

# Ashton Kutcher Portrays the Ethereal Hero in ‘Jobs’

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The revolution in technology, that has allowed the world to change completely in just two generations, was led in part by dreamers in a garage. One of those “Edisons” was Steve Jobs – the creator of Apple Computers – portrayed with an inventor’s instinct by Ashton Kutcher.

Kutcher, and the approach that director Joshua Michael Stern and writer Matt Whiteley took with the character of Steve Jobs, are the highlights of the film. There is great respect toward the passion in the dreamers and innovations, and that type of creativity that changes our way of doing and thinking. Where the film doesn’t score points is within the “inside baseball” elements of the Apple Computer corporation. There is too much time given to boardrooms, marketing managers and staffing decisions, and while this is intriguing, it isn’t as interesting as the reflective vision that Steve Jobs gave his products. Ashton Kutcher understands this part of the Jobs’ persona, and rises above the office politics in in his performance and the character portrayal.

The film begins with Steve Jobs (Ashton Kutcher) announcing the new iPod to his company, on the cusp of that revolution. The familiar bearded guru with the black turtleneck and jeans gives way to his story, beginning as a barefoot college dropout in the mid 1970s. He is fascinated with what his tech geek friend Steve Wozniak (Josh Gad) is working on, as he pairs an early desktop computer with a television monitor. A new era is dawning.



Steve Jobs (Ashton Kutcher) Finds Divine Inspiration in ‘Jobs’  
*Photo credit: Open Road Films*



Jobs sets up a company in his parent's garage, intent on producing the first Apple Computers (the new name for his venture), and collects a motley crew of like thinking innovators including Daniel Kottke (Lukas Haas) and Rod Holt (Ron Eldard). Their small venture gains interest from outside money, represented by Mark Markkula (Dermot Mulroney), and a new business is born. The growth of Apple unfolds from there, and it's mostly growing pains, with Steve Jobs both at the helm and exiled at various times.

Ashton Kutcher impressively understands what made Steve Jobs tick, and he is able to produce that energy in both positive and negative waves. As the film portrays the man, he is a product of being adopted (by loving parents) and the Age of Aquarius. The is nicely summed up in an early scene, and it provides an anchor for the idealism that Jobs displays throughout his trials and triumphs. Kutcher embodies this wizard-like vision, and communicates it with a personification that allows connection to the character.

The supporting cast, outside the boardroom, are also a lot of fun. Josh Gad is both appropriately tech nerdy and emotionally connected to his friend and business partner. As there friendship dissolves through the massive overload of the business model, Gad is able to touch upon what he feels is important between the co-founders of Apple Computer. Lukas Haas, Dermot Mulroney and Ron Eldard represent their 1970s characters in its various before-the-revolution guises, both in aiding the tech revolution and becoming victims of it.

Inside the boardroom is where the least of the movie occurs, and at times becomes wonky, and so caught up in the politics of Apple's fortunes, that it could pass for a film produced by the company itself. When the boardroom antics first begin, it's interesting for awhile, especially when they bring in John Sculley (Matthew Modine) from Pepsi-Cola, to act as Apple's marketing manager. But the shifting of the guard and the problems stemming from it become redundant, and this even applies to when Jobs famously left Apple, then came back.



The Two Steves: Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak (Josh Gad) Make History in 'Jobs'  
Photo credit: Open Road Films

The approach of writer Matt Whiteley and director Joshua Michael Stern to formulate a Steve Jobs that sees things that others don't is the most refreshing element of the overall story. As Stern uses a shot technique that reflects that stark computer code reflecting off Kutcher's eyes, it evokes an examination into the organic matter of Steve Jobs that eventually revolutionizes everything. The strength of the inventor is his ability to be a seer and soothsayer, and that is essentially within the core of this Apple story.

To illustrate the impact of Steve Jobs, I am typing this review on an Apple Computer, looking at it on an Apple monitor and most likely will be interrupted by a call on my Apple iPhone. The dreamer is the drop of water in the thirsty desert, that eventually roars like a torrent and becomes a sea of change.

*"Jobs" opens everywhere on August 16th. Featuring Ashton Kutcher, Josh Gad, Dermot Mulroney, Lukas Haas, Matthew Modine, J.K. Simmons, Ron Eldard, James Wood and Leslie Ann Warren. Written by Matt Whiteley. Directed by Joshua Michael Stern. Rated "PG-13"*



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By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [17]  
Senior Staff Writer  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[pat@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com) [16]



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