



初创企业 应当采用 何种领导风格？

文 | 泰德·普林斯

当 你开始创业的时候，很可能之前没有过创业经历，更没当过CEO。在这种情况下，你肯定对自己的领导风格没有信心，并且在很长时间里都难以建立起这方面的自信。即便如此，这并不妨碍你一直努力追寻这一问题的答案。

强势抑或宽容？

CEO应当采用怎样的领导和管理风格呢？这是一家新晋公司要面对的首要问题之一。一般来说，领导风格分为两类：强势型与温和型。强势型领导的特点是目标明确，纪律严明，务实，注重结果，集权式管理。宽容型领导的特点是开放式管理，分权，具有探索性，注重激发员工天生的创造力。这是两种截然不同的管理风格，无所谓哪种好哪种不好。你

只要知道这两种风格适用于不同的公司和市场环境就可以了。

需要指出的是，这两种领导风格并不构成创新型公司与非创新型公司间的分野，它们都能被应用于这两类公司，至于具体采用哪一种，主要取决于CEO和企业创始人的想法。

在一家创新型公司里，强势型和宽容型领导风格都有用武之地；即便是一家比如主打大客户服务的非创新型公司，这两种风格也都同样适用。关键是你得明确地知道自己公司的发展目标，并了解这两种领导风格各自是如何服务于这个目标的。

谷歌与苹果的范例

在此，让我们以苹果和谷歌这两家著名的公司为例，来看看强势型与温和型领导风格是



两种领导风格

强势型

目标明确
纪律严明
务实
注重结果
集权式管理

宽容型

开放式管理
分权
具有探索性
注重激发员工创造力

如何在现实中运用的。苹果公司是运用强势型领导风格的典型，而谷歌是宽容型领导风格的典型，但正如我们所知，这两家高度重视创新且领导风格截然不同的公司都在各自的创新领域取得了成功。

在分析苹果公司领导风格的时候，我们讨论的是乔布斯时代的苹果。因为在新任CEO蒂姆·库克的领导下，苹果公司与以往相比已大相径庭，研究如今的苹果公司已经是另外一个话题了。

在乔布斯的领导下，苹果公司是一家纪律严明的企业。乔布斯是一位结果导向型企业家，同时也是一个非常严苛的老板，经常对下属提出不公平、不合理的要求，有时甚至很粗鲁。不管你如何评价他的领导风格，他的风格确实取得了很好的实效。他手下的人不得不让

自己随时保持最佳的工作状态，实际上，他们常常因此有超水平发挥，而这恰恰正中乔布斯的下怀。

乔布斯掌控苹果公司时，这家公司的权力高度集中，旁人提出的任何计划、想法都必须在得到他的批准后才能实施。这种集权管理有效地统一了公司上下的思想和行动，由此，苹果公司才研发出一系列可靠性和兼容性均属一流的产品。在苹果公司，乔布斯一个人说了算，每一项工作的细节都必须得到他的认可，这使得苹果公司的产品质量和服务水平能够在全球各地保持高度一致。

有些员工可能不喜欢这种领导风格，认为这会限制自己创造力的发挥。像这样的员工在苹果公司是没有发展前途的，因为这家公司无意培养个别员工的创造力，而是致力于通过提供统一的产品和服务来创造一致的客户体验。

强势型领导非常重视成本控制，这种领导风格追求的目标之一是创造高额乃至超额的利润，这意味着产品的高价值将转化为高价格和高毛利。为了追求利润最大化，强势型领导会将生产成本降到最低，哪怕这将挤压销售商们的竞争空间。所以，强势的领导风格并不仅仅针对自己企业的员工，还会影响到商业生态链上的销售商和供应商。深受生产企业这种高度集权管理影响的销售商和供应商，是无法按照自己的意愿开展业务的。

再来看看谷歌的领导风格。谷歌总是强调自己非常注重员工创造力和发展机遇的提升，所以长期以来谷歌都允许员工在为公司工作的同时另起炉灶。谷歌的员工每周最少可以拿出半天的时间来做自己个人的项目，公司对此不予干涉。显然，这种事在乔布斯治下的苹果公司是绝不可能出现的。

苹果公司追求的是包括苹果电脑、iPhone、iPad等电子设备在内的一个产品系列。而谷歌追求的是产品的多样化，所以很难

采用大一统的思维方式与行事原则。除了搜索引擎这个核心产品之外，谷歌已陆续研发出安卓系统、谷歌眼镜、电子邮件、地图与导航、超高速宽带服务、互联网气球、无人驾驶汽车等产品。这家公司统一的产品线甚至没有产品配套计划，它推出的是一系列涉及领域广泛的产品，其中的一部分将获得成功，但大部分都会像信息及社交网络服务Google Wave那样走向失败。

退一步讲，即便谷歌有统一的产品线，它也不会像苹果公司那样，将硬件、软件和服务牢牢掌控在自己手里。安卓系统就是一个例子，虽然它是谷歌公司研发的，但在实际应用过程中，不同的经销商能够根据自家产品的需要对其进行修改，结果是市场上出现了多种多样的安卓设备。谷歌的这种举措最大限度地迎合了不同用户的不同需求，但同时也产生一个问题：多样的安卓系统造成用户体验很不一致，有些体验的效果令人失望。

谷歌产品是开源的，而苹果产品不是，这是两家公司产品的显著差异。另外，两家公司对自身专利产品采取的市场策略也是不同的，前者允许他人申请专利授权，而后者完全不允许。

虽然这两家公司在对待员工和对待产品的方式上有着如此巨大的差异，但它们都获得了巨大的成功。苹果公司富可敌国，利润率高得惊人，谷歌的情况也大致如此，其搜索引擎的获利能力同样令人印象深刻。

谷歌公司的企业文化不像苹果公司那样无情，但它同样希求获取最大利润。耐人寻味的是，虽然谷歌不像苹果那样一切以绩效为考量的中心，但它也达成了自己理想的经营目标。实际上，谷歌常常走向另一个极端：投入大量人力和财力去研发一些还完全看不到盈利可能的新项目。如此说来，与苹果公司相比，承受风险在谷歌的企业文化中占有更大的比重。



公司的权力高度集中，旁人提出的任何计划、想法都必须在得到批准后才能实施。

风格取决于历史

在一定程度上，苹果与谷歌经营风格的差异源于其不同的发展历史。史蒂夫·乔布斯在取得最终的成功之前曾经历了多次失败。

虽然乔布斯是苹果公司的创始人，但曾由于主导开发的产品市场反应冷淡而惨遭公司董事会解雇。他被赶出苹果公司后成立的NeXT电脑公司和皮克斯动画公司也都曾走过一段坎坷的发展道路，当他重返苹果公司后才获得了最终的成功。

初创苹果公司时，以及后来创办NeXT电脑公司和皮克斯动画公司时，乔布斯开展了一系列创新性尝试，但最终都以失败告终。他的强势领导风格很可能源于这些失败经历，因为他明白，管理涣散，忽视成本控制，或是在缺乏有效管控的情况下同时推进多个项目都会导致失败。

与苹果公司相反，谷歌在推出第一款产品——搜索引擎之后立刻一炮而红。这家公司的创始人在创业之初就获得了成功，他们没有被解雇的经历并在公司上市后赚了很多钱。与此同时，他们还让员工自主地开展项目试验。成功来得非常迅速，没有任何失败经历，这个过程中，公司的管理相对宽松并启动了许多高投入的项目，但其中的很多都未获成功。

谷歌从自身的经验出发，认为宽松的企业管理风格行之有效，没必要去改变它。所以，当我们审视一个企业采取的 leadership 风格时，有必要考察企业创始人的经历背景。

风格取决于个性

企业创始人的个性和行为习惯也会深深地影响其领导风格。

谷歌的创始人拉里·佩奇和谢尔盖·布林与乔布斯的个性完全不同。后者很难与人达成共识，而前面这两位非常崇尚团结合作，哪怕他们各自都有能力做出良好的决断。乔布

斯完全不是一个利他主义者，而谷歌创始人则完全相反。后者从大学教育经历中获得了良好的分析能力，而乔布斯毫不掩饰对正统学习和专业教育工作者的反感，他喜欢凭直觉行动。

在其他方面，这三个人却很相似：都高度重视创新，对客户的新需求都有着高度的观察力。但他们是以不同的方式追求着自己的创新事业。总之，乔布斯是指挥官型的领导，而谷歌的创始人是协作型领导。

两种风格的哲学基础

强势型领导风格与宽容型领导风格的差异是有其哲学基础的。强势型领导唯成功是瞻，他们基本上不信任他人，并试图通过约束他人的行为来降低人们做出错误决定的机率。如果你的企业拥有具有远见并且强势的创始人，就可以通过采用这种管理风格来取得成功。

宽容型领导认为，允许员工更多地尝试创新和经历失败对企业来说是一件好事，因为启动足够多的项目能有更多机会让成功的项目对冲那些由失败造成的损失。宽容型领导乐于信任他人，并给予他们更大的空间去做自己想做的事。

当然，这两种领导风格都有其弊端。强势领导风格往往对员工限制过多，致使他们最终不得不离开公司，去别处实现自己的抱负。人们往往憎恶这种高度集权的领导风格，因为它不允许他们成长，至少是不允许他们按照自己想要的方式成长。而宽容领导风格会导致高成本和更多的失败，这将加大公司关张的风险。但值得一提的是，这两种领导风格有一个重要的共同点，至少我们能从谷歌和苹果看到这种共同点：它们有非常酷的一方面。最聪明的人、最有创意的人都想进入这两家公司工作，因为它们追求的事业都非常酷，非常令



注重员工创造力和发展机遇的提升，所以长期以来都允许员工在为公司工作的同时另起炉灶。

人兴奋。如果你曾在谷歌或苹果工作，这一经历将使你受益终生，因为人们会因你曾在一个人令人兴奋和充满创意的地方工作而对你刮目相看。

从这个角度讲，对于新创公司或正在成长期的公司来说，采用哪种领导风格并不是最重要的，最重要的是你的公司是否真正追求卓越。

你当何去何从？

现在我们要回到本文开头提出的问题。创业时你应该采取强势的还是宽容的领导风格呢？以下是在你做出决定前需要考虑的几个问题：

1. 你是什么性格的人？什么样的工作环境让你觉得最舒服？
2. 哪种领导风格最有可能导致你创业失败？是过于信任他人的宽容风格还是会迫使手下员工与你分道扬镳的强势风格？
3. 你过去有过因为采取强势或是宽容的领导风格而失败的经历吗？当时要是你采取了另一种领导风格结果会怎样？
4. 你准备如何让公司具备那些酷的基因？采取哪种领导风格更有利于实现这一点？
5. 你的产品以及面对的市场是什么样的？它们适应哪一种领导风格？有同类公司的经历能为你提供相关经验参考吗？
6. 你的人生目标是什么，是赚足够多的钱还是帮他人实现理想？你唯一在意的或者说主要在意的是金钱还是个人综合潜能的提升？

最后需要强调的是，本文只是试图从一个角度为读者提供领导风格的概要性介绍，其他可选的角度还有很多，领导风格的类型也有很多，选择并不局限于强势与宽容，在这两极之间还有许多不同的组合，或许其中就有最适合你的那一种。🔴

“What Leadership Style Works Best In Startups? Soft or Hard?”

Dr. E. Ted Prince
Founder and CEO
Perth Leadership Institute
www.perthleadership.org

Top Capital Magazine (Beijing)
June 2014

If you are starting up a new company, the chances are that you have never led a company before, let alone actually been a CEO. So it's pretty sure you won't have much appreciation of your own leadership style and probably you won't have such an appreciation for some time, maybe many years. But that doesn't stop you asking the right questions immediately even if you don't know the answer.

Hard or Soft?

One of the first questions that often arises with a new company is what broad style of leadership and management should the CEO adopt? Broadly you can think of styles as being “hard” and “soft”.

Hard styles are focused, disciplined, clinical in styles, results oriented and based on a strong central command style. Soft styles are open, decentralized, exploratory, deliberately somewhat unfocused, and oriented to bringing out the natural creativity of their people.

So they are radically different styles. But neither of them is good or bad in itself. You just have to know when they will be the most appropriate for your own particular company and market circumstances.

Note that we are not drawing a distinction here between innovative and non-innovative companies. Both of these styles can be innovative and both also non-innovative. A lot depends of the CEO and the founder's vision.

If the founder's vision is an innovative one, then a hard or a soft style can work very well. Even if it's a non-innovative one, for example focused on great customer service, both styles can work equally well. But you do need to understand what your objectives are and how the particular direction is supported by either a hard or a soft style.

Google and Apple

Let's take a couple of famous examples just to show how this all works in practice. Our two examples are Apple and Google. Apple is a great example of a hard style and Google a great

example of a soft style. But as you can see both are highly innovative companies and both have managed to support their innovation and success using two completely different styles.

Let's take Apple first of all. For the sake of convenience we will look at Apple when it was run by Steve Jobs. Apple under the new CEO Tim Cook is really a different company and really merits a separate discussion.

Apple under Jobs was a highly disciplined place. Steve Jobs was famously results-oriented. He was also a tough and demanding boss, often even unreasonable and unfair and sometimes even abusive of his employees. But however you feel about his style, it got results. His people felt obliged to perform at their very best, in fact often beyond it because that is exactly what Steve Job required of them.

And Apple under Jobs was a highly centralized place. Any ideas that didn't come from Jobs had to be explicitly approved by him; otherwise they could never be adopted.

But it was this centralization of vision and methods that allowed Apple to create products that were incredibly reliable and worked so seamlessly, because there was just one vision and everyone followed it. There was only one Apple operating system and every detail had to be approved by Jobs. This ensured that there was a tight and uniform vision globally for Apple products and services.

If an employee did not like this model because it limited his own creativity, then that employee would have no future in Apple. Apple was definitely not about fostering the individual creativity of individual employees but about creating a unified customer experience across the entire set of Apple products and services.

And in a hard style, cost control is a key factor. A hard style is aimed at high, even excessive profitability. That means that the high value of the product translates into very high prices and gross margins.

But to get the high profits you need low costs so a hard style requires ruthless control of costs, even if it means that many vendors can't compete. So a hard style isn't just for employees; it also extends to vendors and suppliers. They all come under the disciplined central command style of the company and they have no room to do things their own way.

So let's contrast this with Google. Google has always said that it is about increasing the creativity and opportunities for its own employees. So for a long time they allowed employees to pursue their own projects, no matter what they were, for maybe a half-day a week. That, of course would have been impossible in Steve Jobs' Apple.

And while Apple pursued just one product set – the Mac/iPhone/iPad – Google has pursued numerous, so that is very difficult to think of them all. In Google there is a central product, search. But then there's Android, Google Glass, email, maps and navigation, fiber, broadband using balloons, driverless cars and so on. Google doesn't have a product; it doesn't even have a portfolio. It has a wide collection of assets, some of which will be successful and most of which will not (like Google Wave for example).

And even where Google does have a product, it doesn't mean that it is one unified product like Apple. Take Google's Android. This is actually a collection of products with different vendors having different variations and styles of Android to meet their own circumstances.

Unlike the centrally-controlled iPhone, there are lots of different types of Android phones catering to an enormous variety of customer needs. But the Android experience is often frustrating because of these differences, even though it results in many more products meeting many more different types of customer needs.

That exemplifies one of the key differences between Apple and Google. Google is open-source, Apple is closed-source. Yet both have proprietary products. Each has taken a proprietary approach; one has allowed that to be licensed by anyone; the other allows no-one to license it.

Clearly Google has tried to allow employees to be much more creative and to actualize themselves in their own way, without too much corporate pressure. Apple has taken the opposite tack.

Yet both have achieved stellar results. Apple has so more cash than most governments in the world. Its margins are astronomically high. And Google also has a huge amount of cash, and its search margins are also astronomical.

While Google might not have the same ruthless performance culture of Apple, it has still managed to get huge returns. But note that it has gotten these results even though in many ways it is the opposite of Apple's cost-focused culture.

In fact Google often goes to the opposite extreme, allowing many of its people to undertake new projects with extremely high costs, even though there is no guarantee of even the slight prospect that they will ever make money. So Google might be the more risk-tolerant culture of the two companies, even though Apple has obviously taken huge risks too.

Histories

It's possible that the differences between Apple and Google derive at least in part from their completely different histories. Steve Jobs has several failures before he finally became successful.

He was fired from Apple, even though he founded it, because its products were not taking off sufficiently and because it was losing money. He then failed in NEXT Computer, and (at least initially) in Pixar. It was only when he came back to Apple, for a second time that he succeeded.

In the original Apple, in NEXT and Pixar, Jobs allowed a lot more experimentation but he needed up failing in these companies. So it's probable that his hard style came from his experience of failure; if you allow things to get loose, you don't control costs ruthlessly, you allow too many projects to go forward without tight central control, and then you fail.

In contrast, Google had almost instant success when they brought out their first search products. The company exploded.

The Google founders were successful right from the very start. They didn't get fired, they made lots of money soon after launch and this all happened while they allowed a lot of experimentation by their employees. So their experience was almost the opposite of Apple's. They succeeded almost immediately, never had any failures, and this all happened with relatively loose control and while they had a high level of costs from the numerous projects they launched, many of which failed.

So in their experience, a soft style worked very well and there has been no need to change it. So we have to take into account the experience of a founder when looking at the reason behind adopting one style or the other.

Personalities

Of course you also need to examine the personality and behaviors of the different people involved in Google and Apple since these clearly have an enormous impact on what leadership flavor you adopt.

Larry Page, Sergey Brin and Steve Jobs were totally different type of people with radically different personalities. Steve Jobs is absolutely not a person who is comfortable with consensus; Larry Page and Sergey Brin promote consensus even though they can make good decisions. So Steve Jobs is a commander-type, the Google founders are consensus styles.

Steve Jobs was absolutely not altruistic; in contrast the founders of Google are very altruistic.

The founders of Google are very analytical, as befits their university training; Steve Jobs despised formal learning and professional educators and was highly intuitive.

But in other ways they were very similar. All of these three were highly innovative, incredibly determined and acutely sensitive to the emergence of new types of customer requirements. However they pursued their innovation and used their determination in totally different ways.

Philosophies

There are key philosophical differences between hard and soft styles. A hard style is focused on success. It is essentially distrustful of people and attempt to reduce risk by making sure that you limit the opportunities for people to make bad decisions. It does this by restricting what they can create and do. As long as you have a visionary and tough founder, this style can obviously work very well.

A soft style is based on the idea that you get more opportunities if you allow people to experiment and fail. It is based on the idea that enough projects will succeed to more than offset the failures. The soft style trusts people and allows them a lot of latitude to do their own thing.

Of course both styles have their downsides. A hard style can restrict people so much that eventually they leave the company and create their ideas elsewhere. People can be resentful of the command style since it doesn't allow them to grow, at least not in the way they want. A soft style can lead to high costs, numerous failures and thus risk the very survival of the enterprise.

But it's worth noting one key similarity between the two styles, at least as practiced by Google and Apple. Both had the "cool" factor.

The smartest and most innovative people wanted to work in both companies because they were doing cool and exciting things. If you worked in Google or Apple, it would help you for the rest of your life because people would see that you had been in such exciting and innovative places.

That's a lesson that any startup or young company has to recognize if it wants to get a reputation for excellence, despite its style being hard or soft.

What About You?

So back to the question we asked at the beginning of the article. Should you adopt a hard or a soft style in a startup or a young company? Here are some of the questions you need to answer before making a decision:

1. What is your personality type? What type of environment are you most comfortable in?
2. Where are you most likely to fail? Is it with a soft style because you are already too trusting and need more discipline? Or is it with a hard style because you are already inclined to be exacting in a way that will make people not want to work for you?
3. Have you already had experiences of failure in the past? Was it because you adopted either a hard or a soft style? How would it have worked out had you adopted the other style?
4. How should you plan to get the cool factor? Will it be better with a hard or a soft style?
5. What about your product and market? Are they both more suited to a hard or a soft style? Are there other companies in your market that can provide you with some relevant experience?
6. What are your life objectives? Is it to make money for yourself or help others reach their own goals? Do you actually care only or mainly for money or do you live to reach your own potential independent of the money angle?

And finally; remember that this article has attempted to provide you with a framework for leadership. It isn't the only one. And the choice isn't just between hard and soft; there are many points in-between and maybe the best place for you is somewhere between them. But at least you have another way to evaluate your choices.

Good luck!

Dr. E. Ted Prince, the Founder and CEO of the Perth Leadership Institute, located in Florida in the US has also been CEO of several other companies, both public and private. He is the author

of two books: "The Three Financial Styles of Very Successful Leaders" (McGraw-Hill, 2005) and "Business Personality and Leadership Success", Amazon Kindle 2011 as well as numerous other publications in this area. He is a frequent speaker at industry conferences. He works with large corporations globally on leadership development programs and coaches senior executives and teams in the area of financial leadership. He has held the position of Visiting Professor at the University of Florida in the US in its Graduate Business School and also at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics in China.