

Title:

Why Benjamin Franklin Was So Awesome

Word Count:

969

Summary:

Almost everyone who has graduated from high school knows that Benjamin Franklin was a famous American. Most folks can also come up with one of Benjamin Franklin's famous sayings (A stitch in time saves nine). Few of us, however, know that Franklin was America's best scientist, inventor, writer, business strategist and diplomat of his time. Benjamin Franklin was indeed awesome, and now we find out how he became was so awesome.

Keywords:

internet, marketing, business, opportunity, success, money, strategist

Article Body:

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Almost everyone who has graduated from high school knows that Benjamin Franklin was a famous American.

Most of us have read that Franklin used a lighting rod to prove a theory he had about electricity. Others remember that he was the one who invented the bifocals which many of us wear today. (I just ordered a new pair of trifocals; thanks to Ben, I see better.)

But few of us also know these facts and observations about Benjamin Franklin:

Franklin was America's best scientist, inventor, writer, business strategist and diplomat of his time. He was also one of the era's most practical political thinkers!

Franklin's interest in electricity led him to note the distinction between insulation and conductors, the idea of electrical grounding, and the concepts of capacitors and batteries.

Franklin discovered that the big East Coast storms known as northeasters, whose winds come from the northeast, actually move in the opposite direction from their winds, traveling up the coast from the south, thus beginning the science

of weather forecasting.

Franklin combined both science and mechanical practicality by devising the first urinary catheter used in America.

Franklin declined to patent his inventions, freely sharing his findings, as his love of science was born of curiosity.

Franklin became the first person in America to manufacture type, because there was no foundry in America for casting type when he opened his print shop.

Franklin reprinted an English novel--Pamela--thereby publishing the first novel in America.

Franklin created America's first great humor classic, Poor Richard's Almanack (Almanac, in today's usage), which Franklin began publishing in 1732, combining two goals of his doing-well-doing-good philosophy: the making of money and the promotion of virtue. His aphorisms and observations soon became legend.

Franklin's genius as a 16-year-old writer was obvious when he authored 14 essays anonymously that were published in his brother's newspaper, creating the character Silence Dogood, a widowed woman. Franklin's ability to speak convincingly as a woman was remarkable, and his writing style would introduce a new genre of American humor: the wry, homespun mix of folksy tales and pointed observations that would later be perfected by such great American writers and humorists as Mark Twain and Will Rogers.

Franklin became America's first gossip columnist.

Franklin became the patron saint of self-improvement guides by writing many personal credos that laid out his pragmatic rules for success. Dale Carnegie would follow in his footsteps, as well as hundreds of positive thinking, modern day self-improvement authors.

Franklin manufactured the first recorded abortion debate in America, not because he had any strong feelings on the issue, but because he knew it would help sell newspapers.

Franklin was the consummate networker, forming a club of young workingmen he dubbed the Junto, which met in a rented room and, by pooling the books of its members, became America's first subscription library.

Franklin created a volunteer fire force (the forerunner of today's volunteer

fire department), and established the academy that would later be renamed the University of Pennsylvania.

Franklin was appointed to the top post office job in America by the British government. Within a year, he had cut to one day the delivery time of a letter from New York to Philadelphia. (The United States Postal Service manages to get the same letter delivered in an average of three days today!)

Franklin retired at age 42, with an assured income over the next 18 years of approximately 650 pounds annually; in his day, a common worker earned 25 pounds a year, so Franklin retired with an annual income 26 times a normal working person's wages! (In today's money, if you were making \$50,000 a year in income, Franklin was getting by in retirement on an income of \$1.3 million--\$1,300,000--annually.)

Franklin became America's greatest diplomat by negotiating the support of France (its money, its recognition and its military support), that led to the success of the American Revolution, and creation of the United States of America as an independent nation.

Franklin was instrumental in shaping the three great documents of the American Revolution: the Declaration of Independence, the alliance with France, and the treaty with England.

Franklin was the only person to sign all four of America's founding papers: the Declaration of Independence, the treaty with France, the peace accord with Britain, and the Constitution of the United States.

Franklin's most important vision was an American national identity based on the virtues and values of its middle class.

Franklin came up with the concept of matching grant money, showing how government and private initiative could be woven together for the common good.

Franklin was America's first great publicist. He carefully crafted his own persona, portrayed it in public, and polished it for posterity.

Franklin perfected the art of poking fun at himself, recognizing that a bit of wry self-deprecation could make him seem even more endearing.

Franklin was the first to note that "nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes."

Franklin was also the first to remind us that "a penny saved is a penny earned."

Franklin might also have said "a penny, invested wisely, could be the start of a small fortune."

Benjamin Franklin would have been one of the first people of his time to use computers, and would have been one of the first to start an Internet marketing business. Franklin loved to make money, and he loved the virtues of independence, self-reliance, hard work and innovation, all virtues associated with making a lot of money.

Franklin would have been front and center with today's Internet marketers, in constant contact with his fellow entrepreneurs through online forums, e-mail messaging, and hobnobbing at seminars around the country and overseas (Paris was his second home).

Was Benjamin Franklin awesome? Absolutely.