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Apple After Jobs — Has Tim Cook done good for the company since 2011?

Introduction

In September 2011, Apple co-founder & CEO Steve Jobs died from pancreatic cancer which he had been fighting many years prior. Whilst he was ill, Jobs never left the company, but when he passed, Tim Cook, who was formerly leader of operations for Apple and essentially in charge of the company whilst Jobs was on medical leave, was made CEO. Being completely in charge of one of the richest tech companies in the world is a tough job for anyone. Thus, this project will investigate if Tim Cook has done good for Apple since Jobs' departure. It will cover topics such as revenues, controversy and innovation in its consumer products. I chose this topic as Apple's products have always been a big part of my life. I got my first iPod touch in 2010 and have great memories of using it. In 2015 I received my first iPhone 5S, and it also has great memories including photos I took. Those wouldn't have been possible without Apple. However, Apple's products and design styles have been different since Jobs left, and this project aims to investigate why, and if Tim Cook has been good for Apple.

Aims & Objectives

Aim — Find out if Tim Cook has been a good CEO for Apple

Objectives —

1. Carry out research regarding what products and operating systems Apple has released since September 2011 and how they differ from when Steve Jobs was CEO.
2. Send a survey to others to collect people's opinions on Tim Cook, Apple and its products & operating systems.

Aim — Find out how Apple's top employees have changed since Cook became CEO

Objectives —

1. Conduct research on how the design of iOS and macOS has changed since Cook became CEO
2. Send a survey to others to collect people's opinions on Apple's designs.

Aim — Find out if Apple has seen less controversy since Cook's course as CEO

Objectives —

1. Do research on any controversy Apple has faced since 2011.

Rationale

Primary research

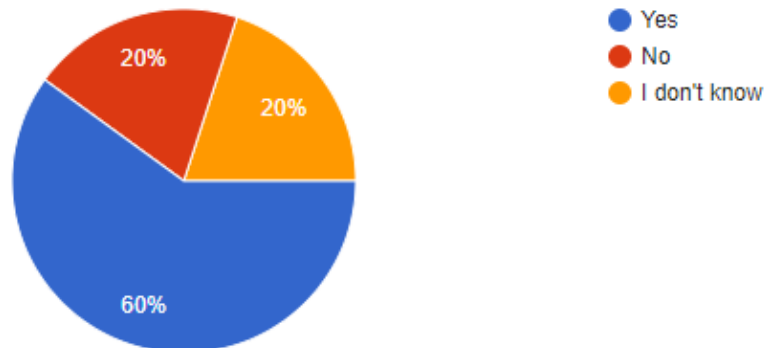
The benefits of using a questionnaire include direct responses, clear answers and a mix of opinions in lots of people.

Question 4 will be "what is the most innovative product Apple has released in your opinion since Cook became CEO?" — this will help me answer Aim 1, Objective 2.

Questionnaire

Do you generally think that Tim Cook is a good CEO for Apple?

5 responses



Firstly, you can already see that the majority of people that took part in the questionnaire like Tim Cook as a CEO for Apple. This question comes before any of the others [aside from gender and age].

Next, I wanted the candidates to compare the most innovative products between Steve Jobs and Tim Cook's time as CEO:

What is the best / most innovative product Apple has released since Cook became CEO [Aug 2011-present]?

5 responses

iPhone 6

Apple Watch

iPhone 6

iMac Pro

HomePod

What is the best / most innovative product Apple released when Steve Jobs was CEO? [1997-Aug 2011]

5 responses

Ipod

iPhone

iPhone 4

iPod

iMac G3

Interestingly from the data above, the most popular choices are from the iPhone product line; and the first iPhone was released whilst Steve Jobs was CEO. Tim Cook resumed the iPhone line of products when he took over the company and is still its biggest monkey-maker.

What is your most controversial opinion regarding Apple? [this question is not required]

3 responses

Overpriced and too restrictive

Their products are designed to break after a year

They are against repairs.

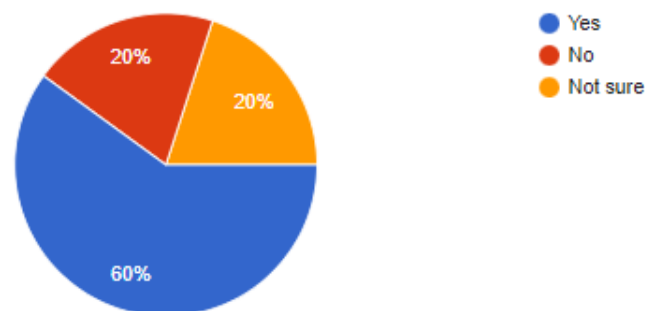
Controversy is something that is always going to interest everyone, which is why it was the topic of my next question. It seems that the respondents' opinions are based on strategies Apple uses to get more money.

To avoid bias, I asked the respondents if they used Apple products. 60% of them said they don't use an iPhone as their main phone. 100% of those who did, said it often infuriates them. When asked if they'd buy an iPhone or an Android phone again, 80% answered with Android.

After this, I started asking them for their opinions on how Apple manages controversies. It seems that the majority of respondents aren't fond of how Apple does that. Here are 2 examples:

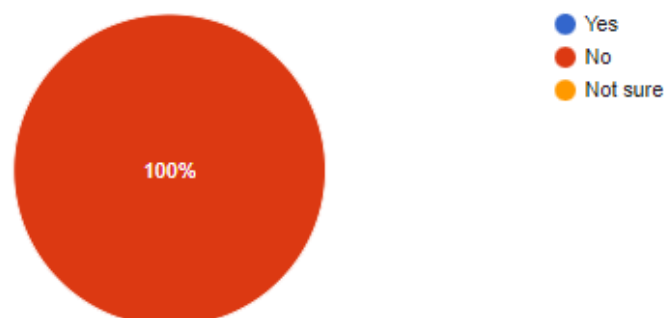
In September 2014, shortly after the iPhone 6's release, it was reported that some models were bending in people's pockets. This phenomenon was known as 'Bendgate.' In 2018, it was revealed that Apple was aware of the issue even before the phone was released. Do you think Apple should have delayed the product to solve the issue instead of releasing it earlier?

5 responses

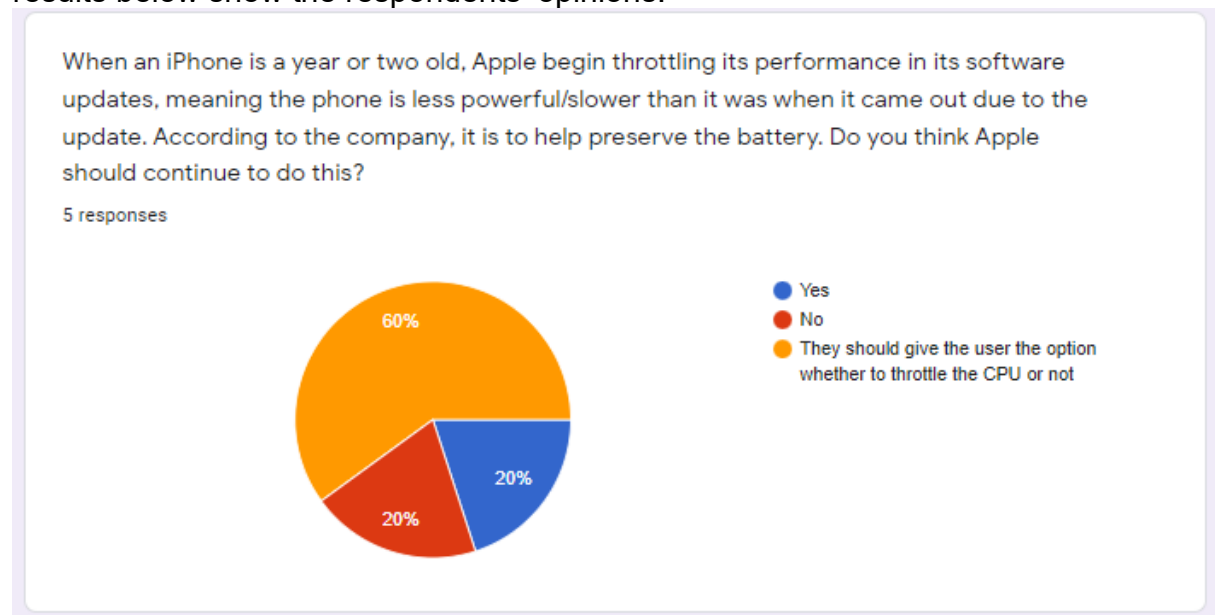


For manufacturing of all their products, Apple hires Chinese electronics company Foxconn, which is infamous for employee abuse & suicide and has been for many years. Is it right for Apple to continue to use this company?

5 responses



Finally, I asked the respondents about Apple's most infamous controversy – CPU throttling. After a few years of software updates, Apple slows down the CPUs on older iPhones. The company claims that it is to help “preserve battery life.” The results below show the respondents’ opinions.



Secondary research

Secondary research is when you gather information from other people's documents & articles, etc. The method of secondary research I am going to use in this project is using the Internet. The benefit of using the Internet is that it is the easiest and most accessible place to get information. I will be using sources including [Wikipedia](#), [Apple Insider](#), and [Apple's own website \[including statements they've given regarding controversy\]](#) to gather it. To confirm that my secondary research is credible, I will ensure that the articles are legitimate, unbiased, and up to date. Using these sources has also helped me write my questionnaire.

The article [“Customer Letter” by Tim Cook](#) will help me answer Aim 3 Objective 1 as it provides information on how Cook handles controversy and responds to customers' concerns.

Forstall's departure (2012)

According to Apple Insider, upon becoming CEO, Cook was 'quick to eject' long-time Apple software engineer Scott Forstall. At first glance it may seem as if he removed a rival from the team, however, it was in reality due to the poor launch of Apple Maps which was in a buggy state when it had first released with iOS 6 in 2012, and Forstall refused to sign an apology letter to iPhone, iPod touch and iPad customers regarding the Maps issue.

Lightning (2012)

The first iPhone to release after Steve Jobs had passed was the iPhone 5 in 2012. As well as its positive changes, such as an improved speaker, improved cell signal and durability and a taller screen, it had a controversial change which infuriated some long-time Apple customers – a new charger.

Apple changed from the analogue 30-pin charger cable which had been used since the original iPod in 2001, to a new digital Lightning cable, which has a smaller plug than the 30-pin. It is more reliable and secure, and a good design benefit is that the charger can go in the device either way. It doesn't have to be in a specific orientation, unlike the 30-pin.

The same year, the latest iPad and iPod touch also received the Lightning cable & charger port. However, as aforementioned, the new charger was infuriating for long-time customers as they now had to buy new accessories for their devices, including cables and audio docks.

The idea of the iPhone and iPad products using the same 30-pin charger as the classic iPods was that people didn't have to buy new cables and accessories, and for many, it seemed that Apple was contradicting itself.

To compensate, Apple offered a \$29 30-pin-to-Lightning connector for anyone who wanted to use old accessories and audio docks, i.e. the VGA connector for iPads. They did not offer a Lightning-to-30-pin adaptor.

Plan C (2020-2022)

Recently, as aforementioned in the Primary research section, [Apple has been requested by the EU to switch once again from Lightning to USB-C](#) – the connector that most consumer electronics today are using, including portable power banks, Android phones, laptops, game controllers and even Apple's own MacBooks. The EU argued that it would cost customers less money, take less storage for cables, and would be friendlier for the environment as less material would need to be used to manufacture cables. However, Apple is infamous for keeping their products strictly proprietary and refused to switch. They stated that it would impact innovation within the company and would create electronic waste.



Figure 1: Lightning connector next to a 30-pin connector



Figure 2: USB-C connector (left) next to a Lightning connector (right)

According to EU law, Apple will be forced to use USB-C on all their mobile devices in 2023.

iOS 7 (2013)

In 2013, Tim Cook had completely re-shuffled Apple's design team. The most notable change of the reshuffle was Jony Ive being made head of software design. Before, he had only designed Apple's hardware.

The first version of iOS that Jony Ive designed was iOS 7 – and with Android phones becoming more modern, Apple had to compete. Jony Ive gave the iOS design a complete overhaul and got rid of its skeuomorphism. The newer design of iOS was simpler and more

minimalistic, however, still appealing at

first glance with its smooth animations and glossy transparency effects.

Upon the reveal of iOS 7 at WWDC 2013, Apple faced criticism from its fans, with people saying it looks 'ugly' and it will 'ruin the iPhone.' Though expected from such a big change, Apple released iOS 7 in September 2013 alongside the iPhone 5S – an enhanced iPhone 5 with Touch ID.

The design remained controversial among many customers with mixed opinions, but they all favoured its functionality. Apart from its design, Apple still introduced new features into iOS 7 including an overhauled notification centre and the new 'control centre' which allowed users to toggle Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, the flashlight, volume, and music controls from any app just by dragging up from the bottom of the screen.

Although iOS 7 appeared to work completely fine on the shiny new iPhone 5S, some older iPhones, especially the iPhone 4 had a downgrade in performance. The devices were performing slower than on iOS 6, and batteries were draining faster. The problem was well known by March 2014 and Apple promised to fix the issue with an update, however, that update didn't fix the issue. Some users reported that it exacerbated the problem. After the release of iOS 8 and iOS 9, older devices continued to perform worse including the iPhone 4S, iPhone 5 and iPod touch 5.

Beats (2014)

Spotify was started in 2009 and by 2014 the service was rapidly becoming more popular, with customers preferring the streaming service model to buy music separately. Tim Cook & Apple knew that its famous iTunes service had to compete.

In 2014, Apple would take its next venture into the music industry with its major acquisition of two companies – Beats Electronics and Beats Music – both founded by Dr Dre.

Beats Electronics is an audio hardware company which manufactures premium speakers and headphones. Beats Music was a streaming service company similar to Spotify. You pay a monthly subscription and get instant access to a vast catalogue of music with the option to download for offline listening.



Figure 3: iOS 7 (left) compared to iOS 6 (right)

Apple acquired both companies for \$3.2 billion, its biggest purchase since its acquisition of Steve Jobs' company NeXt in 1996.

After the purchase, Apple would handle in-house manufacturing for Beats Electronics, and in mid-2014, the same year it launched, Beats Music was shut down. The company would still operate and it would manage Apple's in-house streaming service to replace Beats Music, called Apple Music.

Apple Music (2014-2015)

Apple Music came as a complete surprise for some customers, but for most it was expected as Spotify was on the rise.

Apple Music faced criticism at launch because of its similarity to Spotify. It had the exact same functionality, features and subscription fee. Many customers stuck with Spotify because Apple Music offered no new features to bring to the competition.

However, AM's most convenient feature is its full native integration into iOS 8 – there's no need to download and launch a different app – it's all in the existing built-in Music app.

Apple Watch (2014)

Apple's next venture with Tim Cook would be in the wearable-gadget business. By 2014, smartwatches were rising in popularity. With many running Android, Apple's main competitor in mobile operating systems, they had to compete. At WWDC 2014, Tim Cook revealed the Apple Watch to fans' complete surprise. Marketed as a fashion accessory that can also be an aid to the iPhone, its features included heart rate monitoring, texts, custom watch faces, and select iOS apps. Additionally, notifications from the user's iPhone would also appear on the Apple Watch. Apple also claimed it would help "look at smartphones less."



Figure 4: An Apple Watch Series 1

The San Bernardino Case (2016)

In December 2015, there was a terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California. It consisted of a mass shooting and attempted bombing.

As part of an FBI investigation, an iPhone 5C belonging to one of the perpetrators was found. The FBI requested that the NSA unlock it or bypass its passcode encryption, which they were unable to do. Additionally, after 10 failed passcode attempts, the phone would erase its memory – the FBI didn't want to risk the phone being suspected to contain evidence regarding the attack.

The FBI demanded with a court order that Apple unlocks the phone – which Tim Cook responded to, and refused.

In a statement, Cook sympathised with those affected by the attack but said that Apple would not be unlocking the perpetrator's phone. He said it would require creating a customized version of iOS with a 'backdoor' and he also stated it is something Apple does not have and consider "too dangerous to create."

Once created, the backdoor can not only be used once but on many other personal iPhones. Cook wrote, "no reasonable person would find that acceptable" and "the Government is asking Apple to hack our own users."

Cook refused the court order and did so to protect Apple's customers. As of today, the perpetrator's iPhone 5C has never been unlocked.

HomePod (2017)

In 2016 and 2017, Amazon's Echo line of products, which are smart speakers featuring their Alexa virtual assistant, dominated homes in the US and UK. With just their voice, users can command the device to play music, track incoming parcels, check the weather, set timers, make lists and more. With Apple being one of the first to have smart assistants, having released Siri in 2011, they eagerly wanted to compete. The company quickly released the HomePod, a smart speaker with a similar design to the Amazon Echo. It, like iPhone, features the Siri virtual assistant. HomePod didn't sell as well as expected. A

contributing factor to this might be that Siri is infamously considered by the tech

community as "dumb." Additionally, enthusiasts speculated that the HomePod was indeed rushed into the market to compete with Amazon and Google, and it offered no new features compared to the rest of the market.



Figure 5: HomePod

Shazam (2017)

In 2017, Apple made its next and most recent venture into the digital music industry with its purchase of Shazam.

Shazam is an app which allows the user to see what song is currently playing in the environment around them. Shazam was one of the first big hits on Apple's App Store, when it first launched in 2008.

After purchasing the company, the app became ad-free on both iOS and Android. Additionally, it was integrated into Siri – and you can use it by saying “Hey Siri, what is this song?”

Apple TV+ (2017-2019)

The purchase of the Shazam recognition service also brought Apple a new opportunity with its new video division.

Their first venture into creating movies & TV was a planned biopic series about Elvis Presley, being developed with The Weinstein Company. However, due to sexual abuse allegations made against producer Harvey Weinstein, the company cut their ties with The Weinstein Company and cancelled the series in October 2017.

With the popularity of Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Google Play Movies, and the emergence of Britbox and Disney+, Apple took the chance to compete with the vast amount of subscription fee-based streaming services. Throughout 2018 and 2019, they started the development of various series and films, under the “Apple Originals” tagline for Apple TV+ which would be launched in November 2019.

In April 2018. The company signed Kerry Ehrin to produce original content. Ehrin renewed the deal in May 2020.

In June of the same year, Apple signed the Writers Guild of America and Oprah Winfrey to a content partnership. They also signed a multi-series order to

Sesame Workshop, the production company behind Sesame Street, to produce various live-action & animated series as well as a single puppet-based series. In September 2018 it was reported that Apple had decided to cancel a limited biopic TV series titled *Vital Signs*, about the life of Dr Dre. It was shelved due to concerns about it being too graphic, with moments including characters using class-A drugs, instances of gun violence and sexually explicit scenes. Additionally, it was reported that Tim Cook was taking a 'hands on' approach with Apple's new Worldwide Video Unit with decisions aligned to his personal tastes, with a preference for family-friendly shows.

Content already being produced had been altered, including *The Morning Show* which stars Jennifer Aniston & Reese Witherspoon.

In November 2018, Apple signed an agreement with A24 to produce original films with their Worldwide Video Unit.

On November 1, 2019, Apple's streaming service was launched as Apple TV+. The content they had in production, including *The Morning Show*, was under a selection of series and films called Apple Originals.

COVID-19 (2020-2021)

On 31st December 2019, the WHO was alerted of cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause in Wuhan, China. From patient samples, it was recognized as a coronavirus, which was named COVID-19.

Throughout Q1 2020, the virus swept across Europe and shocked the world.

On 13th March 2020, Tim Cook issued a public statement to the "worldwide Apple family," titled *Apple's COVID-19 response*. In it, Cook said "at Apple, we are people first," and said Apple had donated \$15 million to the "global COVID-19 response."

Throughout the statement, Cook discussed how Apple was handling the new pandemic. All retail stores outside of Greater China would remain closed until March 27th, and all workers should work from home "if their job allows."

Additionally, "deep cleaning" would continue at all sites. Cook also reassured all employees by stating all hourly workers would continue to receive pay and Apple had expanded its leave policies.

During 2020 & 2021, all if not most Apple employees were working from home. With employees prepared to return to the office in February 2022, Tim Cook told Apple staff in December 2021 that it had been pushed back to a "date yet to be determined." Cook made this decision based on the data from the Omicron variant of COVID-19, which is highly transmissible. Cook also encouraged all employees to get a booster dose of the vaccine. Apple didn't make it compulsory for all workers, unlike Google, which said all employees must follow its vaccine policy or risk job termination.

Apple also gave its employees a \$1,000 bonus to cover work-from-home needs, including retail workers. Cook stated the funds are "intended to help you with your home workspace and can be used as you see fit. You will be receiving more information about this shortly."

Mac Processor Transition (2020)

Intel (2005-2019)

Since before the emergence of COVID-19, Apple had been working on a big change for its Mac computers.

From 1995 until 2006, iMacs & MacBooks had used IBM PowerPC CPUs.

Despite being powerful at the time, they operated at high temperatures and used lots of energy.

Apple had made efforts to move to Intel processors in the '80s, but it never came to Mac computers until 2005. At WWDC 2005, Steve Jobs announced that all Mac computers would be transitioning from PowerPC processors to Intel x86 processors. Jobs promised superior performance, and the ability to run Microsoft Windows, the operating system of its main competitor.

In January 2006, the first Intel-based iMac was unveiled, using the Intel Core Duo. In April of the same year, Apple released the Boot Camp software, which allowed users to install Windows XP onto the iMac as Steve Jobs promised. After installation, users would choose whether to boot to Windows or macOS upon turning on their computer.

In Late 2006, Apple updated the iMac with the Intel Core 2 Duo processor, allowing for performance improvements.

Throughout the rest of 2006, Apple transitioned the rest of its Mac computers to Intel from PowerPC. The Mac Mini was updated to an Intel Core Duo, the PowerBook G5 laptops were replaced by the MacBook Pro line of laptops using an Intel Core CPU, the PowerMac PCs were replaced by Mac Pro, and the iBook PCs were replaced by MacBook.

For the rest of the decade, Apple continued to make Intel-based Macs and updated the processors regularly. The latest Intel-based iMac, released in mid-2020, used the Intel Core i7.

Apple Silicon (2020)

During WWDC 2020, which was hosted exclusively online as a pre-recorded video due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tim Cook announced a transition to a different processor for Mac computers, created and manufactured by Apple itself, called the Apple Silicon series. Processors in the Silicon series included the A series for iPhones & iPads and the W series for Apple Watches. Macs would be using the new M series, with the first processor being the M1.

Likewise, with the Intel-transition prior, Cook promised better performance and better energy usage. However, Intel uses the x86 architecture and Apple Silicon uses the ARM architecture, meaning existing programs wouldn't work on the new



Figure 6: Steve Jobs shows Mac OS X running on Intel Pentium 4 hardware



Figure 7: The last Intel-based iMac (mid-2020)



Figure 8: The first Intel-based iMac (Late-2006)

M chips. All programs on macOS needed to be updated by their original developers to support the ARM architecture, and the capability to run Microsoft Windows via Boot Camp, a selling point of the Intel-based Macs, would become deprecated. However, Apple fans and computer enthusiasts alike were optimistic for the new M-series chips to be featured in all upcoming Mac computers, and in late 2020, the first Silicon-based iMac and MacBook Pro computers were released, featuring the Apple M1 CPU.

Conclusion

My research for this project shows that Apple has changed a lot in the past ten years.

Aim 1

When Steve Jobs was CEO, we saw a revolution in the music industry, a successful line of smartphones which is a type of device that everyone now has, and quality performance in computers.

After Jobs' departure, we still saw plenty of innovation at the company. An improved charging port is among one of the most significant changes made during Tim Cook's time as CEO.

Aim 2

Even more importantly, iOS saw a redesign to keep up with changing times. If Jobs was CEO, we still definitely would've had a redesign, but the original skeuomorphic design would've lasted a couple more years and the redesign may not have been designed by Jony Ive – who may have stuck to designing hardware.

The Apple Watch is a good example of innovation from Apple under Tim Cook, and it helped popularise the smartwatch industry. However, their biggest audience is fitness enthusiasts as the Apple Watch can show the user's heart rate and other info. You see many people in public with iPhones but not Apple Watches.

However, it seems that many of Apple's new products have been only created to compete with others – and not completely original ideas.

The HomePod was rushed onto the market to compete with the Amazon Echo and Google Home. It did not fix the reputation of Siri and the product has not sold much. Apple TV+ was launched to compete with the likes of Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Hulu, and throughout 2017 and 2018, Tim Cook signed deals to create content for their platform with as many companies as he could, including A24.

Aim 3

Tim Cook's handling of controversy hasn't changed much compared to Steve Jobs'. For years, the Foxconn controversy has been with Apple. Foxconn is hired by Apple to manufacture their products, but the Chinese company is infamous for underpaid workers and reports of worker suicides. Steve Jobs "investigated" the issue alongside HP but nothing changed. As of today, Apple is still a Foxconn customer and Tim Cook prefers to ignore that issue.

However, another controversy which I think Tim Cook handled very well is The San Bernardino Case, where the FBI ordered Apple to unlock a terrorist's iPhone 5C by 'brute-force.' Tim Cook rightfully refused this order, because it would have required creating a custom version of iOS that allowed it, and Cook believed it

was 'too dangerous to create' and would compromise the security of iPhone users around the world. Cook stated that the FBI was asking Apple to 'hack our own customers.'

To conclude, Tim Cook has been a good CEO for Apple and has helped Steve Jobs' legacy live on. The iPhone line of products has been more successful in recent years than ever before, despite all iPods [apart from the iPod touch] being discontinued by 2017. Cook has helped make Apple the 6th biggest company in revenue earnings in the world, totalling \$365.8 billion in 2021, compared to \$15-20 billion in 2009-2010 when Steve Jobs was CEO. Apple is one of the most recognisable brands in the world among all ages and Tim Cook has helped push that beyond what Steve Jobs imagined.