General Information

Source: Rock Center with Brian Williams  
Resource Type: Video News Report  
Creator: Brian Williams  
Copyright: NBCUniversal Media, LLC.  
Event Date: 12/06/2012  
Air/Publish Date: 12/06/2012  
Clip Length 00:19:05

Description

Steve Jobs' hand-picked successor, Tim Cook, talks in this exclusive interview about Apple's battle with Samsung, glitches with their maps application, the prospect of Apple TV, and the challenge of keeping Apple cutting edge. Cook also discusses the death of company founder Steve Jobs, the navigating of the future of the company, and Apple's role in China.

Keywords

Made in America, Exports, Imports, Engines, Price, Cost, Skills, Manufacturing, Education, Research, Development, Retail, Industry, Icons, Downloads, Compaq, Robertsdale, Alabama, Biography, Robert Kennedy, Stress, Leadership, Career, Visionary, Counterfeit, FaceTime, Life, Profile

Citation

MLA
"One on One With Apple’s Tim Cook." Brian Williams, correspondent. Rock Center with Brian Williams. NBCUniversal Media. 6 Dec. 2012. NBC Learn. Web. 8 September 2018

APA

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE
"One on One With Apple’s Tim Cook" Rock Center with Brian Williams, New York, NY: NBC Universal, 12/06/2012. Accessed Sat Sep 8 2018 from NBC Learn: https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/browse/?cuecard=62292

Transcript
One on One With Apple’s Tim Cook

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
The impact of Apple on life in America is well established by any standard. They have changed our electronics and our culture and whether you’re the owner of Apple products or not, you’ve got to admit that much--as much as any company can be about one guy, Apple was Steve Jobs. And now that Steve Jobs is gone, Apple is run by Tim Cook. He hasn’t talked a whole lot about his life or his business. He certainly hasn’t done so on television until now. Apple is famously secretive and so it-- while it took months of meetings and negotiations, Tim Cook agreed to be interviewed and we met up at one of the places Apple has transformed. Nobody remembers the guy who came after Thomas Edison. And nobody seems to recognize Tim Cook as we walked together across the teeming floor of Grand Central Station.

TIM COOK: I’m a private person.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Yeah.

TIM COOK: And, you know, I-- I like my-- being anonymous.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: As we walked, we’re surrounded by examples of what Apple has done to our society, both good and bad. People now live their lives while listening to the soundtrack of their lives, communicating with members of their own community while ignoring the actual community around them. And in this marble monument to another time where trains lumber to a halt two stories beneath our feet,
we go up the stairs into what we were told the future would look like. The red shirts greet us. And Tim Cook is home now in the Apple Store where the successor to Jobs is suddenly treated more like Jagger.

TIM COOK: Hi.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Hi.
TIM COOK: Good to see you.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I believe in you.
TIM COOK: It’s a pleasure. Thank you very much.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I’ve been looking for a long time.
TIM COOK: Thank you.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Sign it for me, please.
TIM COOK: Oh.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I’m your big fan.
TIM COOK: Oh.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I’ve been a big fan for-- for-- for years, really.
TIM COOK: There you go. It’s pretty spectacular. Who else would put a store like this in Grand Central?

BRIAN WILLIAMS: And who else would have us believe they intend to be the one company that reverses hundreds of years of business history by becoming the one company that never fades away into irrelevance.

You realize if you’re a company that can keep amazing us, consumers, if you’re a company that can stay fresh without an expiration date, you’ll be the first company ever to do that. There is a cycle, a circle of life, a-- a life and death. And you’re trying to buck that trend.
TIM COOK: Don’t bet against us, Brian. Don’t bet against us.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: We started our day with Tim Cook in Lower Manhattan at another of his two hundred fifty austere Apple stores where we began the questioning with: what’s different about him? How are you not Steve Jobs?
TIM COOK: In many ways. One of the things he did for me that removed a gigantic burden that would have normally existed is he told me on a couple of occasions before he passed away was to never question what he would have done, never ask the question what Steve would do, to just do what’s right.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Doing right has done well for Tim Cook so far. He’s had a good first year on the job. The company’s stock is up about forty-five percent during his tenure. And think about this he’s already presided over the rollout of three iPads, two iPhones, and three Macs.
It is beautiful.
TIM COOK: Absolutely stunning. Every detail has been focused on.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: So you’ve got guys whose job it is to get this mesh right, to get this-- this curve right.
TIM COOK: To get it-- to get it precisely right.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: In fairness, however, this past year, they haven’t gotten everything precisely right.

JOHN Malkovich (TV ad): Weather?
AUTOMATED VOICE (Siri; TV ad): Nice weather--
BRIAN WILLIAMS: Starting with Siri, the small woman who lives in your iPhone. The service amazed all of us at first but then came under criticism for not being perfect or as consistently amazing as Steve Jobs wanted it to be. Then there are the Maps—iPhones used to come with Google maps until they set out on their own. But Apple’s version wasn’t quite ready for launch. It lacked some critical street smarts. And in those early days God help you if you went anywhere near the Brooklyn Bridge or the Hoover Dam. It was a rare and public embarrassment, and Cook fired two top executives in charge. And how big of a setback was Maps?

TIM COOK: It didn’t meet our customers’ expectations. And our expectations of ourselves are even higher than our customers’. However, I can tell you—so we screwed up.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: And you said good-bye to some executives?

TIM COOK: Well, we screwed up. And we are putting the weight of the company behind correcting it.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: As for the iPhone 5 itself, they have flown off those perfect Apple store shelves.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: All right. There you go.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Apple sold five million of them in the first weekend alone, breaking all previous sales records. But buyers of the iPhone 5 soon discovered they had to buy something else, none of the old power cords work on the new equipment. Why did we have to buy new cords for this?

TIM COOK: As it turns out, we had a connector, a thirty-pin connector--

TIM COOK: --that we used for a decade or more--

BRIAN WILLIAMS: I’ve got five hundred of them at home, if you need any--

TIM COOK: You have a few of those on--

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Yeah.

TIM COOK: --on-- on iPod. But, Brian, it was one of those things where we couldn’t make this product with that connector. But let me tell you, the product is so worth it.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: And that’s the thing about Apple. Sleek isn’t cheap. Those white earbuds announced to the world you’ve got a couple of hundred dollars to spend. Your investment will buy you a staggeringly beautiful product that works unlike any other and in a lot of workplaces, including our own, the Apple products you’ll see are the ones people bring in from home—they’re usually right there on the desk, next to the computers we have to use for work. Apple prides itself on being equal parts computer-company and religion. Apple fans get whipped up into a stampeding froth with every new product release. Customers famously camp outdoors and then emerge triumphant, emotionally spent. Journalists flock to those dramatic product rollouts as if the CEO is going to reveal stone tablets instead of the kind with scratch-proof glass. And the legendary Apple culture of secrecy is designed to keep it that way. Why are you institutionally so secretive? Why-- how is it that you know how many times I’ve listened to a Bob Dylan song or a Kendrick Lamar song or “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” and yet we never get to know anything about you guys?

TIM COOK: We think that holding our product plan secret is very important because people love surprises.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: This was one surprise Apple could not have loved, the new Samsung ad campaign.
It’s blistering, bold, damaging. It portrays Apple products and people who love them as somehow passé and uncool, even desperate. It’s a blunt instrument disguised as satire and it’s a frontal attack on a giant that would have been unthinkable not too long ago.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (TV ad): Hey, what’d you just do?
UNIDENTIFIED MAN (TV ad): I just sent him a playlist.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN (TV ad): By touching phones?
UNIDENTIFIED MAN (TV ad): Yep, simple as that.
UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: It’s the Galaxy S3.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I’ll see you at the studio later.
UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: When do you think we’re going to be able to do that thing?
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Hey.
UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (TV ad): Hey.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Hey mom, dad.
UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Oh, thanks for holding our spot.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: You guys have fun. Home by midnight you two.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN (TV ad): The next big thing is already here Samsung Galaxy S3.
UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: But, honey, this is the line for apps.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: The unmistakable message right there, Apple products are for your parents. Samsung makes the really cool stuff and they’re much more casual about it. They came along and tried to paint those with white earbuds, Apple users as losers. They’re trying to paint their product as cool and yours as not cool. Is this thermonuclear war?

TIM COOK: Well, we love our customers. And we’re-- we’ll fight to defend them with anyone. Is it thermonuclear war? The-- the-- the reality is-- is that we love competition at Apple. We think it makes us all better. But we want people to invent their own stuff.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: He’s talking about the legal fight between Apple and Samsung. They’ve sued each other in courts around the world over patent infringements. Apple won the last round in the U.S. when a jury ruled Samsung owed them a billion dollars for stealing ideas. Samsung was back in court just today appealing the judgment. Sometimes the business of making pretty things is ugly.

How tough is your business? How surprised would we civilians be at how rough it gets--spying, skullduggery?

TIM COOK: It’s tough. It’s very tough. You have people trying to hack into systems on a constant basis. You have people trying to elicit confidential information about future product plans. All of these things are things that we constantly fight.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: And then there’s Tim Cook’s larger challenge, the man who rhapsodizes about the perfectly rounded edges of his products, vows to always keep Apple cutting edge.

It sounded to me, like, you and I grew up the same American life, kind of a grindingly simple and normal American middle-class household. When you and I as kids would go to a neighbor’s house and see under their new TV--Sony Trinitron--that would tell us something instantly. And you’re smiling. And that brand lasted up until Walkman, Discman. But then fast-forward to today it’s less meaningful. How do you not
become Sony, with all apologies to Sony?
TIM COOK: We’re very simple people at Apple. We focus on making the world’s best products and enriching people’s lives. I think some companies--maybe even the one that you mentioned--maybe they decided that they could do everything. We have to make sure at Apple that we stay true to focused, laser focus. We can only do great things a few times, only on a few products.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: But will the next great thing be Apple’s long-rumored move into the television business?
TIM COOK: It’s a market that we have intense interest in and it’s a market that we see that has been left behind.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: What does he mean by that? Tim Cook goes on to talk about that. We’ll show you as much as he’s willing to say about what might be the next big thing when we come back with part two of our interview right after this break.
Welcome back. This is the first time Apple’s Tim Cook has done this, a full-on television interview. It’s also the first time he’s spoken in any detail about the death of the legendary co-founder Steve Jobs. And here now part two of our conversation.
In August 2011, Tim Cook was made CEO of Apple. Steve Jobs reduced his own role to chairman of the board. Then less than two months later, he was gone after a long fight with pancreatic cancer.
TIM COOK: It’s so great to see so many of you here today.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: It was Tim Cook who was chosen to preside over the private memorial service for Apple employees. Thousands of people gathered as the face of the founder gazed down upon them from the side of the building.
TIM COOK: It was-- it was the saddest time of my life.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: Did you know how sick he was?
TIM COOK: I always thought that he would bounce back because he always did. And it wasn’t until extremely close to the end that I reached a sort of an intellectual point that-- that he couldn’t bounce this time.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: Big boss coming through. Big boss, people, look alive.
UNIDENTIFIED MAN: How are you?
TIM COOK: Good. How are you doing?
BRIAN WILLIAMS: It’s his company to run now. And after the peaceful transition of power, he was quickly forced into crisis footing because of the situation in China, where so many Apple products are assembled by skilled workers. There’s been trouble and Cook traveled there after harsh criticism of poor working conditions and low wages. The situation was later parodied on SNL by cast members who actually make up the heart of Apple’s demographic.
(Excerpt from SNL)
FRED ARMISEN: Oh, no, talk about Apple Map. It no work, right. It take you to wrong place? You want Starbuck, it take you to Dunkin’ Donut? That must be so hard for you.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: China remains a major issue for Apple and Tim Cook seems to have a ready answer for it.
Why can’t you be a made-in-America company?
TIM COOK: You know, this-- this iPhone, as a matter of fact the engine in here is made in America. And not only are the engines in here made in America, but engines are made in America and are exported. The glass on this phone is made in Kentucky. And so we’ve been working for years on doing more and more in the United States. Next year, we will do one of our existing Mac lines in the United States.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: Let’s say our constitution was a little different and Barack Obama called you in tomorrow and said get everybody out of China, and do whatever you have to do, make these, make everything you make in the United States. What would that do to the price of this device?
TIM COOK: Honestly, it’s not so much about price. It’s about the skills, etcetera. Over time, there are skills that are associated with manufacturing that have left the U.S. not-- not essentially people, but the education system stopped producing them.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: Cook says Apple has already created more than six hundred thousand jobs here in the U.S. that includes everything from research and development to retail to a solar power farm. He also points to the app industry, another one of those that didn’t exist before Apple came along. All those icons and all those downloads employ a lot of people.
STEVE JOBS: All this side is iPods here.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: Yeah.
It was such a different world just six years ago when we sat down with Steve Jobs for one of his last television interviews. He showed us around Apple’s flagship store on Fifth Avenue in New York which six years later is still the big glass granddaddy of them all. Back then, Steve Jobs was as usual all about the future.
STEVE JOBS: We’ve got some really great ideas of the products we’re going to build next year and the year after that we’re working real hard on. So I-- I think our focal length is-- you know, is always forward.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: He was all black turtleneck and glass frames and mystical and mysterious. And, you know, forgive me, you and I could work at a Best Buy. We’re, you know, plain-looking people. You’re a much more conventional-seeming guy. But there’s obviously brain power he saw in you that you brought to bear on this job.
TIM COOK: I’m not sure a conventional person would’ve come to Apple at that point in time. Almost everyone I know thought I was crazy.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: That’s because Apple was on the ropes back in 1998. Steve Jobs had just come back and was trying to steal Cook away from Compaq Computer, a now-faded name that was actually vibrant back then.
TIM COOK: I just got to Compaq. I’d just gotten to Houston. I agreed to come out and talk; five minutes into the conversation with him I’m wanting to throw caution to the wind and come to Apple. And, you know, the rest is history.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: Tim Cook’s personal history starts in Robertsdale, Alabama, the son of a Gulf Coast shipyard worker and a mom who stayed at home. After working in an aluminum factory as a teenager he went off to Auburn, and then to Duke for an MBA. Among what little else we know about him: he’s got a lot of Bob Dylan on his iPod, and Bobby Kennedy was his hero. He still has his accent from the South.
These days he finds solitude in the West. For all the folks trying to get to know you and figure you out, where do you go when you need to go someplace?

TIM COOK: I work out to keep stress away. I’m in the gym by 5 AM every morning. If I have some free time, I go to the National Park. I love getting in nature. And so these-- these are the things that calm my mind and allow me to think clearly. And-- and so that’s what I do.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: This is kind of your television coming out. And I’m-- I’m glad you did this. Does this mean you have reached a cruising altitude?

TIM COOK: There’s no-- maybe for other CEOs. There’s no cruising altitude at Apple.

(Crowd cheering)

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Tim Cook is a manager with a vision who is following in the footsteps of a visionary-turned-manager. While he has to worry about global issues like the counterfeiters who instantly turn out fake copies of every new Apple product, Cook has to keep one eye on the stock price constantly and the other on the future; and that sure sounds like it means TV.

What can Apple do for television-watching? What do you know that is going to change the game that we don’t know yet?

TIM COOK: It’s a market that we see that has been left behind. You know, I used to watch The Jetsons as a kid.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Absolutely.

(Excerpt from The Jetsons)

TIM COOK: I loved The Jetsons.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Right there with Elroy.

TIM COOK: We’re living The Jetsons with this.

(Excerpt from The Jetsons)

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Facetime is The Jetsons but television is still television.

TIM COOK: And it’s-- it’s-- it’s an area of intense interest. I-- I can’t say more than that but.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: I’m not shocked. All right. Complete this sentence--ten years from now Americans are going to be amazed that they ever-- what’s the-- give us broad generalities, what’s the new thing?

(Tim Cook laughing)

BRIAN WILLIAMS: It’s-- it’s okay to tell me.

TIM COOK: I love it. I love it.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Let this stuff out. Whatev-- what-- whatever you’re thinking of-- for the future, it’s all right.

TIM COOK: Our-- our whole role in life is to give you something you didn’t know you wanted and then once you get it, you can’t imagine your life without it.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Starting with--

TIM COOK: And you can count on Apple doing that.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Oh, man, that’s frustrating.