

THE MAN

Most of his employees would describe Casey as an extraordinary man—but just an ordinary CEO.

On a personal level, they genuinely liked their leader. Casey was a devoted husband, a loving father to his four children, a committed parishioner at Sacred Heart Church, and a helpful friend and neighbor. It was almost impossible not to like—even admire—the man.

Which made his limitation as a leader all the more mystifying.

HIS STORY

The McDaniel family had lived modestly in Carmel for the past fifty years, and Casey grew up on or around the many golf courses in the area, usually as a caddy or gardener. His affinity for golf was matched only by his love for computers, so he left home after high school to attend the University of Arizona on a golf scholarship, where he studied electrical engineering and computer science. Four years later he graduated toward the middle of his academic class, but at the top of the Pac-10 Conference in golf.

The lure of joining the PGA Tour, and someday playing back home at Pebble Beach in front of friends and family, was too much for Casey to resist. So he joined a qualifying tour where he quickly became one of the more popular players on the circuit with his quiet humor and generosity toward any fellow golfers who needed a little advice about their stroke.

Over the course of the next five years, Casey won a few more than his share of second-tier tournaments and earned enough money to keep his head far above water. But just as he was about to break through to the big tour, he developed

His Story

a chronic case of what golfers call the yips—an almost clinical disorder that makes it difficult to remain steady while in the act of putting. Plenty of promising players had their careers cut short by the pseudo-psychological yips, and Casey reluctantly counted himself among them.

Never one to let disappointment keep him down for too long, Casey returned home with a new sense of purpose—and an idea. In a matter of months, he got married, bought a tiny bungalow with the earnings he had saved, hired two local programmers, and began hacking away at what he believed would be the most realistic golf video game that the market had ever seen.

The initial results would wildly exceed even his expectations.

BREAK

Within two years of launching his company, Yip Software, Casey released his first product, which immediately set the standard for realism in all sports-related games. Because of his in-depth background in the sport, the game reflected deep knowledge of many of the subtle aspects of actual golf venues, including of course, the putting greens.

Almost immediately the game became a favorite of the most important focus group of customers imaginable: golfers themselves.

Because he had become close friends with many players who were now on the tour, Casey was able to arrange inexpensive but effective sponsorship deals with a few of the better young players. But it was a purely accidental occurrence that propelled Yip's success beyond being a niche video game and onto the pages of *Sports Illustrated*.

One of Casey's friends won his first PGA tournament less than a year after the product had been released. During his post-tournament press conference, he was asked about the improvement in his putting. Almost embarrassed, he admit-

Break

ted, “I can’t believe I’m going to say this, but I think it may have something to do with a video game I’ve been playing lately. . . .”

And the cat was out of the bag.