

sig  
she  
brig  
foo  
con

desi  
vas,  
spec  
son,  
of t  
simp  
Sole  
fans  
even  
with  
our  
shoe  
kids!  
they  
pare  
for  
to o

used by  
based on  
types of  
have be-

licity of  
ank can-  
signs and  
as Han-  
ad singer  
on. The  
yle Your  
TOMS  
rties are  
te shoes  
Many of  
TOMS  
e—little  
at which  
ds; their  
ive play  
n giving

In design, simplicity rules. Look at the world around you—many of the most successful design concepts are also the simplest. The most obvious and ubiquitous examples can be found in Apple's product line, and specifically

the iPod. When it was introduced, the small music player wasn't the first of its kind, and it lacked some of the features offered by its competition, like a radio receiver. It's also comparatively expensive, and its battery system is harder to replace than that of its rivals.

But the iPod has something the others don't have: simplicity of design and ease of use. No product looks cleaner and is less complicated to operate. This has always been Apple's forte: creating straightforward designs that even people who are timid with technology can embrace. By 2010, nine years after the iPod was launched, Apple had sold 250 million units—many to people who never dreamed they could so easily master the art of storing and listening to all their music in such a minimal device.

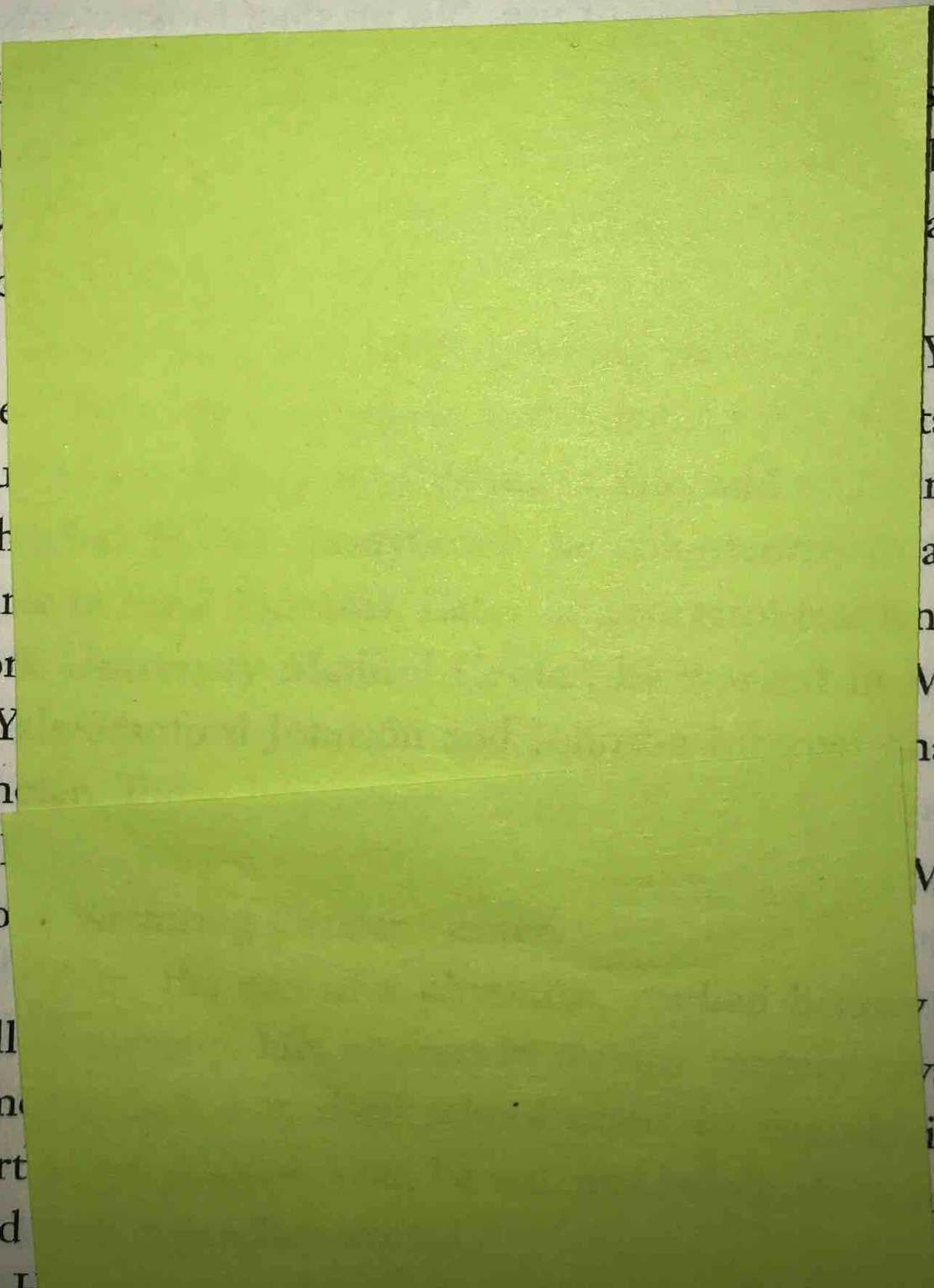
Another example of expertly used simplicity: Google. Here's a story from the business biography *Inside Larry and Sergey's Brain*, by Richard L. Brandt. Marissa Mayer, Google's vice president of search products and user experience, once received an unusual response from someone following her blog. It was simply the number 37. Mayer didn't know what this meant, so she went through her email history to see if the person had sent other messages. He had—nothing but single numbers: 33, 53, and then one that said: "61, getting a bit heavy, aren't we?" There was also a comment: "What happened to the days of 13?"

Marissa soon realized that the emails were appearing on the day she launched changes on Google's home page, and the numerals referred to the number of words on the page. She had thought she was keeping the page simple, but it

didn't occur to her to count the words on it—which is now her standard procedure. At this time, the company won't allow more than twenty-eight.

★ **A SIMPLE OPERATION**

Si  
th  
fi  
Ac  
  
are  
stu  
sch  
cli  
Yor  
a Y  
sch  
of  
Slo  
  
nell  
a m  
start  
died



sion, as in  
by thirty-  
ar-old Dr.  
  
York City  
tan. Peter  
n medical  
a medical  
nt at New  
Malawi as  
nal health  
Division  
Memorial  
  
at Cor-  
stallized  
ia at the  
is guide

Here are some more simple ideas that have become great companies:

**CHIPOTLE:** After graduating from culinary school in 1990, twenty-five-year-old Steve Eells moved to San Francisco and frequented the taco and burrito joints that had sprung up in the city's Mission District. Eells's idea: Create a high-quality Mexican-food experience using organic ingredients and naturally raised meat while keeping the menu as simple as possible and using assembly-line techniques for speedy service. In 1993, with a loan from his father, Eells opened the first Chipotle in Colorado. Today there are more than 1,000 Chipotle restaurants in thirty-eight states, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In 2010, their net income was \$178 million and they employed 26,500 people.

**CRAIGSLIST:** While working as a computer-security architect, forty-three-year-old Craig Newmark started a small email list to keep friends updated on local art and technology events in San Francisco. His subscriber base increased rapidly, and in 1996, Newmark decided to create a free website, called craigslist, that closely modeled the typical classified ads in newspapers. It became an instant hit. Today craigslist has expanded to more than 700 cities in seventy countries around the world, and it is the seventh-most-trafficked website in the United States.

**DAILYCANDY:** Frustrated with the agonizingly slow pace of magazines, in 2000 writer Dany Levy decided to create an email newsletter featuring style and fashion tips, dining

recommendations, and cool events happening in New York City. She called her newsletter “DailyCandy” and sent it off to about 700 friends, family members, and people she considered influential. The tone of the emails was light and fun, and it worked: Today, DailyCandy editions are sent out in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, London, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Miami, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. In 2008, Comcast purchased DailyCandy for \$125 million.

**DONORSCHOOSE:** In 2000, twenty-five-year-old Charles Best was working as a social studies teacher in the Bronx. Frustrated by the lack of resources in public schools, Best sensed that people wanted to donate to education—but wanted a way to connect directly with individual classrooms. So he invented the website DonorsChoose.org. There, public-school teachers make requests for specific items they need for their classrooms, from pencils to musical instruments, and donors browse the requests and give any amount that inspires them. All donors receive a thank-you note from the teacher making the request, photos of the ongoing project, and a report showing how the money was spent. As of this writing, DonorsChoose has raised more than \$73 million and helped more than three million students in 35,000 public schools across the country.

**HEIFER INTERNATIONAL:** Heifer International’s simple idea: Livestock has the power to lift families out of the poverty cycle. The organization was first conceived in 1939 when

relief worker Dan West, rationing powdered milk to refugees of the Spanish Civil War, realized that handouts would never be enough—poor families needed animals to plow their fields, to produce milk and eggs they could use to feed their children, and to leave behind manure they could use to improve the quality of their soil. Today, Heifer International gives livestock from goats to water buffalo to rural families in more than 125 countries.

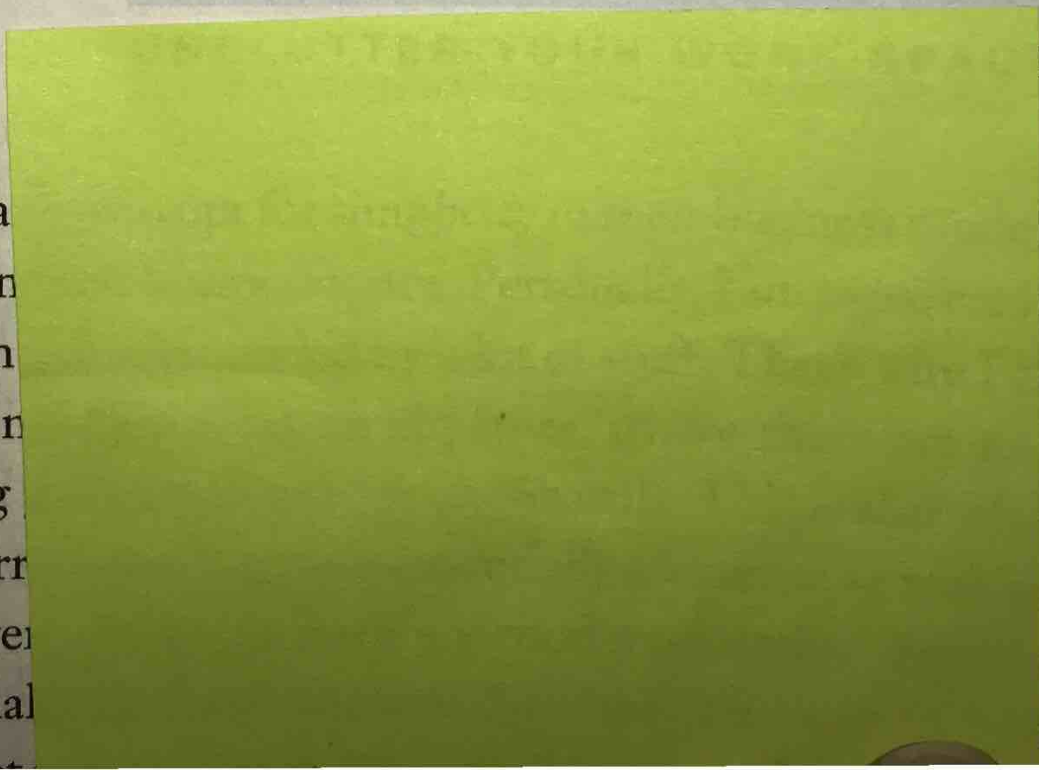
Heifer also teaches the importance of planting trees, collecting manure for organic fertilizer, preventing overgrazing, and planning for long-term success. Recipients take part in the giving cycle by agreeing to share one or more of their animals' offspring with others; Heifer calls this "Passing on the Gift."

**NETFLIX:** After selling his software-engineering company in 1997, thirty-seven-year-old entrepreneur Reed Hastings turned his attention to an entirely different business: DVD rentals. At the time, people were accustomed to going to Blockbuster or a local video store to pick up their VHS tapes. Hastings's simple idea: Put DVDs in the mail and send them directly to people's homes. Today Netflix offers more than 100,000 titles online and has ten million monthly subscribers. Back in 2007, the company announced its one billionth DVD delivery. Wow!

**SOUTHWEST AIRLINES:** In 1966, Texas entrepreneur Rollin King showed his lawyer, Herb Kelleher, a triangle he'd drawn on a cocktail napkin. The triangle represented the

state of Texas; on each point, King wrote the name of a city: Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. At the time, flying between these cities was inconvenient and expensive; King wanted to create a low-cost intrastate airline servicing this Texan triangle. Kelleher liked the idea. Today the company he founded, Southwest Airlines, carries more passengers per year than any other airline and posts a profit every year. The secret? They keep things simple by making Southwest the absolutely cheapest option for passengers on short-distance flights. Kelleher, who stepped down as CEO in 2008, once said, "I can teach you the secret to running this airline in thirty seconds. This is it: We are *the* low-fare airline. Once you understand that fact, you can make any decision about this company's future as well as I can."

Ma  
it in  
I'm  
of n  
ing  
curr  
Ever  
smal  
fact



l also seek  
tive when  
ave some  
distract-  
TOMS'  
o offices.  
embles a  
nd a half