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An Oral History of Apple's Infinite Loop

Apple's old HQ holds stories of pizza ovens, iPhone secrets, baseball bats, and what happened to Steve Jobs' office.

SAVE

LAST MONTH, APPLE became the first company valued at a trillion dollars. With its new ring-shaped campus, all glass and curvy lines, it looks the part of a company bestriding an industry. But its dominance wasn't always assured.

Twenty-five years ago, the computer revolution's marquee company was in decline. Back then, it was just settling into shiny new headquarters, a campus of six buildings that formed a different kind of ring. Called Infinite Loop, the name is a reference to a well-known programming error—code that gets stuck in an endless repetition—though no one seems to know who applied it. Infinite Loop was the place where Apple's leaders and engineers pulled off a historic turnaround, and it will always be the source of stories and legends—many of them untold. Until now.





PHOTOGRAPH: MICHELLE GROSKOPF

About the Author

Editor at large Steven Levy has covered Apple for more than 30 years.

Though Apple is keeping the complex, the move this year to the grounded UFO known as Apple Park seems to mark an end to the era when Steve Jobs, every inch the hero in a Joseph Campbell narrative, rescued a company that no one wanted to die. In 1997, a young WIRED magazine, founded in the same year that Infinite Loop opened, ran a cover with the Apple logo and a one-word caption: Pray. Our prayers were answered—and it happened at Infinite Loop.

For more than a year I've been interviewing Apple employees, past and present, about their recollections of Infinite Loop. In their own words, edited for clarity and concision, here is the story of a plot of land in Cupertino, California, that brought us the Mac revival, the iPod, iTunes, the iPhone, and the Steve Jobs legacy.

IN THE EARLY 1990s, Apple decided to expand its Cupertino headquarters by building a new, grander campus. Steve Jobs, who was forced out of the company in the mid-'80s, had come up with the idea.

John Sculley (Apple CEO, 1983–93): When I first started working with Steve Jobs, he had this idea of building an Apple campus. Steve called it SuperSite. He wanted something like the experience of going to Disney World, with monorails going around, where everyone was in different-colored uniforms. When Steve told the Mac group that he wanted to have uniforms, they all looked at him like he was crazy.

John Sculley poses with employees at Apple's headquarters in 1993. PHOTOGRAPH: ACEY HARPER/THE LIFE IMAGES COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES

Chris Espinosa (Apple employee #8, 1977–present): Then Steve left, but he'd planted in Sculley the idea that we needed a central campus on property we owned.

Sculley: We had taken a contract on a former Motorola site, Four-Phase.

Shaan Pruden (senior director, partnership management, 1989–present): I visited there in 1993. I think the windows might have been in, but the insides weren't done. I'm struck by the image of those giant windows and seeing the Caterpillars pushing around those mounds of dirt.

Espinosa: It opened very late '92, early '93. We occupied the buildings mostly in numerical order. One, two, three, four, five, six.

Greg “Joz” Joswiak (VP of product marketing, 1986–present): They built this campus fast, and it was obviously a bright shiny object. Everybody wanted to move in. It was a gigantic shift in the way we worked, because we went from being in cubes to, all of a sudden, literally every person had an office.

Espinosa: Building 1 was occupied first by the exec staff and software group. Building 2 was all the Mac web. Three then was the development tools, technical support, and product marketing. Building four was the cafeteria and the Apple library, a great, great resource. Buildings 5 and 6 were hardware. The notion was that all of R&D would fit in it, but by the time we finished it we'd grown too much. And then, of course, after we occupied it, the company collapsed so that we all fit in again. By '96 we all fit into the Loop.

Tony Fadell (SVP for the iPod division, 2001–10): Infinite Loop 7 was the Pepper Mill, a restaurant on North DeAnza Boulevard. It turned into BJ's, which continued to be called IL7. People would say, “I'll meet you in IL7,” which was the code for “Let's go drinking.”

Joswiak: The original inhabitants of all the floors got to name their own conference rooms. It's a very weird set of names. We have rooms like Here and There. I still have the hardest time keeping it straight. Which one's Here, which one's There?

Scott Forstall (SVP of software, 1997–2012): Those buildings were mazes. Every time I would bring someone on campus, they would get lost. There's only one time I remember someone not getting lost, and it was when we were working on a screen reader for sight-challenged people. I brought someone in who needed a seeing-eye dog. He asked to use the restroom. Every other time this happened, I would wait because they would get lost trying to find their way back. Left, right, left, right, right. Five minutes later his dog brings him right back into the room. That seeing-eye dog was the only one who knew his way around the very first time.

When the campus opened, Apple was struggling and CEOs came and went. Sculley left in 1992, succeeded by Mike Spindler, nicknamed the Diesel. He was gone soon after Infinite Loop was built, replaced by Gil Amelio in 1996. Steve Jobs, meanwhile, was building the computer company NeXT.

Steve Jobs in 1988, when he was building NeXT Computer. PHOTOGRAPH: ED KASHI/VII/REDUX

Pruden: I moved in IL3 in March '95. It was a tough time for Apple. Every day somebody else would be leaving or they'd be having another reorg.

Eddy Cue (SVP of internet software and services, 1989–present): In the early days of this campus, Apple wasn't a highly successful company—the question was whether we would continue to exist, as opposed to whether we would be successful.

Gil Amelio (CEO, 1996–97): I got handed a bucket of garbage and was working as hard as I could to get it cleaned up.

Heidi Roizen (head of developer relations, 1996–97): I was hired by Mike Spindler, but I started the same day as Gil Amelio. That was the quarter we lost \$700 million. There were 350 people in developer relations. But within the first week they said, "You're going to have to cut 20 percent of your team." That was not what I would call a fun year.

Fred Anderson (CFO, 1996–2004): I started at Apple on April Fool's Day, 1996. We were in the middle of a liquidity crisis, and I had to work with my finance team on a major restructuring plan and a debt offering. I called a staff meeting. The controller and treasurer didn't show up, and I found out later that they had tendered their resignation effective when I joined. I ended up making battlefield promotions to a treasurer and controller.

Pruden: It was Friday night before the 1996 Christmas holiday, and a friend of mine called me and said, "Don't go home today without talking to me." Four-thirty comes around, and he says, "Oh, you might as well go. Nothing's going to happen." Half an hour later, he told me to get back in here. Outside of Town Hall [the auditorium in IL4], I could recognize all the guys from the *San Jose Mercury News*—this event was meant for the press and not many Apple people were there. Our chief legal counsel goes to the podium and says, "Ladies and gentlemen, we're here to announce that Apple Computer has acquired NeXT and I'd like to introduce Gil Amelio and Steve Jobs." They came down the far aisle and I thought two things, "I am watching history right now" and "Oh my God! We're saved!"

Avie Tevanian (SVP software engineering, 1997–2006): The meeting was in the evening—by the time the lawyers had drafted everything and signed everything it had gotten late, and for some reason we needed to get the announcement done.

Amelio: I knew Steve would never allow a partnership, and that my days were numbered. But I did what I thought was right for the company.

Jon Rubinstein (SVP hardware engineering, 1997–2006): When the NeXT deal closed, we walked into this insane asylum with Gil Amelio and his staff. Fortunately, Fred Anderson was there. But the rest of them were nuts. It was really crazy. We started downsizing dramatically. Steve would be around occasionally in an advisory role, but he didn't really spend much time there. Gil was not really sort of in tune with the company.

Roizen: When I first arrived Gil was still up in City Center [Apple's headquarters before Infinite Loop]. Gil's floor there was like going into the inner sanctum of corporate America. Steve said the place needed an exorcist.

Amelio: I didn't like being over there when all the action was at Infinite Loop. So I started to develop this executive suite [on the fourth floor of IL1].

Anderson: Gil had his lunch brought in every day on china rather than going over to our cafeteria to mix with the rank and file. He didn't fit the culture.

Gil Amelio at an Apple event on May 13, 1996. PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT MANCHESTER/GETTY IMAGES

Amelio: I was absolutely not a culture fit. I ran the company in a very professional, disciplined manner. I did it for one reason: It works. The fact of the matter is that we did solve the fundamental problems. We did create a new platform. We did fix the quality problems.

Anderson: There were three board calls that I was involved in and Gil wasn't invited to. Ed Woolard, the board member who headed DuPont, asked, "Fred, do you agree with the strategy?" I felt I had a fiduciary responsibility [to be truthful] so I said, "Ed, no. I don't, really." He said, "You think we're going to make the plan this year?" I said, "I don't think so, Ed." He said, "How's morale?" I said, "It's not very good, Ed."

Rubinstein: On July 4th weekend, I get a call from Fred saying, "Hey, get your ass up here right now." Gil had been fired and Fred stepped in to the interim CEO roll. Fred was interim CEO for July, August, and part of September. And then Steve stepped into the interim CEO roll to help hire a CEO for Apple. We interviewed a whole bunch of people, and Steve didn't like any of them. And so he continued to do the job himself.

After moving into Infinite Loop—building IL1—Jobs began transforming Apple, as a company and a culture. With its huge atrium featuring a coffee bar to host serendipitous meetings, IL1 was the gateway to Apple. Jobs' presence loomed on the fourth floor.

Espinosa: When Steve returned, I drove down to the local Flag and Banner store, bought a pirate flag, stuck an Apple sticker on it and cable-tied it to the bridge across the atrium. It was there for about four hours before security took it down.

Dan Whisenhunt (VP, real estate, 2007–18): Steve didn't like the campus. He wasn't here during the time it was built, and he didn't have ownership of the design. But the actual bones of the buildings were really good.

Rubinstein: They were not great buildings. We'd kind of look out at it, and Steve would shake his head.

Whisenhunt: One thing he did like was the interior courtyard. It served Apple really well. It was private. It was beautiful. It had this collegiate campus feel.

Mike Slade (special assistant to the CEO, 1999–2004): Steve didn't use Gil's office but had a small one. It was very, very, very cluttered with random shit people sent him. There were probably a hundred products in his office at any given time. The couches and the coffee table were littered with crap. And then his desk was also very busy.

Espinosa: One of the first things Steve did was to put giant "Think Different" banners in the huge atrium in IL1, which seemed a little propaganda-ish, but they were a hit with everybody. Then he started putting the products on the banner. If you're a product manager or an engineer on a team, there's nothing more motivating than seeing your product 40 feet high on a billboard.

"Think Different" banners emblazoned Infinite Loop in April of 2000. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID MCNEW/GETTY IMAGES

Cheryl Thomas (VP software operations, 1989–present): The “Think Different” campaign was a huge, huge deal for us because it was this redefinition of who we were and how we thought. We had a big Friday beer bash, there were stacks of posters that employees could grab. People had them framed. Those same posters are in people’s offices today.

Phil Schiller (SVP worldwide marketing, 1987–present): Things were so different then—there were no cell phones, not even Wi-Fi. We didn’t get all our news on the internet yet, so the drop of magazines was a big deal to everybody. Somebody would go around with the mail cart of everybody’s magazines, and we’d get our *Macworlds* and *MacWEEKs* and look at the rumor column on the back page and say, “Uh, oh, what leaked?”

The epicenter of Apple was IL1—and, in particular, Jobs’ fourth-floor boardroom.

Cue: This was the central hub. People spent a tremendous amount of time in this area because of Steve’s involvement with the products.

Slade: Most meetings with Steve, no matter who was meeting or what the topic, he did 75 percent of the talking. It didn’t matter who it was, he’d just talk.

Rubinstein: We’d meet every Monday. Steve would sit in the middle of the table in front of the white board—and he would spend a lot of his time up at the white board. All the major decisions were made in that meeting. One big one was moving the iPod to work on Windows. Phil and I pushed really hard on it, until Steve finally got pissed off and told us to do whatever we wanted to do, and we would be responsible.

Schiller: In 1997 we made the tough decision to kill Newton. I remember Newton customers picketing outside of Apple.

Tim Cook (Apple CEO, 1998–present): My first day at work I had to cross a picket line to get in the building—they are out with signs and yelling and I’m asking myself, “What have I done?” I learned that it was because Steve decided to kill the Newton. I told him there’s protesters outside, and he says, “Oh yeah, don’t worry about that.”

The Newton, an early tablet computer shown here in 1993, accrued a small but passionate fan base. PHOTOGRAPH: BROOKS KRAFT/GETTY IMAGES

Schiller: We're like, "Steve! Newton customers are picketing! What do you want to do? They're angry." And Steve said, "They have every right to be angry. They love Newton. It's a great product, and we have to kill it, and that's not fun, so we have to get them coffee and doughnuts and send it down to them and tell them we love them and we're sorry and we support them."

Cook: At IBM and Compaq, where I had been working, I had been involved in helping with thousands of product introductions and withdrawals—and, I have to say, very few people cared about the withdrawals—and not very many people cared about the intro, either. I had never seen this passion that close up.

Slade: One day in Steve's office we were talking about some gadget, it was like in '98 or early '99, and he just went and bought it on Amazon. He was in awe about how cool it was to buy things with one click. So he called up Amazon and said, "Hey, this is Steve Jobs," and licensed that one-click patent for a million bucks.

Cue: My first memory of sitting in a meeting in IL1 was with Steve. It was just the two of us up on the fourth floor in the boardroom. We started at 10. I was working on the online store and we were trying to come up with all the things associated with it. By 1, he says, "Hey, are you hungry, because I am." Six pizzas came in. I'm like, "OK, they must have not known which kind we wanted so they provided a bunch." I took the first one and it was pizza dough with tomato sauce and onions, no cheese or anything else. The next one, same thing. So I'm like, "All right, now I get it—the first three are his." I open the fourth one—same thing. Six pizzas, all dough and tomatoes and onions. That's how I discovered that his idea of pizza and my idea of pizza were definitely something different.

Slade: In 1999 we were going to ship iMovie. Steve gave all of us on the executive team iMacs, a brand new Sony digital video camera, and a week to make a movie. The next Monday we came back and showed our movies. Most of us had kids, and showed

movies about our kids. Steve did a movie about his kids. But the movies that weren't about kids were the funny ones. Tim made a movie making fun of how expensive housing prices were in Palo Alto.

Cook: I was looking for a home to buy, and moving from Texas I was so shocked at the prices here.

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Slade: What was interesting about it in retrospect was it told us almost nothing about Tim. Nobody really knew Tim, he's kind of inscrutable.

One of Jobs' most popular moves was revamping the cafeteria, dubbed Caffè Macs.

Francesco Longoni, head of food services (1998–present): Steve and I were friends because he lived close to a restaurant that I used to run, Il Fornaio, very close to his house. Steve wanted me to come over and run the café, which was operated by a third party.

Schiller: He said to Francesco, “How would you like to run the biggest restaurant in Northern California?”

Longoni: I said, “If I can become an Apple employee and all the chefs can be Apple employees as well, instead of having this third-party nonsense.” In early 1998, I got the offer. All my friends told me that I was crazy, Apple was dead. And I said, “No, Steve is back and I know Steve very well, and he's going to turn this place around.”

Pruden: Couple times a year in the café, we'd get a new toy, I think to keep Francesco happy. So we'd have coffee roasting when it was a new thing, and then they made gelato, and then we got this fabulous woman who made udon noodles.

Longoni: We introduced a wood burning, outdoor pizza oven about 12 years ago that I designed. We took it out on a Tuesday morning and all the employees said, “Oh my God, what a cool thing it is.” And I go, “Oh no, if everyone likes this, Steve is going to hate it!” So I took a picture of the oven to his office and I said, “Pizza is good today.” And a minute later he comes down and he goes around the pizza oven and he checks everything, and he goes, “Good job!”

Forstall: Whenever I ate with Steve, he insisted on paying for me, which I thought was a little odd. Even if we went in together and he selected something quick like premade sushi, and I ordered a pizza in the wood-burning pizza oven, he would wait for me at the cash register for 10, 15 minutes. I felt so awkward. Finally, I told him. “Seriously, I can pay for myself, so please don't stand there and wait for me.” He said, “Scott, you don't understand. You know how we pay by swiping your badge and then it's deducted from your salary? I only get paid a dollar year! Every time I swipe we get a free meal!” Here was this multibillionaire putting one over on the company he founded, a few dollars at a time.

By 2001, Apple was on the upswing, but it was still in financial peril.

Fadell: When I arrived in 2001 [to lead the iPod project], it still felt like a campus that wasn't filled. There were all these empty offices everywhere in every building. All of the furnishings and everything had not been updated since it opened.

Cook: It was an awful time. The stock crashed, it goes down by 60 to 70 percent. We get a call from Ted Waitt, founder of Gateway. He wants to talk about acquiring Apple. Steve and I went to a meeting with Waitt and their CEO, and it's a different Steve. Very calm, listening to the comments they made, how they'd *probably* keep the Apple brand. I was sitting there feeling like my organs were being cut out. Then they said maybe they could come up with a role for Steve, and I'm thinking—he's going to blow! He's going to blow any minute! Then they start talking about price. And Steve looks at them—he could look at you with eyes

that just penetrated your soul—and says, “Who do you think is worth more, Apple or Gateway?” The meeting lasted only two or three minutes more. And in a few weeks they had some accounting scandal, and their stock crashed.

Slade: I go into work on September 11, 2001, and it’s kind of like we’re out of business. Meetings are canceled. Steve’s just kind of sitting around the board room with the TV on and he says, “I don’t really know if we’re going to be in business. There may be no business.”

That year, Apple staffers had been working away on the iPod.

Schiller: One day I went into Steve’s office and said, “Hey, all these other competitive devices make you click on buttons and go *Next song, next song, next song.*” If you’ve got a thousand songs, you don’t want to press it a thousand times. We had been talking about how great the device should be if you go running, which meant you had to be able to do it one-handed. The idea came to me that we could apply the idea of a wheel to a music player. If you could rotate around continuously on a wheel, and you could have acceleration, that would be really great.

Fadell: The iPod event was at 10 in the morning, it lasted for an hour, then we had a demo and some lunch. That afternoon about 2 or 3, we were kind of winding down and Steve goes, “Tony, Jony, Joz, Phil, let’s go over to the ID room,” the industrial design studio. And he says, “So, on the next generation we need to do this, this, this, this, this, this...” Literally, we had celebrated for a nanosecond and then we were on to the next thing. But a week later, we had a nice team lunch and Steve came and said some nice things.

Thomas: The first time I ever saw someone outside a lab carrying an iPod was Steve, right after the announcement. He was walking, iPod in hand, be-bopping across the quad. He had the hugest smile on his face.

As Apple regained its cultural momentum, Infinite Loop became a magnet for celebrities, musicians, political figures, and icons like Muhammed Ali.

Thomas: Before Steve returned, there weren’t all kinds of interesting people walking around this campus. Over the years, what we were doing really resonated with artists and athletes and all kinds of different people. Someone would say, “Oh, Muhammad Ali’s here.” OK, cool. “Oh, Sheryl Crow’s here.” Oh, wow. Cool. Stevie Wonder was here pretty recently. Tom Jones, that was a pretty funny one—up front there were a bunch of women, screaming. I don’t know if they were just channeling history or they were really into it.

ILLUSTRATION: SARAH MAXWELL

Schiller: One visitor was an ambassador from a country not to be named, and part of their requirements was that they put sharpshooters up on the roofs of the buildings at Apple. Guys with scoped high-power rifles up there on the roof! I was like, “Oh my God, that is so scary.”

Cue: Lady Gaga once came in to visit Steve. I don't know exactly what she was wearing, but it looked like it was made out of, like, a Glad trash bag, and she had these huge heels and these gigantic glasses. I'm thinking, "This is going to be a disaster." But she sat down and started talking with Steve and she had all these great ideas.

In February 2001, Apple moved the industrial design studio from across the street to Infinite Loop 2.

Rubinstein: I didn't like the idea—I thought they should be further away from Steve, so it's a little more difficult for him to drop in any time he wanted. But Steve was the CEO and so they moved it.

Andy Grignon (senior manager, iPhone, 1995–2007): The original OG lockdown was Jony Ive's lab. The stainless steel door with a camera and the buzzing in, all this stuff.

Fadell: Everything else on the campus was utterly, utterly corporate standard, and then you went in this ID room and it was like a whole different world. It was like you had entered a spaceship.

Tevanian: They had these really fancy machines that could custom-make things. They could go into their CAD program and design something and get this very fancy, expensive machine to produce a prototype. They had the famous wood tables that you see in the Apple Store. Every nine months there was something new.

As the Jobs regime solidified, he became the center of the daily routine at Infinite Loop.

Schiller: Steve would say, "Let's not have a meeting sitting in a chair, let's get up and walk." The campus is Infinite Loop—it's a circle—and Steve would take you for a walk around it rather than be cooped up in an office. We'd do laps. When people talk about walking to close your rings on the Apple Watch, I always think back to that.

Whisenhunt: He had very predictable paths. The first was from the parking lot through the lobby up to his office. The second path was over to Jony's studio. That was an indoor route that was known very well. There was one place along the path where I would put things where I knew he'd see them—I would mock up various carpets or floor coverings so he could get a sense of them. Then I could talk to him later and say, "Well, hey, did you like that? Did you like what was down there or not?"

Espinosa: All of the big launch and intro activities were rehearsed in IL3. In the two weeks before a product was intro'd, it would be just crazy with Steve coming in and sitting and watching the keynote demos over and over and over again and refining them. I remember one group was going to introduce this feature of Mac OS10. Steve basically tore it apart—it didn't make sense, he didn't understand why anybody would use it, the demo was terrible. Right there, a week before introduction, he killed the product and it never surfaced again.

Schiller: My team would create and develop all the keynote demos. When we were working on the demo for the first iBook with AirPort WiFi, the original idea was we would have an iBook with an accelerometer strapped to a giant doll. So we took a four-foot doll, and had someone up on the roof with this doll on a bungee cord. Steve said, "That's great—but it can't be a doll, it has to be a person—and Phil, it has to be you. If you do it, you'll go down in the demo hall of fame!" I said, "One condition, I won't sign any waiver. If I get maimed or killed my family can sue Apple for everything you're worth."

Steve Jobs tosses an iBook notebook computer in the air during a press event in Cupertino on May 1, 2001. PHOTOGRAPH: LOU DEMATTEIS/REUTERS

Of course, Apple employees had their own adventures and rituals.

Schiller: In the first couple of years, Jon Rubinstein had this fun tradition where we would get together on a Friday evening. He'd have a bottle of Scotch in his drawer, and we'd do shots— not a lot of them, just one or two. He had those little Dixie cups, each one with your name on the bottom. Having a plastic Dixie cup in there with your name on it in Jon's drawer in the hardware group was important. You'd made it.

Espinosa: The atrium was the crossroads of the company. If you sit in the black couches for long enough you'll see half the people that you need to talk to in a day, even though most of them work in other buildings.

Schiller: Eddie Cue and I are both into cars, and once we had John Hennessey visit. He's a car maker who makes custom, super high-class stuff in Texas, and he made this custom car called the Hennessey Venom. It's based on the foundation of the Lotus but souped up to like a thousand horsepower. He was out in the parking lot at our building, IL3, and he took each of us on a ride in this thing. I swear, the g-forces were too strong to look over at the speedometer, but I'm pretty sure we broke 100 within two blocks of the parking lot.

Fadell: My now-wife and I both worked at Apple but hadn't met. Once we locked eyes at Caffè Macs and I wondered, "Who is that?" Then in 2002, someone in HR told me about her boss and said, "Tony, you have to meet this woman. Go sit in the lobby of IL1." Dani came down the elevator and sat down with me on the old chairs outside the security zone. Now no Apple employee sits down in the reception area. You just don't do that, you're always running around. Because we're going so long, Steve comes down the elevator, comes out of the secured area, locks eyes on me, sees Dani. I could see it in his eyes—"What the hell are these two doing talking to each other?" So he beelines over and says, "Whatever you're doing, you guys better not be doing this." So Steve Jobs shows up on my first date with my soon-to-be wife. We got engaged 11 weeks later.

During the mid-2000s, Infinite Loop's greatest secret was the iPhone development.

Tevanian: In the mid-2000s we had built prototype tablets that never saw the light of day. We'd developed multitouch, we'd developed the soft keyboard, we had examples of pinching and zooming of maps and stuff. We wanted to see what we could do.

Forstall: One day Steve and I were having lunch outside at Caffè Macs and we both flipped open our phones to check something. We looked around and saw that almost everyone around us was carrying a phone, and they were all horrible. Steve looked at me and said, "Do you think the technology we're building for the tablet could be used to build something that could fit in your pocket?" We prototyped something and that was the beginning of the iPhone.

Grignon: This is when Steve started to kind of go off his rocker on secrecy. Forstall locked down that second half of IL2. The atrium previously was open for two stories. That common area was walled up.

Joswiak: Everything was locked. You felt like you were going to Fort Knox. It was our equivalent of building the A-Bomb.

Grignon: When I first joined Apple in the 1990s, you could walk around pretty much all of Infinite Loop, One through Six, and except for industrial design, go pretty much anywhere you wanted. Now fast forward to Apple today and pretty much everything is locked down. But that's where it started.

Forstall: We were testing out prototypes behind locked doors on locked floors of a locked building and they were connected to cell towers I had installed in the closet down the hallway. But I worried what would happen when we brought it out into the real world, so I made the decision that I needed to take one off-campus and use it. But I was worried what would happen if someone robbed me and took the prototype. I even talked to a friend of mine who worked at the CIA about how to avoid being followed.

Grignon: Here's the kind of pressure we were under just before the iPhone launch. Somewhere before Christmas, we were in the lockdown, and a program manager got on this guy about fixing bugs. It started out with stern talking and then escalated to yelling at each other about who had spent less time with their kids. The argument ended and she was just livid, ran to her office, and slammed the door so hard that the lock broke and she couldn't get out. We called the Apple locksmith, and he was going to be an hour and a half to get there. Forstall comes by, he's got an aluminum bat and we took turns swinging, and ultimately forced it open. It was really cathartic.

Leaving Infinite Loop could be traumatic—and bitter.

Grignon: I give my notice, and I get a call from Steve's admin to meet, and we just have this fucked up chat. It gets personal, it gets all sorts of weird. This is a keep-me chat, right? And the first words out of his mouth were, "You fucked up Bluetooth on the phone."

Lynn Fox (director of PR, 2006–2008): I took a job heading communications at Palm, which Steve had a thing about. I had been prepped by other ex-Apple people there about what to expect when I quit. So I cleaned out my office because I knew I was going to be walked out. Sure enough, when I told my boss Katie Cotton, she said, "You're betraying us." And she walked me out. Fifteen minutes later, my phone was disconnected.

Rubinstein: I left in 2006. A year later, Palm asked me to be executive chairman, and I agreed. And I gave Steve a head's up. You know Steve, he was either "You're on my side or you're the enemy." I was voted off the island. I have never been back since.

Fadell: I quit three times. I remember packing my office after the first time, three or four months after the iPod shipped. I had set up a party in my house and was driving home when I get a call to come back. Steve and Jon worked out with me the terms I needed. I got back in the car with all my stuff in it, drove home and said, "Guys! This is just a party!" They're like, you're not leaving? No, not anymore. [When I did leave] Steve announced that I was going to be leaving, and I got real nice claps and high fives from the senior executives. And I've never been back.

In 2003, Jobs got sick.

Slade: I can probably count on my fingers the number of times Steve came in my office. One time he came in my office and he shut the door, and said, "I need to talk to you about something really important." I said, "What?" And he tells me how he and Laurene were having a big argument about cheese—he didn't think his kids should eat it but Laurene thought it's a source of protein. I said, "Steve, you might be right, but I think this is an argument that if you win, you lose. Don't you just let her make the call?" The next time he comes in my office is the fall of 2003. He says, "I need to tell you something—I have pancreatic cancer, I'm dying." And he's crying, and I'm crying, and it's awful. So, that was Monday.

Tevanian: Instead of having our normal meeting, he told everybody to come over to the side of the room, instead of by the whiteboard where he would always sit. So it wasn't just everyone sitting around the board room and him saying "I'm sick."

Slade: On Tuesday, he comes in my office again and he says, "No, [he's going to be all right]." My future father-in-law was a general surgeon and he did tons and tons of pancreas surgeries. He did this thing called a Whipple. But Steve told me he wasn't doing that. He had reasons why. I explained it to my father-in-law and he said, "That makes no sense, I've never heard of that."

A year later, Jobs took a brief leave for surgery. For a while, he seemed to recover but then went into a slide, took another leave for a liver transplant, and then continued working during a painful decline.

Fadell: There were times you could definitely see it, I don't want to get into what happened, it's just too personal. And he would walk out of the room when something happened. We would all just sit there, and we didn't know what to say. We just looked at each and we were just, *fuck!* No matter what he said, or no matter what happened, it didn't feel right.

Dag Kittlaus (director of Siri, 2008–11): We were going in that boardroom and meeting with him every three, every two weeks, seeing him progressively weakened. And I remember walking in, I met him in the hallway. He could barely walk. This was like June or July 2011. And I said, Steve, "How are you doing?" He looked at me and he said, "Dag, I just need a new body."

Steve Jobs died on October 5, 2011.

Cook: I felt I was filling in for a period of time and Steve would come back. I was always good with that, and that's how I wanted it to be. I thought that until literally 48 hours before he passed away.

Shan: It was the only day in probably my 20 years at the campus that I wasn't there, because that day a shooting happened up at the rock quarry in Cupertino. There were police helicopters everywhere and the guy was still at large, so I was home in the morning. The news started circulating. I go to Apple.com and there was the tribute picture on the front page, and I just lost it. I just had to go back to the office. It sounds morbid, but I wanted to be there with people who knew him. But by the time I got there, everyone had gone home. It was a ghost town, which was even more bizarre.

Thomas: That day, as I walked out the main front doors there was this amazing sky, but in the foreground were flags set at half-staff. That image of those flags lowered is something I'll never forget. And over the next few days, thousands of people were coming, and there was this makeshift memorial to him on the lawn right outside of IL6.

Flags fly at half-staff outside Apple headquarters following the death of Steve Jobs on October 5, 2011. PHOTOGRAPH: NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN/REUTERS

On October 19, 2011, Apple hosted a vast Infinite Loop memorial event for its employees.

Whisinant: We had three or four days to set up. We're good at doing stages, but the unique part was creating the landscape and the atmosphere for the event. We brought in sod to create more areas for people to stand and sit in. We brought in lots of beautiful trees and plants to give more serenity and greenery to the space. It was almost like a church for that morning.

Schiller: The Steve Memorial Service was probably the most emotional thing I've ever worked on. We all wanted to make sure it was the greatest thing we ever worked on, from the entertainment to the giant images of Steve that we selected. We wanted Coldplay to come, but at first it didn't fit their schedule. They were supposed to be on a late-night show on the East Coast, but finally the band said, "Wait a minute. When friends call to ask for help with something, you drop everything, and you just do it, and Apple's our friend."

Pruden: I couldn't sleep the night before so I thought I'd just come and get in line—at about 3:20 am. I was at the front, and when I entered I saw the whole thing in all of its glory with nobody in the Quad. They had those beautiful pictures up on the buildings,

and they had a lovely buffet breakfast set out for us. There were white orchids everywhere and his favorite playlist was on the sound system. Very touching tributes from Bill Campbell and Al Gore and of course Tim and Jony. They played Steve's voiceover for the Think Different advertisements and there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

Late last year people started moving out of Infinite Loop for the new Apple Park campus.

Joswiak: This has been the epicenter of Apple for the last couple of decades and it's gone pretty well. At the same time, there was excitement over creating something new. One of the things that Steve wanted or taught us is to not be nostalgic.

Whisenhunt: For a set of 25-year-old buildings, I think they still look pretty good.

Schiller: The basic bones of the buildings and structures are the same, but there were big changes over the years. We added more, more, more, more people. The parking has gotten so much more challenging. The offices have two or three people to them. But the biggest change has been the diversity of the people. You see more young people than we ever had. You walk around and you're hearing probably every foreign language being spoken around this campus. You didn't hear that 20 years ago.

Kittlaus: Walking around Infinite Loop, the thing I noticed was everyone was good at what they do, and they generally were in the right spots. That place oozes with competence. I had never been in a company that's spent 95 percent of its time thinking about the product. I used to work at Motorola and when I met with the top guys, it was always about how we're going to win the Vodafone accounts. But sitting in with Steve and Scott and the team, we would sit in a room all the time, for hours, deciding whether certain settings belonged on the top level or whether they should have been the second level on iOS.

Cue: At the end of the day, I don't think the campus mattered, honestly. It's the people who make the products. Would it have worked somewhere else? Yeah. Now does leaving bring back really great memories? Of course. Sometimes it brings some sad memories.

Cook: We locked up Steve's office. I would not have moved into his office, and no one has. I decided early on it didn't feel right to change that office at all. There are some personal things he had in there that are now with Laurene. But it's the same desk and chair, credenza, bookcase. As a matter of fact, there's still drawings on the whiteboard that his daughter did. Last summer she came by, and I showed her the stuff that she had drawn. You can still feel him in there, because I saw him in there so much. Some people go to the grave site to reflect on someone. I don't do it frequently, but I go to his office.



Forstall: Soon after Apple bought land for the new campus, Steve and I walked around the property to get a feel for it. I expected Steve to be happy. But he was melancholy. He explained why as we passed a deserted building on the property and saw an old Hewlett-Packard sign. Apple had purchased the land from HP, which had been one of the most storied companies in the history of Silicon Valley, started by two legendary founders. Steve looked at the building. "Eventually everything comes to an end," he said. We looked at each other for a few moments, then walked on.

MANY PARTICIPANTS HELD *different roles at Apple over the years. The titles included here are the ones that seemed most relevant.*

Updated 9-17-18, 2 pm EDT: An earlier version of this story incorrectly identified the name of the former Motorola site.

Updated 9-20-18, 2:30 pm EDT: An earlier version of this story used an outdated title for Tony Fadell.

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