

A Timeline of Microsoft's Route To Success



Microsoft has become a juggernaut in the enterprise services space, eclipsing every other competitor. The fact that they're a monolith of a company is clear. However, the question remains: How did they become so dominant? There are a few key reasons why they came to be such a powerful force in the enterprise services sphere.

1985 *NOVEMBER 20TH*

Microsoft makes the first graphical extension for MS-DOS called **Windows 1.0**. Enterprise adoption starts at the workgroup and department level, effectively bypassing IT due to its relative ease of use.



1987

The company makes its first corporate acquisition by purchasing Forethought - developer of a presentation program that would eventually evolve into **PowerPoint**.

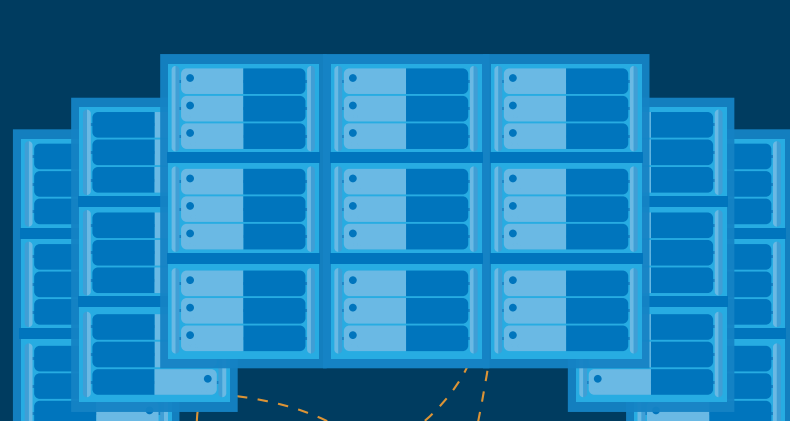
Microsoft Releases **Windows 2.0**, with improved 16-bit graphics, speed, reliability, and user interface.



1990

Microsoft introduces the business world to **Office**, its powerful suite of productivity solutions that quickly became the optimal choice for businesses.

Windows 3.0 appears and takes advantage of the improved memory management features of the Intel 80286 and 80386 processors to deliver a much-improved user interface.



1993

Microsoft replaces the seminal Microsoft Mail platform with its newly-developed **Microsoft Exchange Server**, migrating all internal mail to the X.400-based client-server and releasing it to the public three years later.

Windows NT 3.1 arrives, Microsoft's first 32-bit version of Windows designed for workstations and servers.



1995

Windows 95 heralds the end of the MS-DOS product line, arriving on the scene with a new START button, improved GUI, and a hybrid 16/32-bit operating environment.

Windows 98 is the first version of Windows primarily designed to enable internet activities, coming bundled with Internet Explorer 4.01 along with other online applications such as Outlook Express, Microsoft Chat, and Personal Web Server.



1998

2000

In addition to releasing two new Windows versions - Windows 2000 Windows ME, Microsoft purchases Visio Corporation. This would later result in **Microsoft Visio**, a powerful tool that enables the creation of comprehensive diagrams for businesses.



2001

Windows XP - one of the most iconic and widely-used operating systems of all times - is born. It forever changes the way software licensing and security updates are handled, and improvements to UX and performance make it incredibly successful among enterprise businesses. All told, it will eventually sell over **1 BILLION** copies. ⁽¹⁾



2002

Microsoft purchases Navision for **US\$1.45B.** They will later develop **Microsoft Dynamics**, which is now an important pillar in Microsoft's enterprise management strategy.



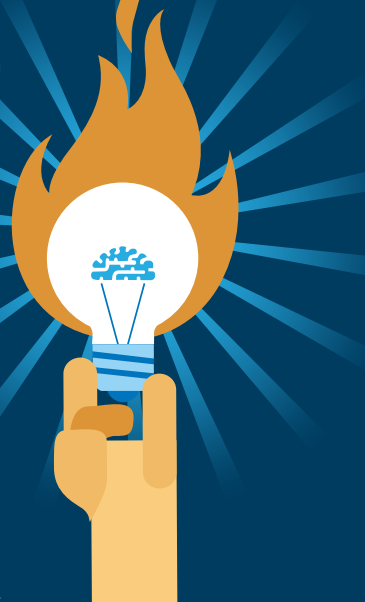
2007

Despite improvements to UX, networking capability, and vastly-improved security features, Windows Vista fails to live up to expectations. Due primarily to restrictive licensing terms and high system requirements, the platform is widely criticized.



2008

Microsoft releases the **Azure Services Platform**. Azure will quickly become the heart of Microsoft's cloud-based offerings and is still considered to be one of their most critical services today.



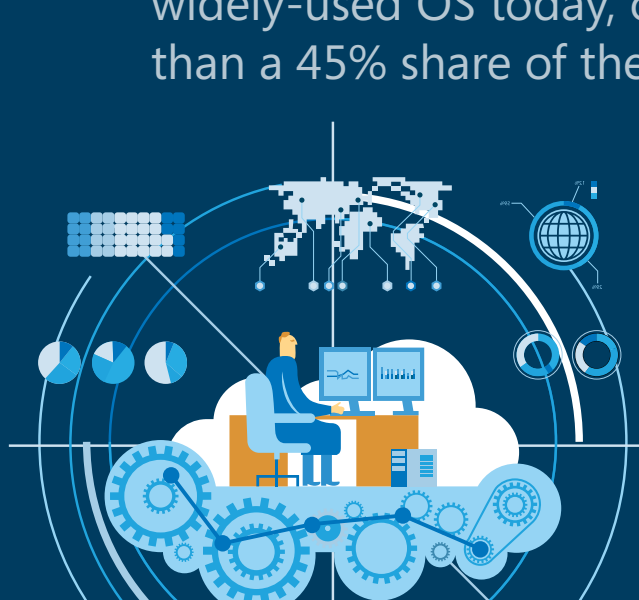
2009

The release of Windows 7 manages to overcome the negativity of its predecessor. The improved performance, better UI, and file sharing support make it a resounding commercial success. In fact, it's still the most widely-used OS today, commanding more than a 45% share of the market.



2011

Microsoft purchases Skype Technologies for **US\$8.5B.** With over 300M active monthly users. Skype at the time is one of the most active communications tools on the market.



2012

Microsoft acquires the social network Yammer for **US\$1.2B.** Over 25% of businesses with more than 100 employees actively use it for internal communications.



Windows 8 debuts, an incremental update from the still-popular Windows 7 that places a heavy emphasis on tablet and mobile usability.

Skype for Business, a version of Skype developed for the needs of large businesses, is released. It's now used by over 55% of companies

Windows 10 debuts. It recognizes the importance of universal apps - those programs that can be used across any device type - and introduces improved desktop management and security environments. Although it doesn't enjoy the market dominance of its Windows 7 predecessor, it's believed to be on track to have a billion users by the end of the decade.

2015



Microsoft acquired LinkedIn, the world's premier job search platform, for **US\$26.2B.** LinkedIn boasts over 500 million users along with by over 30% of companies

As a major push toward gaining a foothold in the mobile computing platform, Microsoft announces "Surface as a Service" making it easy for enterprises to lease Surface devices that are fully integrated with Windows 10 and Office 365.

2016



Microsoft announces that **Microsoft Teams**, a chat-based platform for business, will roll-out to Office 365 customer worldwide as a communications platform aimed at challenging Slack.

2017

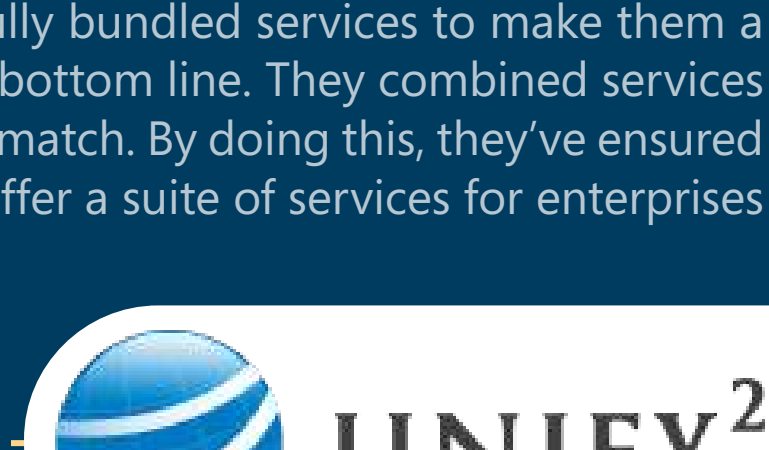


2018

Microsoft reveals that Teams will add voice, video, and meetings integration with the ultimate goal of replacing Skype For Business in favor of a unified messaging experience.



The aggressive acquisitions along with the internal developments Microsoft has completed has a clear theme: Gather diverse and complementary tools, and then work to consistently improve them. Microsoft also carefully bundled services to make them a compelling choice for enterprises sensitive to their bottom line. They combined services in a package that their competitors simply couldn't match. By doing this, they've ensured that can't be matched.



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