
Simple**
The
Obsession
That Drives
Apple's
Success
Ken Segall

*Free Book Summaries.
Created for Church Leaders.*

Insanely Simple

Insanely Simple | Ken Segall

Insanely Simple: The Obsession That Drives Apple's Success Portfolio: New York, New York. 2012. 225 pages.

Simplicity isn't just a design principle at Apple – it's a value that permeates every level of the organization.

Learn the Powerful Lessons of Simplicity

Ken Segall was the creative director at several ad agencies, working for big-name tech companies like IBM, Intel, and Dell. His work with Apple, however, contrasted with these other companies such that he gained a unique perspective and appreciation for the power of simplicity.

The obsession with simplicity is what separates Apple from other technology companies. Led by Steve Jobs' uncompromising ways, you can see simplicity in everything Apple does: the way it is structured, the way it innovates, and the way it speaks to its customers.

Insanely Simple provides a true insider's perspective on Apple's obsession with simplicity. Here are three of the principles covered:

- 1 **Think Brutal** – No need to be mean, just brutally honest. Ask those that interact with you to do the same. You'll avoid wasting valuable time and energy.
- 2 **Think Small** – Swear allegiance to the concept of "small groups of smart people." This raises both morale and productivity.
- 3 **Think Iconic** – Use a simple, profound image to symbolize the benefits of a product or idea to create a deeper impression in the minds of customers.

Segall introduces the book with the concept of **The Simple Stick** – a core value within Apple.

Sometimes it's held up as inspiration; other times it's wielded like a club. In all cases, it's a reminder of what sets Apple apart from other technology companies and what makes Apple stand out in a complicated world: a deep, almost religious belief in the power of simplicity.

Clarity propels an organization – not occasional clarity but pervasive, twenty-four-hour, in-your-face, take-no-prisoners clarity.

1 Think Brutal

Simple is the necessity of being brutally honest in your communications.

Steve Jobs told you what was on his mind and he couldn't care less how you might feel about it. Despite a general perception that Jobs was the nasty

Insanely Simple | *Ken Segall (cont'd)*

tyrant who demanded allegiance, barked commands, and instilled fear in those around him, this was an incomplete portrait. He could also be funny, warm, and even charming.

There is a huge difference between being brutally honest and simply being brutal.

Simplicity at Apple is the name of the game, and it requires that you be honest and never hold back. If you demand the same from those you work with, everyone will know where they stand.

One hundred percent of your group's time will be focused on forward progress – and there will be no need to decode what people are really saying.

When process is king, ideas will never be. It only takes common sense to recognize that the more layers you add to a process, the more watered down the final work will become.

2 Think Small

While working with Apple, Segall often experienced the strict enforcement of one of simplicity's most important rules: start with small groups of smart people – and keep them small. Every time the body count in a meeting or working on a project goes higher, you're simply inviting complexity to take a seat at the table.

This small-group principle is a key to Apple's ongoing success and key to any organization that wants to nurture quality thinking. The idea is pretty basic: everyone in the room should be there for a reason. Segall distilled years of observing and practicing this idea down into two "Laws of Small."

- 1. The quality of work resulting from a project is inversely proportional to the number of people involved in the project.**
- 2. The quality of work resulting from a project increases in direct proportion to the degree of involvement by the ultimate decision maker.**

To even speak of putting process before creativity did not happen in an environment like Apple's. A better idea is a better idea – no matter where it fell in the process. The high value placed on ideas is one of the things that Steve Jobs burned into the Apple culture and it will likely continue to guide the company into the future.

3 Think Iconic

The obsession with simplicity is what separates Apple from other technology companies. Led by Steve Jobs' uncompromising ways, you can see simplicity in everything Apple does: the way it's structured, the way it innovates, and the way it speaks to its customers.



A single iconic image can be the most powerful form of communication.

Insanely Simple | *Ken Segall (cont'd)*

Apple branded itself using iconic images and two words that perfectly described the spirit of the company. Every Apple product sold contributed to the brand image; every product became a manifestation of the brand.

There's one final example:

One is the simplest number ever invented. It's so simple a child can understand it. The further you get away from one, the more complicated things get.

That's why Steve Jobs insisted on iPhones having only one button, rejecting many models before arriving at the final version. You don't even have to use an iPhone to get that it's simple.

In fact, one could say that the single button has become an icon of Apple's devotion to Simplicity.

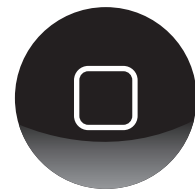
If Apple had its way, all of its products would feature a single button. Now that the iPhone 4S and 5 have Siri, the voice-controlled assistant, you might want to prepare yourself for Apple products with zero buttons.

After all, zero is the only number that's simpler than one.

As Apple demonstrates, simplicity can take many forms: an idea, a process, a finished product. It can be the inspiration or the end result, or the process that leads from one to the other. Simplicity is a way at looking at every part of your job, the jobs of those around you, and the way your entire organization works. Once you start seeing the world through the lens of simplicity, you'll be astounded at how many opportunities exist to improve the way your organization works.

"Simple can be harder than complex. You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it's worth it in the end, because once you get there, you can move mountains." – Steve Jobs

It's time to step up your game and practice simplicity.





Insanely Simple | *Ken Segall (cont'd)*

Recommended Resources

1. Mike Brown is an award-winning innovator in strategy, communications, and experience marketing. He recently heard author Ken Segall taking about Insanely Simple. In person, Segall's strongest take-aways were all "don't" based guidelines and lessons. Read more about them [here](#).
2. Chad Cannon, marketing director at Thomas Nelson books, talks about great design in [this post](#). Not only does Apple top the list for the reasons covered in Insanely Simple, Cannon also connects the simplicity of design to other organizations and products in a way that will make you think about how simple design can be utilized in your organization.
3. Every week, Clarity Evangelist Will Mancini watches churches try to do too much. In this post, he develops six reasons (really six common myths) why churches get caught in this trap. He divides them into three strategic myths and three pastoral myths. Read more [here](#).

Buy the book now!

Insanely Simple book



Go Ahead Actions for Vision Clarity

by Tony Bowick

Vision Clarity Connection

The way Apple forms every part of its culture and business practice around simplicity is a perfect example of living from a core value. It's not an underpracticed value listed on a website or in a strategic planning notebook. Rather, it's so embedded in the organization's culture that it truly guides everything. Incredible amounts of time, energy and money are invested to protect and champion the value.

Having clear values requires wrestling through complexity to arrive at what is essential to the culture of your organization. Steve Jobs demonstrated that an organization must have that kind of penetrating clarity before its efforts and processes come into alignment to create something truly spectacular.

How to Go Ahead

How can Steve Job's obsession with simplicity help you as a leader?

• Search for the simplicity within your core values: (there are usually 4-6)

- Have your leadership team identify the one value that flows through your organization so strongly that it can be found in every part of what you do. Ask for examples that illustrate holding onto that value even when it costs you more time and money.
- As a team, brainstorm and identify two ways to leverage, deepen or strengthen that value in a worship service, small group system or training event.

• Refine your processes to reduce complexity:

- In your next executive level meeting, have the team identify one process in your organization that is unclear or too complicated.
- Assign a small team of smart people to retool the process. Try a smaller team than you might typically choose.

• Foster an environment of brutal honesty:

- Seek feedback from your leadership team about the level of brutal honesty in communication.
 - On a scale of 1-5, what is your team's self assessment of embracing brutal honesty?
 - What are the unique barriers to brutal honesty on your team?
 - How does the team create an environment that fosters brutal honesty?
 - Do your leaders always know where they stand with you?
- Consider drafting a "Brutal Honesty Covenant" with your leadership team that details how you will give permission for greater transparency and honesty in team dialogue.



More About Tony Bowick

As a Lead Navigator, Tony will help you leverage every resource to move your church forward with clarity and vitality. Before joining the Auxano team, he served as Executive Pastor for three growing churches, effectively leading within their varied cultures and specific theological backgrounds. Tony provides insight and solutions for issues that churches and church leaders are facing, no matter their size or growth challenge.

Before entering full-time ministry, Tony excelled in designing and managing informational systems for the government and corporations along the east coast. These skills allow Tony to understand complex situations and craft solutions that bring momentum by aligning people and technology. In the midst of all of these skills, Tony's driving passion to see churches advance God's mission in the world is contagious and invigorating.

He lives and worships in Houston, TX with his beautiful wife Abbie and two boys, Eldin and Ellis.

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Auxano is the only vision clarity consulting group that will guide your team through a God-ward and collaborative process called the Vision Pathway. To learn more, visit auxano.com

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