



# THINKING DIFFERENT

Former PepsiCo and Apple boss John Sculley talks 'noble causes' and 'zooming' with **Vikas Shah**

New York-born marketing expert John Sculley became Pepsi-Cola's youngest ever president at the age of 37, and by the time he left the company, in 1983, the Pepsi brand had become the largest-selling consumer packaged goods brand in the USA. He was lured to Apple by Steve Jobs, who asked him, "Do you want to sell sugared water for the rest of your life? Or do you want to come with me and change the world?" As CEO, working closely with Jobs, he oversaw the launch of the Macintosh and the company's initial runaway success. Later, however, the two would clash, and Jobs was ousted from the company. In 1993, Sculley himself was also forced out. He is currently working with a handful of startup companies that are using advanced digital technology to produce healthcare-related tools.

**"Entrepreneurs are now seen as the absolute leaders of our economy"**

**What does entrepreneurship mean to you?**

Entrepreneurship means the unrelenting belief that there has to be a better way of doing things. I learnt that back in my early days when we were creating Pepsi's marketing campaign against Coca-Cola, I learnt it many times at Apple, and again and again since.

If it was obvious that things were already being done in a great way that couldn't be improved, there wouldn't be any need for entrepreneurs to step in and create new ways of doing things that don't rely on the baggage of the past. Entrepreneurs are people who by nature are optimists, who can tolerate risk and have huge curiosity.

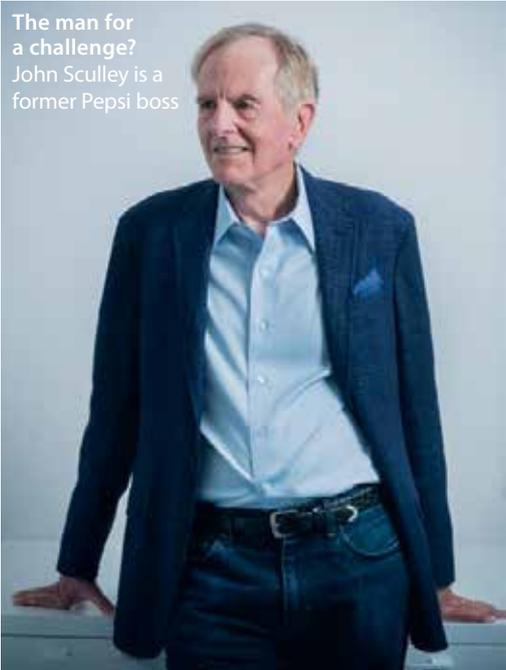
It's an amazingly exciting time to be an entrepreneur. For a long time, entrepreneurs used to be on the fringe of the economy,

but now they're right there in the middle, and it's so exciting that entrepreneurs are now being seen as the absolute leaders of our economy, and our world.

**What enables a startup to become a scale-up?**

Timing is everything. When we created the first personal digital assistant, the Newton, I wasn't a trained electrical engineer or computer scientist and I didn't realise at the time that while we were clearly pointing in the right direction towards mobility, handheld devices and the amazing things you could do without a keyboard, we were probably 15 years too early. Even some of the best computer scientists in the world didn't realise that at the time. We needed Moore's law to continue doubling processing power every couple of years for at least a decade before it was practical to build products such as iPhones.

It's important that you separate the entrepreneurial leadership that defines new industries from the entrepreneurial leadership that's opportunistic and takes advantage of the derivative effects of new industries. I'd only been at Apple a few months and I was hearing Steve Jobs and Bill Gates talking about their 'noble cause'. I had just left one of the most competitive markets in the world and I had never heard about having a noble cause in business. For me, it was about gladiatorial competition – someone wins, someone loses. But here were Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, two young guys under the age of 30, talking about their noble cause of empowering knowledge workers with tools for the mind, making them incredibly productive, and helping them to change



The man for a challenge? John Sculley is a former Pepsi boss

THE LIST

**WELL MET**

Ally Yates provides ten tips for making meetings as successful as possible

**1. BE PRESENT AND AVAILABLE**

It's well known that multi-tasking isn't effective, so don't sit in a meeting simultaneously doing your email. Lead the way and help the meeting to be more productive, using a range of behaviours to improve the meeting's outcome.

**2. BE THE GPS**

Productive meetings are like smooth journeys. They are well signposted and make good

time. Proposing an agenda is critical to providing structure and highlighting progress.

**3. LEAD WITH QUESTIONS**

Meetings get more than their fair share of 'blah, blah, blah'. Exercise skilful use of questioning to help people to explore topics and develop a shared understanding. The mantra "Tell less, ask more, ask better questions" works here.

**4. BUILD**

'Building' is a behaviour that modifies or shapes an idea from another person – and yet it's rarely experienced in meetings.

This is because it requires you to listen to the contributions of others rather than be preoccupied with your own thoughts, ideas and opinions.

**5. ENSURE CLARITY**

With a full agenda and the pressure of time it can be easy to lose track of what's being said. Help your colleagues and increase the chances of everyone leaving the meeting with a clear and shared understanding of the decisions, actions and accountabilities by summarising the key points, then asking questions to test people's understanding.



the way things were done in our world, and creating entirely new industries in the process.

There are very few people who genuinely have the leadership capacity to build businesses like this. In this decade it would be people like Elon Musk, Larry Page, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg, who are changing the future by creating new industries. Every major new success has those types of brilliant entrepreneurs leading, and has significant derivative effects, and I'm particularly interested in how you take the derivative effects of brilliant, world-changing innovations, and turn them into global businesses.

Here's an example. People like Steve Jobs realised you could take a mobile device running on a 3G network and use that to send photographs. That eventually led to the iPhone and, four years later, Kodak – which had been a \$26bn market-cap company – filed for bankruptcy.

When Evan Spiegel created Snapchat, he saw photography in an entirely different way from Kodak – he was from a different generation. Evan saw that smartphones could take photos to use for communications, not for archiving into an album. He turned Snapchat into something young people loved. They could do very risqué things with photos that would disappear, they could add effects and emojis to show how they were feeling... This was a better alternative to phone calls and texts and it created a whole new derivative industry that came out of iPhone and Android. This derivative industry has led to its own multi-billion-dollar companies.

The ability to understand the derivative effects of major new industries that are being created by these exceptionally brilliant handful of leaders is very important for entrepreneurs.

**How do companies survive rapid growth?**

When you look at companies that survive growth, you are seeing the importance of people – not just ideas. You have to have

**Apple times**  
Sculley with Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs in 1984



incredibly talented people leading the company, and within it.

Noble cause businesses such as Apple, Facebook and Tesla are doing more than just making money. They are inspiring everyone who is involved with them – from customers to employees and partners – to say, “This is so important that everything else is secondary...” That’s why you see these charismatic leaders as being so crucial to the success of these scaling companies.

**How can strategic vision help scale businesses?**

I learnt zooming from Steve Jobs, it was something he practised all the time. Steve zoomed out to look beyond how industries are defined presently to see what the possibilities might be.

I remember one of my favourite professors was Marvin Minsky at MIT Media Lab and he used to say, “You don’t really understand something well until you understand it in more than one way...”

You need to go beyond the defined description of an industry today, and look at it from all angles, and all contexts.

Steve Jobs looked beyond how other people were thinking about computers. He had already released the Apple II, which did for a couple of thousand dollars what people thought could only be accomplished on computers costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. People were thinking about making computers personal and inexpensive – but Steve Jobs loved calligraphy, and saw the possibilities by zooming out when he was invited to Xerox Parc, and saw the \$80-100,000 engineering workstations they were building that used a graphical user interface. Steve had this experience at Reed College where he fell in love with beautiful fonts. He was a designer at heart, and he started to connect the dots. He saw that you could take personal computers

– which were just less expensive versions of big computers – and change how they

were conceptualised into something that was so easy to use that you could sell it to a non-technical person, allowing them to do creative things. Nobody had thought of that!

He took the technology

Xerox invented and took all the cost out of it, making it affordable and accessible to non-technical people... that was the Macintosh.

That ability to completely take the same set of facts that were available to anyone, and see them in a different way? That’s zooming out... ■

**“Charismatic leaders are crucial to the success of scaling companies”**

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**6. EXERCISE BALANCE**

Skilful performers support and disagree in equal measure. Don’t sit on your reactions – give your backing to a contribution as readily as voicing where you differ.

**7. SHARE THE AIRTIME**

No one likes a loudmouth. Equally, it can be frustrating when teammates don’t speak in meetings. Bring in others by seeking contributions from quieter members.

**8. MAKE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS HEARD**

Struggling to get a word in edgeways? Try a three-step process. 1) Indicate non-verbally that you wish to speak. 2) Label your behaviour by stating your intent (eg “I’d like to ask a question”). 3) Follow through.

**9. MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS**

Taking stock of the meeting afterwards can improve your effectiveness and share accountability for making the

meeting a success. Make time to review the pace (too fast or too slow?), process (clear or unclear?) and participation (shared or unequal?) and then make conscious commitments to improve your collective performance.

**10. FACILITATE INSIDE THE MEETING, GUIDE OUTSIDE IT**

If you have a vested interest, exercise your influence outside the meeting. Manage the tension between the content

and the process. This is also a useful tactic for geographically dispersed teams – get people involved on the call, but give them your input and guidance before and after. ■

Ally Yates is an independent consultant, facilitator, coach and author of *Utter Confidence: How what you say and do influences your effectiveness in business* (Panoma Press, 2017). Visit allyyates.com