



## Watch and Learn from Top Tech CEOs

By Sean Jones

Unless you have been living under a rock since the turn of the 21st century, you are undoubtedly aware of the importance of technological innovation in today's society. Individuals, businesses, and entire economies now rely upon technological innovation to power the success of industries around the world. Unlike generations before, technological innovation today occurs at lightning speed. Developing and releasing new apps, software, and cloud-based services is just the tip of the iceberg. Good companies need to figure out the need for these services before the need arises. Development has to be forward thinking, and once it is released, a service needs to remain flexible to adapt before it is outdated and useless. The individuals at the head of some of the world's top tech firms are the ones guiding the mission of these new apps and services. Some of these CEOs have helped shape the technological world we live in today. Others are new to the game and are shaping the future of tech. Regardless of their role, the following individuals represent the knowledge and forethought the tech industry needs today and in the future. Watch and learn from these top CEOs:

### Jeff Bezos – Amazon

Most people do not think of Amazon right off the bat when they envision technological advancements, but times are changing. As the world's largest online retailer, the online retailing giant has a lot happening in 2014, and Bezos is the man pulling all the strings. In addition to the introduction of Sunday deliveries on shipments and testing drones for home delivery, Amazon has rolled out its Netflix rival (Amazon Prime Instant Video). This is a long way from when Amazon went online in 1995 as a money-losing startup online bookstore selling books online. However, Amazon's biggest move since the Kindle eBook reader, has been the recent release of its new Amazon Fire Phone. Bezos, with his customer-centric focus on business, has made Amazon one of the most highly respected brands in America and around the world. We don't expect you to take our word for it though. Amazon stock, while down in 2014 likely due to the standoff with publishing house Hachette, is still up an amazing 423 percent over the last five years.

According to *Business Insider*, citing a survey from YouGov BrandIndex, Amazon was the most highly regarded brand in the U.S. in 2013. The YouGov survey interviewed over one million individuals.

### Evan Spiegel – Snapchat

Forget FaceTime and boring text messages, the kids these days are all using Snapchat. Evan Spiegel is a co-founder and current CEO of Snapchat, the startup chat service that conquered all comers in 2013. Launched in July 2011, the service was released during the same calendar year as Facebook's Poke app, and stomped the billion dollar competitor's offering into the ground. Snapchat is an app that allows users to take photos, record videos, add text, create drawings, and send them to a specified group of recipients. These sent items, including photographs and videos are known as "Snaps." Snapchat users also have the ability to set a time limit for how long recipients can view their Snaps typically ranging from 1 to 10 seconds, after which, the Snaps are hidden from the recipient's device and, according to Snapchat, deleted from the company's servers. In fact, according to Mashable, more college students in 2014 are more engaged in Snapchat rather than Facebook. This is a significant development because the college student market used to be one of the strengths of Facebook.

Of course, even such a successful new company as Snapchat has had its ups and downs. There is an ongoing lawsuit between Spiegel (and other co-founders) and an ousted friend, reminiscent perhaps of Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook – not to mention a recent security breach that left the information of 4.6 million users open to data thieves. However, Snapchat managed to secure \$110 million in two rounds of financing to power its future growth. In a nod to his hotheaded determination to build a unique product that stays out of the hands of larger tech firms, Spiegel rejected reported buyout bids from Facebook (\$3 billion) and Google (\$4 billion).

### Leslie Harris – Center for Democracy & Technology

The firm Leslie Harris works for won't provide you with the next great technological advancement, but it will protect you from the potential pitfalls of the next great technological advancement, and all the ones that follow. Technology is exceptional, but it can also sometimes infringe on the rights and liberties of individual citizens. Harris is the CEO and president of the Center for Democracy and Technology, an organization that is responsible for protecting your rights as an individual when you surf the Web, shop

online, and use popular apps. The CDT's mission states that the organization "is a champion of global online civil liberties and human rights, driving policy outcomes that keep the Internet open, innovative, and free." As a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, the Center for Democracy and Technology supports its mission through backing business legislation and tech tools that defend the Internet privacy of citizens and advocate against surveillance.

Among her many accomplishments, Harris had a guiding hand in the creation of the Global Network Initiative. This movement brought together other tech giants, notably Microsoft and Google, and human rights groups to protect your privacy online and fight for the freedom of expression. An activist and politician at heart, Leslie Harris is often seen testifying before Congress about pressing issues of cybersecurity and Internet freedom. They say when you have a passion for what you do, you'll never work a day in your life.

## Larry Ellison – Oracle

Oracle, originally founded in 1977 and renamed Oracle in 1982, is the tried and true tech industry leader in relational database software. Oracle Corporation has played a major role in characterizing the big data and commercial computing spaces, and its products are used by every single one of the world's 100 largest public companies. Oracle has now grown so large that many subset companies have sprung up to support its mission. Oracle resellers like Tekstream Solutions provide businesses with the ability to outsource content management and business solution consulting without having to bring someone in-house. They partner with Oracle and assist in deciding best solutions for clients.

Larry Ellison has been the CEO of Oracle since 1977, which makes him the longest running founder/CEO to ever grace the technology industry.

It also means that he has undeniably learned a great deal throughout his career, not to mention a 30-plus year friendship with the late Steve Jobs of Apple. CNBC recently included Ellison in The List, the news network's determination of the top 25 people who have had the "most profound impact on business and finance since 1989." Ellison understood early on that businesses were following a trend of focusing on connecting people to each other and to brands through new mediums. Thus, Oracle rode the Internet wave to success. In fact, Oracle's first clients are thought to be the Central Intelligence Agency and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Ellison teaches us to continually grow

and expand, that being competitive is an extremely valuable trait, and to be ahead of your competition through envisioning the future.

## About the Author

Sean Jones is a business writer with a primary focus on the technological sector, particularly mobile technology. He has covered startup social networking sites and provided engaging content for numerous tech companies, with an interest for topics like cloud computing, hosted services, and mobile productivity.



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