



Julie Clark

Julie Clark was an English and art teacher who wanted to expose babies and parents to classical music, art and nature. She founded the Baby Einstein Co. in 1996 and produced the first two videos (*Baby Einstein* and *Baby Mozart*) in her home. She used borrowed video equipment and edited the videos on her home computer. Clark and her products were featured on many television shows and in a variety of publications. In five years, the fledgling company produced 30 children's books, 10 videos and six music albums before the Walt Disney Co. bought the enterprise from the founders.



Bill Gates

Bill Gates began programming computers at age 13. While he was a Harvard undergraduate, he developed a version of a new programming language called BASIC. He left Harvard as a junior to work on a new software company called Microsoft that he had founded with his friend Paul Allen in 1975. Gates believed that the personal computer would eventually be used in every office and in every home, and his new company began to develop software for those personal computers. By licensing the software to PC manufacturers, Microsoft retained control of the code and was able to work with a wide variety of hardware suppliers.



Linda Alvarado

Linda Alvarado worked her way through college as a laborer with a landscaping company. After working in the construction industry, she founded Alvarado Construction in 1976. Some of her first projects involved building sidewalks and shelters for bus passengers, but as the company grew, the projects increased in scale to hotels, convention centers and sports arenas. When she joined a group of investors to buy the Colorado Rockies, she made history as the first Hispanic and the first woman to buy a Major League Baseball franchise.



Oprah Winfrey

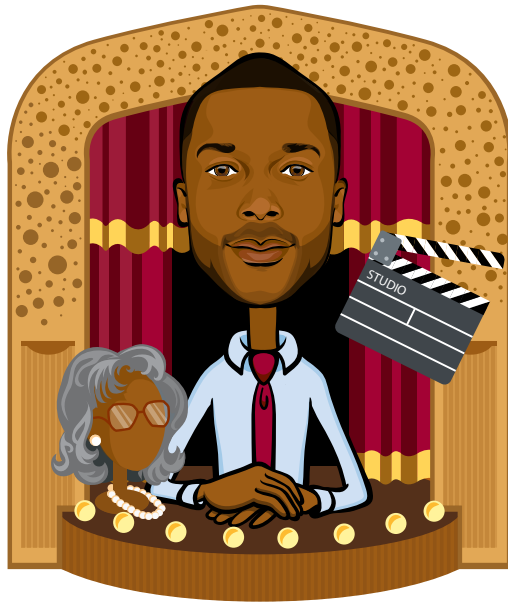
Oprah Winfrey began her broadcasting career in Nashville while still in high school. She anchored television news in Nashville and Baltimore before moving to Chicago to host a morning talk show that was quickly expanded and renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. It entered national syndication in 1986 and became the highest-rated talk show in television history.

In 1988, Winfrey established Harpo Studios, making her the third woman in the American entertainment industry (after Mary Pickford and Lucille Ball) to own her own studio. The company has produced movies and telefilms and has launched new television shows featuring Dr. Phil and Rachael Ray. With her partners, Winfrey has introduced a magazine, a website and an XM Satellite Radio station. Her newest venture is the Oprah Winfrey Network that premiered on Jan. 1, 2011.



Steve Jobs

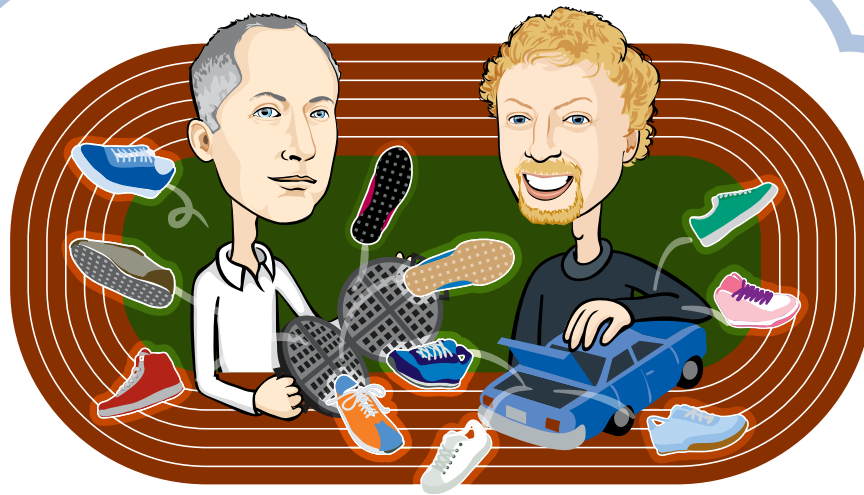
Steve Jobs became fascinated with computers and electronics growing up in Silicon Valley. In 1976, he cofounded Apple Computer with the goal of producing a personal computer at a time when most computers were the size of a room. The company grew rapidly with the sales of the Apple II and the Macintosh. Jobs left Apple in 1985. Over the next few years, he founded and ran NeXT, a software company, and Pixar Animation Studios. He returned to Apple when it bought NeXT in 1996. After his return, Apple continued to develop new products like the iPod, iPhone and iPad. Apple's online music store, iTunes, has revolutionized many different forms of media.



Tyler Perry

Tyler Perry had an unlikely start to a successful career in entertainment—a six-year series of unsuccessful productions of his first play. Perry based *I Know I've Been Changed* on a series of letters he wrote to himself. He used his entire life savings to produce the play in Atlanta in 1992. Over the next six years, he held a variety of jobs and even slept in his car, but in 1998 he opened the play one more time and it became a tremendous commercial success.

He began to write and star in plays. One of his best-known characters is Madea, the grandmother who became a central character in the plays and later in several movies. In addition to his writing and acting, Perry founded his own studio, Tyler Perry Studio, as well as a film company called 34th Street Films that develops the work of other screenwriters. Both companies are headquartered in Atlanta and together employ more than 300 people.



• **Bill Bowerman** •

• **Phil Knight** •

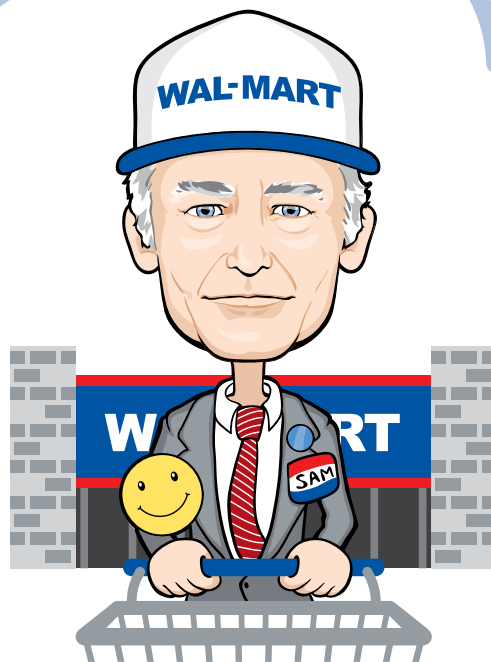
People had been selling shoes for centuries, but two men in Oregon recognized an opportunity. **Bill Bowerman** was a track and field coach at the University of Oregon who was always looking for ways to improve the equipment in order to enhance his team's performance. **Phil Knight** had been on Bowerman's team before he went to Stanford to earn an MBA. In 1964, with a handshake and an initial investment of \$500 each, they formed a partnership and imported their first shipment of athletic shoes from Japan. Knight began to sell the shoes at regional track meets from the trunk of his car, and Bowerman began to tear apart and redesign the footwear to improve the athletes' performance.

In 1970, with the business off to a successful start, Bowerman poured rubber into a waffle iron and created an entirely new sole with nubs to give runners additional traction. The following year, a new soccer cleat was named "The Nike" after the Greek goddess of victory and featured the now-famous "swoosh." Eventually, the company adopted the name and the mark, and with continued innovation, creative marketing and endorsements from famous athletes, grew into a globally recognized producer of athletic equipment.



Estée Lauder

Estée Lauder became interested in beauty products when her uncle came to live with her family while she was in high school. Her uncle was a chemist who created skin creams that Lauder began to sell in beauty salons after she graduated from high school. She and her husband founded the Estée Lauder company in 1946, and their first major sale came a year later from Saks Fifth Avenue. Her early sales experience shaped her vision for the new company. She created a uniquely personal customer experience with product demonstrations at the cosmetic counter. Another innovation that she brought to the industry was the gift with purchase. Lauder was closely involved in every step of building the business, from the selection of the color of packaging for the products to the training of beauty advisors in stores across the country. The Estée Lauder company includes many well-known brands, including Estée Lauder, Clinique, Origins, Prescriptives and M•A•C.



Sam Walton

Sam Walton returned to Arkansas after serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. He began his career in retail with J.C. Penney. In 1951, he opened Walton's Five and Dime in Bentonville. While operating the small variety store in the center of the town, he began to see opportunities for larger discount stores in rural towns. Other retailers had rejected these markets, but he opened the first Walmart store in nearby Rogers in 1962. The concept was an enormous success. As the number of stores grew, Walton developed an efficient distribution system that created cost savings that allowed lower prices in his stores. Innovations continued as the company developed a private satellite network that linked stores, distribution centers and the corporate office. Walmart has experienced rapid growth that allowed it to become the world's largest retailer.



• Robert L. Johnson •

Robert L. Johnson was working for the cable industry in Washington, D.C., when he saw that the African-American television audience was not being targeted by cable stations. He founded Black Entertainment Television (BET) in 1980. At the start, BET aired only a few hours of programming a week, but the network grew quickly into a major force in the television industry. BET financed its rapid expansion with a stock sale, but Johnson worked with an early partner to buy back the stock and sell the network to Viacom in 2001 for about \$3 billion. Two years later, he purchased the NBA expansion team, the Charlotte Hornets. His latest company invests in many different businesses, including Our Stories Films, a film production studio that produces movies featuring African-American writers, designers, actors and directors. Johnson's career has featured a number of firsts—BET was the first African-American-owned company to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange, the sale of BET made Johnson the first African-American billionaire and his purchase of the Hornets made him the first African-American owner in the NBA.



Lionel Sosa

Lionel Sosa worked in his family's dry cleaning business as a child growing up in San Antonio but dreamed of being an illustrator. He founded an art studio called Sosart and landed a contract to do high-profile work for the HemisFair, the world fair that was held in San Antonio in 1968. As the business grew, the art studio merged with an advertising agency and began to design ad campaigns for a variety of retail clients and political candidates. Sosa left the successful firm to start his own advertising agency called Sosa and Associates. It quickly became the largest Hispanic advertising agency in the U.S. and represented many famous brands. In 1996, after he officially retired, he and his wife formed a new company that sought to develop ad campaigns that appealed to many different cultures.