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Satya Nadella: Bringing Microsoft into the Modern Age

by Paige Hobson, Industrial Engineering Junior

Satya Nadella, the current CEO of Microsoft, is changing the priorities of the company. Under his leadership, Microsoft left behind its days as solely a software giant. He made mobile and cloud usage the future of Microsoft and worked to make their technology more available across all platforms.

Satya Nadella began his journey to CEO in his home country of India, where he graduated from Mangalore University with an electrical engineering degree in 1988. Upon moving to the United States, Nadella continued his education by obtaining a master's degree in computer science from the University of Wisconsin.

From there he went to work with Sun Microsystems Inc., but within two years he received an offer to work with Microsoft. Nadella's initial position had him working on the development of Windows NT, which became a landmark operating system and the first purely 32-bit operating system that Windows had ever launched. Proving unwilling to get comfortable with his success, Nadella returned to school in 1997 to work on his master's degree in business administration at the University of Chicago while still working full-time at Microsoft.

Nadella worked his way up the ranks in Microsoft, and, by 1999, he became vice president of Microsoft bCentral. Just two years later, he gained a promotion to Corporate Vice President of Microsoft Business Solutions. After several more moves up the corporate ladder, including some time spent as executive vice president in charge

of Microsoft's cloud computing platform, Nadella attained the mantle of CEO of Microsoft in 2014. He is only the third person to hold this position following Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer.

Upon gaining this position, Nadella quickly made clear the direction he intended to move Microsoft. During his first public announcement as CEO, he claimed that mobile and cloud will be the future, and they were to be the top priorities within Microsoft. Since his laying out of this vision, Microsoft became a major player in cloud computing services. This includes the release of Windows Phone, a mobile operating system for smart phones, and Microsoft Azure, a cloud platform targeted toward business professionals.

In addition to changing the focus of Microsoft, Nadella also changed how Microsoft deals with competitors by embracing partnerships and various collaborations with competing companies. He also encourages a healthier company culture within Microsoft. Nadella currently works to change the way people look at Microsoft, and his efforts seem to be paying off. Microsoft stock prices have soared under Nadella's leadership, tripling within the four years that he has been CEO. Satya Nadella shows no fear of moving away from tradition and adapting to the future, and he reflects that boldness upon Microsoft's journey as a company.

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