The Rise and Rise of the Redmond Empire

3/13/86 A market phenomenon is born: The 11-year-old company's IPO raises $61 million as MSFT rises from $21 to $28 on opening day.

3/13/86 Opening day MSFT investment = $1,000

1986 Revenue $197.5 million; 1,153 employees

4/2/87 The company announces MS OS/2 and Windows 2.0.

7/30/87 Microsoft acquires Forethought, the developer of PowerPoint.

9/8/87 The company ships its first CD-ROM application, MS Bookshelf.

9/21/87 MSFT stock (at $114.50) splits two for one.

10/6/87 Microsoft announces its first Windows application: Excel.

10/19/87 The Crash of '87: The Dow falls 508 points in a single session. (MSFT falls 30.12 percent.)

1987 Revenue $345.9 million; 1,816 employees

3/17/88 Apple files suit against Microsoft, alleging copyright infringement in the Windows GUI.

April 1988 Microsoft surpasses Lotus to become the Number One software vendor.

1988 Revenue $590.8 million; 2,793 employees

6/5/89 Microsoft creates its Multimedia Division.

11/13/89 IBM and Microsoft expand their partnership, agreeing to develop software for MS-DOS, MS OS/2, and MS LAN.

12/27/89 Jon Shirley announces his retirement as president and chief operating officer.
1989 Revenue $804.5 million; 4,037 employees

4/2/90 Michael Hallman is appointed to fill Shirley's posts.

4/16/90 MSFT stock (at $120.75) splits two for one.

5/22/90 Windows 3.0 is launched.

June 1990 The FTC launches a probe into possible collusion between Microsoft and IBM.

9/17/90 Microsoft launches a Windows print ad campaign.

1990 Revenue $1.183 billion; 5,635 employees

1/9/91 Excel 3.0 is announced.

6/27/91 MSFT stock (at $100.75) splits three for two.

Investment value 6/30/91 = $14,598

1991 Revenue $1.843 billion; 8,266 employees

3/1/92 Hallman steps down from the presidency and is replaced by a multimember "office of the president."

6/15/92 MSFT stock (at $112.50) splits three for two.

1992 Revenue $2.759 billion; 11,542 employees

3/22/93 Microsoft Encarta ships.

5/24/93 Windows NT launches.

8/20/93 The FTC closes its antitrust action against Microsoft. The Justice Department opens an antitrust investigation.

8/24/93 A federal judge dismisses Apple's copyright complaint; Microsoft prevails in appeals that last through 1994.

Investment value 7/31/91 = $15,750

1993 Revenue $3.753 billion; 14,430 employees

5/23/94 MSFT stock (at $97.75) splits two for one.

6/28/94 Microsoft acquires Softimage, a digital-video concern.

7/15/94 Microsoft enters into a federal consent decree with the Justice Department, agreeing not to use its desktop OS monopoly to gain advantage in new business sectors.

9/8/94 Windows 95 is announced.
10/13/94 Netscape releases a beta of its first browser.

10/13/94 Microsoft announces its intent to merge with Intuit, a leading maker of personal-finance software.

11/8/94 Procter & Gamble's Robert Herbold joins Microsoft as its COO.

11/14/94 The "Where Do You Want to Go Today?" ad campaign débuts.

1994 Revenue $4.649 billion; 15,257 employees

1/7/95 Microsoft Bob is announced.

3/22/95 DreamWorks SKG and Microsoft form DreamWorks Interactive.

4/27/95 The Justice Department challenges the Intuit merger.

5/20/95 Microsoft and Intuit abandon merger.

**Investment value 6/30/95 = $58,097**

8/24/95 Windows 95 ships.

11/24/95 Bill Gates's *The Road Ahead* hits stores.

11/27/95 Internet Explorer 2.0 ships.

12/6/95 IBM licenses Sun's Java; Microsoft follows suit the next day.

12/7/95 Microsoft announces its Internet strategy.

12/14/95 Microsoft and NBC announce a partnership to create MSNBC.

1995 Revenue $5.940 billion; 17,801 employees

2/15/96 Microsoft's Interactive Media Division is created.

3/12/96 The company announces ActiveX Technologies.

6/24/96 The online magazine Slate débuts.

7/15/96 MSNBC débuts.

12/3/96 Microsoft's Executive Committee is formed, replacing the Office of the President.

12/9/96 MSFT stock (at $152.88) splits two for one.

1996 Revenue $8.671 billion; 20,561 employees

4/6/97 Microsoft acquires WebTV.

6/9/97 The company invests $1 billion in cable TV operator Comcast.
7/21/97 Microsoft invests in RealNetworks, a streaming-video competitor.

8/6/97 Microsoft invests $150 million in Apple.

10/1/97 Internet Explorer 4.0 launches.

10/7/97 Sun sues, alleging that Microsoft is violating a licensing pact by creating a variant version of Java.

10/20/97 The Justice Department files a lawsuit alleging anticompetitive practices in forcing PC makers to bundle Internet Explorer onto Windows machines.

12/11/97 Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson orders Microsoft to offer a version of Windows sans Internet Explorer and sets a trial for May. The company appeals.

12/31/97 Microsoft acquires Hotmail.

1997 Revenue $11.360 billion; 22,276 employees

2/23/98 MSFT stock (at $155.13) splits two for one.

3/26/98 Office 98 for Macintosh is released.

4/9/98 Microsoft acquires Firefly Network.

5/18/98 The Justice Department, 20 states, and the District of Columbia file sweeping new antitrust suits. A trial is set for September and later moved back to late October.

6/15/98 Microsoft joins Compaq to invest in Time Warner's Road Runner cable-data venture.

6/23/98 The US Court of Appeals throws out Judge Jackson's December order.


7/21/98 Steve Ballmer is named president.

10/19/98 US v. Microsoft antitrust trial opens in federal court.

1998 Revenue $14.480 billion; 27,320 employees

Investment value 10/20/98 = $257,778
Wired 6.12: The Rise and Rise of the Redmond Empire

Read Wired magazine columnist Bruce Sterling’s blog, Beyond the Beyond.

Gadget Lab Newsletter

Sign up for the newsletter that gives you the 411 on the latest tech toys.

Get Wired

Special Offer:
Subscribe - save over 80% and get a FREE Gift!

Give Wired
· International Subscriptions
· Renew

Reprints

Customer Service

Wired Blogs

Beyond the Beyond
by Bruce Sterling