

hired a dropout, but we have lots of intern programs, but most people have their college degrees or even masters or PhDs.

**U. MAG.** So you wouldn't suggest a student go the route that you did?

**BILL GATES:** Well, if they see the start of a whole new industry that actually being in at the very beginning makes all the difference, if they have that type of insight, absolutely they should pursue it. That doesn't come along very often. And even in my case, I ended up finishing three years of college. And I wish I could have done more, I loved college, it wasn't something I was looking to finish with, but being the first company to do low-cost software and creating the PC model, Paul Allen and I just saw that it was a time where we could lead the way and so we had to go do it, even though it meant leaving Harvard.

**U. MAG.** What kind of talent are you looking for?

**BILL GATES:** Well, Microsoft, of course, employs people with a huge range of talent. A lot of the people I'll be talking to on the college tour are people thinking about software development, they actually want to write the programs. But there's a lot we do with design, making the user interface right, and testing, getting the quality right, and supporting the customers, and knowing all the specific kind of industries our customers work in and making sure we're adapting the software to them. So it's super broad but the magic of defining the product is a lot of what I'll be focused on.

**U. MAG.** What's the most challenging part of running the world's largest software company?

**BILL GATES:** Well, fortunately, I have Steve Ballmer as CEO, who takes a lot of that burden. It was about, oh, almost six years ago now when I decided to focus in on the product issues, and that's worked out super well. The big challenge for me is making sure we've got the best people and we're driving the big breakthroughs, things like speech recognition, visual recognition, computers that are far more automatic in their behavior, computers that take things you have to worry about today like moving data between your different machines or worrying about things that affect your security, all of those need to be made invisible so that you're not spending any time on those things.

So we've got a research group that looks at things far out in the future, and very practical groups that take every customer input and decide how to respond to those, so quite a range of great technology coming together with the things customers would like to see.

**U. MAG.** How do you keep a company young, vibrant and cutting edge when you're as large as you are?

**BILL GATES:** Well, part of the advantage we have is that we can afford to do long term research, and it's our success that has allowed that to happen. Things like tablet computing and ink recognition, you know, we know that will catch on some day, that students won't have textbooks, they'll just have their little tablet device that will take voice notes, ink notes, connect up the keyboard, however they want to use it. And so we can take a dream like that and just keep working on it as the hardware evolves, as software evolves. And likewise, something like the future of TV, which is to be delivered over the Internet in high definition with interactivity, we got into that, oh, almost a

decade before it's rolled out. Our partners like SBC and Verizon are just rolling that out now. It was more than a decade ago we started putting people on that.

So if you want to be on the cutting edge you've got to be hiring these very top people and you've got to have this long time horizon. Speech recognition, again we've been at that for over a decade and we're making good progress, but the quality that's needed before that becomes a primary way you interact, and there's still years of work to do before we achieve that. Eventually, you'll just talk to your phone and it will understand what you're saying.

**U. MAG.** What's an average day in the life of Mr. Gates consist of?

**BILL GATES:** Well, a lot of what I'm doing is sitting down with software developers at various stages of their work. So we have what we call brainstorming sessions where we'll take something like what's the home environment going to look like when you have screens that can project onto every surface and voice recognition and no limits to your media experience or creativity, so we'll just sit and talk about, okay, what are the software pieces, what are the future developments, who should we be partnering with.

Or I'll do a review of a product at a later stage like the next version of Office which is pretty far along, and it's less than a year from release, and we'll just talk about what the customer reactions are and what are some of the challenges in performance or how they connect up with the other groups in the company.

So 80% of my time is in those meetings. The rest is getting out all over the world and talking with partners and customers and seeing what they need, seeing what the breakthroughs are.

I do a few unusual things. I have two weeks once every six months where I just go off for a week and read research papers and really look at new things that are going on and write up my ideas about those. I call those Think Weeks where I'm not in any meetings or doing anything but reading and sleeping.

**U. MAG.** Is that at your cabin? And you said it's two weeks every six months?

**BILL GATES:** It's a week every six months, so two weeks a year that I

get to go do that.

**U. MAG.** What's been your favorite philanthropic effort?

**BILL GATES:** Well, the biggest thing, my favorite certainly is the work my foundation is doing in global health where there's tens of millions of deaths in developing countries of diseases that we don't see in the rich world, and nobody has worked on medicines for those things because there's not enough money to create a normal market. So our foundation has been able to hire the top scientists who work on tuberculosis, malaria, AIDS, and the other top 20 killers and bring them in.

It's a lot like Microsoft where you have a lot of researchers to go do what you want to do, willingness to take big risks, willingness to work long term. So sitting down with these scientists and hearing about their ideas and the partners they want to work with has been fantastic, and we've made a lot of progress getting more vaccines out, getting new vaccines discovered.

I never thought there would be something that is so similar to the software work I do, very fulfilling because it's about lives, it's about treating every human life as well as we treat human lives here in the United States.

