

# Oral History of Orlando Ayala

Interviewed by **Mario Juarez** for the Microsoft Alumni Network

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## Preface

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Orlando Ayala as conducted by Mario Juarez on August 8, 2024, at Microsoft Studios in Redmond, Washington. This interview is part of the Microsoft Alumni Network's Microsoft Alumni Voices initiative. The goal of this project is to record the institutional history of Microsoft through the recollections of its former employees, so that the information may inform and inspire future generations.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word captured through video rather than written prose. The content reflects the recollections of the interviewee. The following transcript was edited by the Microsoft Alumni Network, which holds the copyright to this work.

## Interview

Orlando Ayala: I am Orlando Ayala. I was born in Colombia. I was with Microsoft for 25 years, retired in 2016, joined in 91, and I had multiple roles.

Mario Juarez: Including?

Orlando Ayala: Oh, you want me to go over them?

Mario Juarez: Sure, yeah just give us an overview.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah. I had multiple roles starting as director of Latin America when the region was really nothing, so I had really the opportunity to develop a lot of that region. It was interesting that I still remember when I was trying to open a subsidiary in my country in Colombia, and how easy the company was at those times, I came to Bill and

Steve and said, "Hey, I think we should open a subsidiary in Colombia."

And he said, "Okay, if you think we can sell software over there, go ahead and do it."

After Latin America, I was moved to basically developing all the emerging markets, at that time, that was the Southern Hemisphere basically, so I spent my time in an airplane for many, many years. Very fun. I had the opportunity to help open subsidiaries in many of these countries.

After that, I was promoted to be VP of something we call SPAR, south Pacific and Americas Regions, so kind of a weird region, it was all the Americas plus the South Pacific; Australia, New Zealand.

And after that I was promoted to be group VP of sales, marketing and services for the company. I stayed a few years on that and then the company acquired and got into the business of ERP, which is a business we were not in, and CRM.

Satya, at that time I remember was actually developing that business for the company and I came to basically help bring that company on board because we bought a company, Great Plains, out of Dakota, North Dakota. And then after that I spent a lot of my last years basically being an ambassador for Microsoft, a lot of dealings with governments. I championed something called the National Plan, which was the Microsoft business proposition around how a country can build up using technology and software, basically to provide that opportunity to all the citizens. So that was pretty much it.

Mario Juarez: Excellent. Beautiful overview. We'll cover all those bases here.

Orlando Ayala: Cool. All right.

Mario Juarez: Let's begin at the beginning though. Born in Colombia, tell me where you were born and what kind of a place it was?

Orlando Ayala: I was born in Bogota, Colombia, a place that today, unfortunately the country is a bit challenged, still continues to be a beautiful, great country. There I spent most of my years, my youth years, I graduated from high school. I wanted to be a pilot, I'm glad I didn't do that. Actually, I realized that dream later. But then after that I got into studying computer science and that's what I did and I graduated there.

Mario Juarez: I want to get that, but tell me about your childhood. Tell me about your family and where you fit in the family?

Orlando Ayala: Well, we are four boys and I'm the third, and my father basically in advertising for many years, my mother stayed home, but she was a real champion of us doing anything possible that we wanted to do. Both great individuals, learned a lot, especially the values which these days, they can be compromised very easily by people when they go after power and money.

So yeah, that was great. A happy childhood, I cannot complain.

Mario Juarez: How would you describe your family?

Orlando Ayala: Liberal, very much, I think really thinking about enabling others, helping others to get access. We were not rich by any means actually, you talk about getting some resources, we were just going by, basically, a lot of work by our parents.

But yeah, it was a family very focused on family, which I think is very good, despite that parents need to work, I think they were very present and again gave us great examples of how to think about life when the real trade-offs come, which, that's the time, that's the time you get tested. And certainly I was tested here at Microsoft more than once, I can tell you that.

Mario Juarez: What kind of boy were you?

Orlando Ayala: I was actually, and I continue to be, not very social, that's something that I would say humans get born with, either you're social or not very social and I continue to be that way. I had very few friends, I was just totally fine with that.

Always interested and curious about how things worked, so I always loved to get things apart and put them back together and things like that. I don't think that any of that was preventing me to still have some friends.

In those days there was no money for toys, so we invented our own toys, as brothers, using [inaudible 00:05:35], for instance, we created a whole Olympics kind of type of thing, baseball, and we imagined and created the rules and everything was done basically by us with our hands to create that illusion of... But very happy. Those things are really happy memories, I'm glad that we didn't have a lot because maybe we may have missed those opportunities.

Mario Juarez: It sounds like kind of a beautiful childhood, how would you describe it?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, no, I think so. I cannot say that there was trauma in my house or anything like that. And yeah, and I think that's very important. I was very busy in my professional life and you look back and sometimes you wonder, was I up to the job, to be there? Because these jobs today, they demand a lot from people.

Now it's better, I think after the pandemic, what happened is now people get to work at home and things like that. But in my times up to the end, I mean it was hours and hours away from home, that's what the job demanded.

So I go back to my childhood and sometimes it makes you wonder if those trade-offs were done properly. But what's done is done. I still have four beautiful kids and they're doing pretty well.

Mario Juarez: Fantastic. When you think about your childhood and then you think about the long arc of your career professionally, what was it that you inherited or had and gained as a child in terms of values and beliefs and bonds that carries you through?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, I would say a couple of things come to mind, which are very important, we can stay a long time talking about that.

Mario Juarez: Yeah, I'm very, very interested.

Orlando Ayala: I'll say a couple of things I would mention. I think hard work is a very important thing. Not giving up, and trying hard, and doing your best. I think it was something without being traumatizing, because I don't remember our parents hitting us or being mad at us because we had an F, and unfortunately many parents do that.

But I think hard work was something, at least I get obsessed at times, and spending time getting something right I think is important, and usually it doesn't come on the first pass. So you have to be resilient, you have to work hard, you have to look beyond and see what is not obvious, which is not easy. Seeing what is obvious is very easy, but you have to think beyond what you see in front of you. So that was a very important part.

The other one was the value of money. I think my father specifically was an incredibly generous person with others. I still remember when I was very little, we used to go and get these pastries, which are very Colombian, it's called Pandebono and it's delicious, like a cheesecake or something, and I used to go with my father to buy some of that stuff a block away. And I remember he bought for us the thing and he came home and I still remember that, and on the way back he used to see dogs on the street and we sat down right

there and give them a little bit of this bread to the dogs that were kind of hungry out there and things like that. Small things.

But you see it's like a key to start seeing these things and just extrapolate that to bigger things. So generosity was also something that was very important. And I would say some money was there, as a vehicle to enable things for you, but that shouldn't be the center of what ultimately you do.

And then the last one is, as I mentioned before, you will get confronted with very hard, tough decisions where you have to ask yourself if your values are going to be compromised. And I think politics today probably shows how easily that's done by most people, of just negotiating values and give it a price, and that's okay for many people.

Our parents were very, very tough on that, on there are certain things we just don't do, and I think that was very, very extremely valuable.

I would say, I will summarize that of being able to stand up to power. It's easy to go down and be challenging people down you, but it's a lot tougher and I have seen very few people being good at challenging up the org chart, and that was something that I feel very proud of that I've done in my life, even if that means that I have to give up what I have.

Mario Juarez: That's rooted in values that your parents instilled in you?

Orlando Ayala: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. In fact, I go back to politics and I don't want to get into politics, but it is pretty disgusting, it's pretty disgusting how very educated people, when things come to basically the greater good and it's so obvious that some of these things are happening, they just put on blinders, it's all about, "Am I going to keep my job?"

That what matters to the majority of humans, unfortunately.

Mario Juarez: Just as a personal note, I'm so happy to have this conversation with you. As somebody who was in Microsoft and communications in all these years, I always knew your reputation, and you had this reputation of a variety of factors that I would sum up in the word integrity. And I'm so delighted that I'm talking to you now to get a sense of what that actually meant and where that was grounded.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, no, no, that's why I think a society that enables a livelihood that permits to parents to spend time with kids in a more purposeful way, I think it's very important. It comes right there, you don't catch it up later. It's very hard to catch it up later. I'm not saying that you give up later, but I would say that's rooted very early in your life.

Either you are or you're not. And I always say, you can lie to anybody, you can lie to your family, when you wake up in the morning and look at that person in front of that mirror, that one you don't fool. And I think that's the thing that people sometimes don't remember.

Mario Juarez: Beautiful. That's fantastic. What kind of student were you?

Orlando Ayala: Average?

Mario Juarez: You were an average student?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, yeah. I don't necessarily correlate a great student with great outcomes in life. I'm not saying we did that, education is extremely important. In fact, our parents made a lot of sacrifices on ensuring that they get us at least up to ending high school. Then after that, I worked during the day, got my college degree at night, there was no other option. It was basically sometimes a twenty-hour day and that was what it was.

Mario Juarez: So you were working in the day to just earn a wage?

- Orlando Ayala: Yes.
- Mario Juarez: And then at night going to university.
- Orlando Ayala: University, yeah.
- Mario Juarez: How long?
- Orlando Ayala: That was four years.
- Mario Juarez: Four years.
- Orlando Ayala: Of doing that, yeah.
- Mario Juarez: I see where the work ethic came from.
- Orlando Ayala: Yeah. Well unfortunately these days there is so much surplus in a portion of the population that kids have it too easy in my view. I'm not saying you should be just not giving your kids what you think you can give, but in our case it was about creativity. You don't have it? You figure it out, and I think that's a huge thing for you to learn skills and do better, so definitely, that was it.
- Mario Juarez: Awesome. So you get your degree and...
- Orlando Ayala: In fact, I got my degree and I was working and trying to save because the good thing is I got a good job, a relatively good job.
- Mario Juarez: What was your job?
- Orlando Ayala: Initially it was coding in the sports institute of the country and I had a little-
- Mario Juarez: So you had a degree in... Tell me about your degree?
- Orlando Ayala: No, I was doing my degree, but let me tell you where that came, the interest for computers because I think that's a cool story.



We used to buy these little cyclists, they were actual plastic, and we used to paint them with mom's nail polish, the shirts and we'd just paint them of different colors and we just created basically the tour of France and we ran and every brother has a team and all of that. And always at the end we had a method to calculate time because of course you have to ensure that you calculate time to see who is first, and I was the one in charge of calculating that time most of the time. So I was always dreaming, I was dreaming always about finding some sort of way to automate that, so I think that was the very early times when I got interested in computers.

And later in life when I went, it was great because I got one of those Casio calculators that were programmable and I sat down, learned the manual, and then with that I created basically a program, which was very interesting, I looked at it a few days ago, it was really, really the early days. And I was able to calculate a lot of the extra hours that the institute needed to pay to people that were working beyond eight hours and they had a backlog of paying those people that didn't know how to do it.

And so I automated that thing in that little calculator and that gave me kind of the platform to do better and better. So I was able to pay my college, which was just not as expensive, I didn't graduate from the best college in Columbia, so it was not like these days where you have to pay per semester 30 or \$40,000 and things like that.

But then yeah at the same time I was trying to save a little bit and then when I just finished that, I stayed one more year and I saved a little bit of money, at the end of my career I was hired by an American company, that's why I'm here. NCR, called by people in the old days National Cash Register. And I did very well with them. And three years after I was hired by them, I was basically transferred to the US in 1985.

Mario Juarez:

Dayton, Ohio?

Orlando Ayala: Dayton, Ohio, that was the first place we landed. And it was shocking, although it was a life-changing thing for us. We had just one of our kids, we loved it. It was the very earliest I still remember my salary, which I think was amazing. Now I look at it and say, "Well, I came here for a lot less money..."

But anyway, it was very good. And yeah, it was 1985. But I was saying, before I said that I wanted to work with that company, I managed to start my flying lessons in Columbia, but then I ran out of money and then I needed to go and do more work, and then that's when I definitely... Because it was very hard. I just really wanted that job. And I remember I went to that company, it was kind of a part-time job, and I said, hey, hire me as a permanent employee. Give me three or four months, I entered into sales with them, and in four months if I've not given you results, I'll give you back what you have paid me.

That was basically my bet to get them convinced, they saw I was hungry. And sure enough, I did very well in the first three months and I closed the deal. And again, that deal connects me back to my parents' values story.

And it is amazing because that deal opened everything for me.

Mario Juarez: One big deal at NCR.

Orlando Ayala: One big deal. Well, this was a guy that showed up at the reception of NCR in Bogota Colombia, and he was just like a guy with... Did you look at him? And he said, this guy came from the street and he didn't look too... Like a farmer type.

In Colombia, unfortunately, and I don't know if maybe in the US it's not as hard, but in Colombia you see somebody like that and immediate people default to all these prototypes... All these ways to think about people.

And sure enough the very experienced sales people saw the guy that said, "I need to see someone here to help me with some computer capability."

And all those experienced sales people said, "Just give it to that guy that just came in."

And the story is true enough, they gave it to me and I was able to really understand where the guy was. He was one of the largest producers of coffee in Colombia. And just because of the way he looked, basically all these people ignored him, they were like pfft...

And basically I was able to go to where he was in a different city and I was just blown away. The guy had a full operation, he produced coffee, he exported coffee to Venezuela, and I worked with them for a couple of months and I got one of the largest orders from him, when nobody basically paid attention to the guy.

And an example that you should not basically measure people by how they look, where they come from or what they do, because very often you will be surprised. So that's the story on that.

Mario Juarez: Awesome. How did you end up crossing paths with the Microsoft Corporation? Tell me the story about how that very unlikely development happened.

Orlando Ayala: No, and it's incredible unlikely, on this I'm going to give actually a lot of credit to my wife. I was doing very well when I crossed paths with Microsoft. I started, as I told you, with that big deal. Three years after, then they gave me the opportunity to go to the headquarters and I was moved to be product manager of the Unix systems, that I started to show up in the industry at that time.

Mario Juarez: This is still at NCR?

Orlando Ayala: I was still at NCR. I spent 10 years with NCR, from 81 to 91. And when I finished my three years as an expat, which was already a

pretty good thing, I was sent to be the sales director of Microsoft, Mexico. Microsoft Mexico. And I went to Microsoft, Mexico. I was doing very well there.

Mario Juarez: So you were hired by Microsoft?

Orlando Ayala: No, no, no, no.

Mario Juarez: So you were with-

Orlando Ayala: With NCR. I was transferred from Ohio.

Mario Juarez: Oh, so they were your client?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, I was transferred from Ohio to Mexico by NCR to be sales director. And being there, I was doing quite well, I was about to be transferred back as an assistant VP, which was already a big step, it's right before VP in NCR. And to me it was like, this is so sudden.

I went to vacation and then when I came back in December, when I came back early January, I saw a couple of calls and "Hey, this person called."

And I called back and it was this headhunter, "Hey, we have this opportunity, would you be interested?"

Which was basically to be the GM of the first subsidiary, because it was a very tiny thing of Microsoft in Mexico. So I returned the call and I don't even know why, but I returned the call, and it was this guy, Mike Kramer, that was not from the headhunter, but he worked for NCR, worked for Microsoft already.

But the headhunter was the one that actually approached me and I went and I talked to him and Microsoft was not really well known at that time. So here it was NCR, a very well established company, multi-billion dollar, larger than Microsoft at that time.

I was kind of in my ascending career with the company and there's this other opportunity here and I said, okay. I listened to it and they said, okay, if you're interested, you have to go to a place called Redmond in Washington.

And I told my wife, what if I go there? And then they sent me a brochure and my wife saw that brochure and said, you have to go. That was the original, you remember the original Microsoft brochure? Very glossy with all this campus thing and it was really attractive. And my wife said, you have to go.

I said, but how do I tell these guys I'm going to go back?

And she said, "Go on. Look."

I was very logical, I said, okay, these people have done a lot for me and all that.

I was not really super happy at that time in the sense that the company was top down, very structured, a hundred-year-old company. Anyway, it was very structured, I was very eager to do different things and sometimes I was told no.

So my wife kind of read on the fact that I was not really super happy. So she was like, go and look.

And surely enough I come here, maybe you guys are going to interview Kathy, Kathy Weisfield, I don't know if you know Kathy? But Kathy was with Bill and other people, but she was the recruiter at that time. And I was coming to interview to be the general manager in Mexico, and then I go and stop at the reception, like today, and I-

Mario Juarez: Just set the scene for me here.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, I fly from Mexico here, Microsoft pays for my flight. I come for my interview with Kathy and I walk nine o'clock, I think it was

building eight. I sit in the reception and I saw a book in front of the reception and I opened the book and I started looking like that.

And I see another job that's called, "Microsoft is hiring for a regional director of Latin America."

And I said, I don't want to be in Mexico, that's the job I want.

So I came to interview with Chris Smith, I don't know if you remember Chris, old guy, but very, very nice. I'm old too, so I'm not saying it in a bad way, but he was very experienced, I would say Chris was probably more than 60 at that time. And I came and I started to turn the interview around what I really wanted. And after 20 minutes I gave him all my background, I had managed P&Ls and NCR and I've done all this stuff.

It was 10 minutes, and he stops the interview. I said, "Well, it looks that didn't go too well..."

He goes out and calls Kathy Weisfield and he was irritated, I didn't know why, I've just seen through the... And he comes back and said, "We're changing your interview lineup, the people who were going to interview you are not going to interview you anymore."

So it's a different type of people. He saw the opportunity for me to be that regional director. So that's, when I say in the values, try to see what is not obvious, be practical, look at things. If I don't open that book and I don't see that job listed that would have never happened.

And effectively, I think the interview went very well, I got a lot of interviews still, Frank Gaudette, who was amazing, was a very senior CFO for the company at that time, he actually helped bring the company to be public.

So unfortunately he died sadly too young, a few years after that. And at the end of that day, Kathy said, "Okay, here's your offer."

And it was to get on that job to be the Latin America director, the first Latin American director, because Latin America didn't exist. That was my first job.

Mario Juarez: Wow. Great story. Fantastic story. So tell me us what your first job was like, give me an overview of what was it that you encountered? What was the challenge?

Orlando Ayala: Well, before that, the first thing is I was almost on drugs, I mean, how high I was with the excitement, literally not on drugs, but I'm just saying the feeling was of excitement, huge excitement for the opportunity. Everything was to be done. I still remember the first meetings in a place like Argentina to open the subsidiary over there.

The meeting was in the main square of the city. It was not even an office, so I was sitting there with a couple of people trying to do things. So it was amazing, it was a pure business development, nothing was basically done.

At that time, by the way, I have to say that I took a very severe pay cut. I still remember I was making 125,000, for that time it was good money with NCR, and I think the pay cut, what they offered me was 75,000.

And I told them, you've got to be kidding me, I cannot take a pay cut of that?

And they told me, "Well, it's that and it's 10,000 shares of Microsoft."

And then when I went back, there was a guy in NCR that I respected a lot, he said, "I hate that you're leaving but it'll be dumb if you don't take it."

That's what he told me. And he was right, totally right. So I took a pay cut and it was a bet. But then I spent my first five years just opening subsidiaries around the world, naming new general

managers, training people, coming back here, getting the corporation aware of the markets down there. At that time, I don't think the region was selling more than \$10 million, and it was sell through boxes from here, they shipped here to some distributors over there. So part of my job was actually to create the ecosystem to sell in a good structured way with Microsoft.

The problem with many of these places was Microsoft couldn't have people there, so they named an exclusive distributor in every place. The first thing was trying to untangle that because we never did one distributor, you needed multiple distributors, competition, market gets bigger. That was the first thing. And many of those were very painful. Some of those distributors sued us because they wanted to continue to be exclusive and things like that, so a lot of great business development, hiring new people. And we assembled a very amazing team that was so connected and they were doing working like crazy and trying to get the company, we took the company basically from 10 million to a hundred million in three years as a group. Yeah.

Mario Juarez: Wow. And you had this remarkable opportunity... Tell me if I'm overstating this and put it in your own words, but to fundamentally bring the personal computing revolution to a whole region, to a whole culture. Is that true? If that's not true then state that for me.

Orlando Ayala: Well, it was not only-

Mario Juarez: Give me a a complete statement.

Orlando Ayala: It is really the magic of Microsoft at that time. Just remembering the 1995 Windows 95 launch just still gives me goosebumps because it was so amazing, not only because there was a lot of interest for it, but just bringing that capability way down into society. There's nothing that was more intoxicating than being in the middle of that mission as a company.



Mario Juarez: Can you describe what the business and technology culture of these first places that you were focused on, give me a description of that.

Orlando Ayala: Well, we have to remember that the personal computer, and I think Windows really didn't exist when I joined, there were beta versions, but it was really MS-DOS. And the first big launch I was in was Microsoft DOS 5.0.

So we have to remember that most of the computing were these big, very costly machines sitting in cold places, and this idea that you can basically in your desktop can have this thing, that can do these amazing things was like unheard of.

So no, I mean it was very rigid, very expensive. All those systems that I used to sell in Microsoft called mini Computers, that term existed. PCs didn't exist except it were called mini computers, those Unix systems, which by the way was one of the waves that a company like Digital and NCR missed at that time, \$70,000 entry point, which was crazy.

And many companies paid for it. Like that guy that I met at that reception place, that was a deal of \$300,000 at that time. That's why they said, "You don't need to work the rest of the year, we trained you for six weeks in Ohio."

So anyway, it was basically the minicomputer time, and it was very revolutionary at that time too, this UNIX thing was important because of course they were competing against mainframes, which cost millions of dollars, one of those.

So yeah, that was mostly it. There was not really a very large ecosystem of people selling this because I'll tell you, the biggest magic Microsoft did for many years and continued to do is that for every dollar that Microsoft sells is a multiplier of 50, 60, 70 downstream on the ecosystem.

That's magic that Microsoft has been responsible for millions and millions of jobs, enabling of jobs in the planet, and that's a fact. So that was very exciting. I was just seeing this magic of us being able to bring that power not only of the computer, but power of doing business in a more effective way that benefited a lot of people from end users to the whole ecosystem of resellers and distributors, that was just amazing.

Mario Juarez: In this first phase of your career, you give Microsoft a foothold and begin to establish the company in markets-

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, that didn't exist.

Mario Juarez: That had not really ever seen it. I'm interested in, one aspect that we talk about in all these interviews is the culture of the company.

Orlando Ayala: Yes.

Mario Juarez: In the early days, what kind of place was it? What did it look like? What did it feel like? We've gotten a lot of perspectives of folks who were here inside the mothership. What was it like for you being out in the field... Give us a picture, paint some pictures for us of what it was like and what were any great moments that you experienced?

Orlando Ayala: Well, yeah, there are many stories about this. The first thing was this capability to think that you can do anything, it's that simple.

Despite that, Bill, and Steve and others were super hardcore on business results, they were also amazing on not letting people get tangled into bureaucracy and layers and layers of management. And I think that was absolutely visionary, doing that and enabling people in the field that way, which allowed them to do many, many things.

And that's clearly the major reason why I think the company grew so fast. I lost track a little bit, but last time when I left Latin America

was approaching 8 billion. So if you look back and say, okay, from 10 million to eight billion, I feel pretty good about that.

But it was that, it's because it was this spirit of entrepreneurship of enabling people to do things. Here, the mothership was a little bit more structured and very centered on the developers, business development people were in a different rank, but we had a ball.

It was just an amazing time where you could do a lot of things, I still remember the way they made sure they spend on marketing was 10% of revenue, and that was like, wow. And then you have a lot of flexibility on, usually that money was spent in a very wise, the GMs, the general managers in these places were very conscious that every dollar mattered. Now, with time, that changed. But you're asking me about the early times. So it was pretty amazing.

Mario Juarez: What was the coolest moment? Give me a cool moment.

Orlando Ayala: A cool moment I would say was... In the region when I was in Latin America?

Mario Juarez: Yeah, and that was the early phase.

Orlando Ayala: One of the coolest moments was having the front page of the largest newspaper in Colombia announcing the presence of the company in my country, with Bill Gates at the center, and people going crazy about that.

And then being able to get Bill to call into the room with 300 people, nine o'clock, and lots of lights, Bill calling and say, "Hey, Orlando, I'm here. Glad to be able to be here."

People went crazy. So that was like, oh wow, we really got our gold medal at that point in time. It was pretty amazing. That was very amazing.

And there were other things like it was cool and strange in a way because there was a time where these places were actually dangerous, you could get...

And I used to carry a letter written by Bill. I still have that letter that says, "This is Orlando Ayala and he works for Microsoft..."

And blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

And when we're opening the subsidiary in Argentina, Eugenio Beaufrand, maybe you guys are interviewing, I don't know, you're interviewing Eugenio. He was later GM of many other places.

I was not planning to go to Argentina, but I was in Chile and he said, "Hey, I'm about to hire the Services Manager, why you didn't take the tour, come and interview."

Because at that time all direct reports to the GMs I needed to interview, just to be sure that we... And I said, okay. I just spend another day.

And then I just changed a little bit on my flight, getting to Buenos Aires that night, come the day after, going to see people, the interview happened and I'm sitting with Eugenio, 2:30 PM, I still remember, in his office, when there's a huge blast in front of the building. The whole thing just broke windows and stuff like that. And it was when the Israeli embassy was bombed in Buenos Aires, and that was, wow, right?

It was like, "Oh, what the heck happened?"

I said, okay, I'm leaving after we interview this person.

I go to the airport that night, seven o'clock, and then they just go and pass immigration. The passport guy stamps the thing. I go and sit in the American Airlines lounge, and then 45 minutes before the

airplane left, two guys with dark glasses come in and said, "We need to talk to you."

I was like, okay. I didn't have a clue why that was happening. They took me to a different room and they said, "Hey, we noticed that you entered this morning and you're leaving tonight, so why you did that?"

The bombing had happened, it was a terrorist attack in the city. I said, "Listen..."

I explained what happened. And they said, "But really, you guys do things this way that you come in and leave the same day? And this is very strange."

And I said, "Listen, I've already explained it to you, but if this helps in any way, here's a letter that you can read."

It was Bill's letter, and that bailed me out.

It was an amazing thing. They delayed the airplane for 30 minutes, and I just walking into that airplane, people just shouting at me that I was delaying the airplane. I said, it's not my fault, these guy went out to arrest me and so anyways, that was a wild place and I still remember those things and we laugh about it.

Mario Juarez: That's like a movie moment. It's like a James Bond moment.

Orlando Ayala: It is totally a movie moment. Anyway, at a time when it happened, I said, oh, how do I convince these guys I have nothing to do with that thing?

So anyway.

Mario Juarez: Wow. Wow. Well, let's walk through the rest of your career. I feel like we could just spend so much time on every aspect of this, but I

want to move along. You established basically the whole Southern Hemisphere process?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, Latin America at the beginning.

Mario Juarez: Of the... Yeah-

Orlando Ayala: So, the result of that basically is when Bill and Steve called me and said, "Listen, we need you to help us develop all these other countries."

And that, of course included basically all the continents, all the southern part of, and that's when we opened a lot of subsidiaries in those places,

Mario Juarez: Including India. Tell me about India.

Orlando Ayala: India was already opened, but in the very early stages, but I was actually there many times, and back here recommended us to have a presence in development there. So I'm sure other people also did that with Bill, but there was a lot of intelligence coming back here on the need to us having a development center, an R&D center, in places like that.

So yeah, I opened several of those that didn't exist at that time, and others were already in place, but it was the same formula. We had a very well-established formula on how to make business. And of course that grew very, very amazingly at a very fast pace too.

Mario Juarez: Talk about the latter part of your career.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, well, the latter part of my career has to get connected with an incident that happened. Basically at that time we have the SLT, the Senior Leadership Team. It was Bill, Steve, Craig Mundie, Jeff Raikes, Jim Allchin, I mean, all those guys, we were all part of the same team, and I was running worldwide sales. I was part of fronting customers at the time the company got in trouble.

When this whole thing happened with the DOJ and we were sued and it was very terrible. I think Bill was criticized unfairly of many things at the same time, I was the one fronting every day the wrath of customers. That was the time where products like Windows Vista came all buggy and blue screens and all that stuff. I mean, it was horrible. I was in charge of basically all the subsidiaries in the world, and I was going out there and I was meeting with government officials. I was meeting with CEOs and CFOs and it was horrible. And I came back here and I don't think people really knew that, people were not paying attention to that.

So every year we used to do a retreat in Semiahmoo, and in that retreat, the agenda usually was Bill presented the vision, the technical vision of the company. Steve spoke as a CEO of things, and then it was the sales guy that was me, that used to stand up and explain, okay, here's how we're doing, this is what's happening, this is how much how we're growing, all the sales, all the field stuff, and it used to be an hour.

And I was so mortified with what was happening because I don't think the company was listening really at that time. The night before my presentation that night in 2003, I think it was, I told my wife, I may be fired tomorrow because I'm going to stand up and I'm going to call it for what it is in front of basically the top 125 VPs of this company, including Bill and Steve.

The whole meeting started, and then Bill and then Steve, and then I stand up and my speech basically lasted 20 minutes, but I put it all out. I said, we just don't get it. I think we're being irresponsible on how we are really listening to customers. I think we continue to bring buggy products to market.

And of course that was pretty intense, because nobody expected that thing at that time. And I got a little bit emotional, saying, listen, I'm out there every day trying to do my best for the company, but we have to do better. We have to listen. There were times where I

think we were very arrogant in front of the press, in front of judges, and in of some of these things, we used to go to some of these sessions and say, you don't have to tell me what to put in windows. I can put lettuce and ham in windows if I want to, and things like that, which you look at that, a customer looks at that and arrogance will never be a good thing.

So sure enough, what happened, I finished, and when I finished there was a big applause from a lot of people. So basically we opened up what was contained, on what a lot of people was thinking, but we're not saying it.

And then the session ended. Bill was not happy with me that's for sure. He came and gave me one of his explicit... And by the way, I more than ever respect Bill today because he has made a transformation of himself, which is pretty amazing. But he was like, "Why the fuck did you talk about the company that way? We're not bad people."

And I said, I'm not saying we're bad people. I'm saying we're not listening, and thank you, I'm leaving.

And I started walking out and then Steve Ballmer jumped in, said, "Wait, let's calm ourselves."

So there was a break, and then when the break happened, Steve Ballmer came back and he changed the whole agenda for the next three days.

And that's how the whole theme of the company eventually turned into realizing potential. Very focused on people, very focused on how we have to think communities and people and others, on the benefits of what we do, more than just making money and making profit.



And from that, I think the company, I have to give a lot of credit both to Bill and Steve, if I would have done that in NCR or IBM, I would have been fired.

But the fact that these guys were great leaders just standing up to the challenge, taking action. We spent billions of dollars for several years on this campaign. I think you still remember it, these kids that suddenly they turn into astronauts or something else.

It was about realizing people's potential. So at that time, it started to go and saying, you know what, this me going out there, I did that for too long.

A lot of people was like, what? Are you going to leave this job that is-

Mario Juarez: So before we go there, I just want to dwell on this moment, and I'm trying to imagine what was your role? What was your title at that time?

Orlando Ayala: Group Vice president.

Mario Juarez: Group Vice president.

Orlando Ayala: Group Vice President.

Mario Juarez: You run the SLT?

Orlando Ayala: Sales managers... Yeah, I'm in the SLT.

Mario Juarez: You basically were willing to blow up your whole career?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah.

Mario Juarez: Tell me about that.

Orlando Ayala: No, no. I told my wife, tomorrow I may not have a job, but I cannot live with this, if I go back to my father and my mother, can you look

at yourself in the mirror every morning. Are you able to basically walk out and feel good about yourself? If you don't, then the rest doesn't matter.

Mario Juarez: But you're walking away from power and money-

Orlando Ayala: A lot of money.

Mario Juarez: At a level most people could never dream of.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, exactly. But I was willing to, and I think it was recognized that I was willing to do that, and I was ready to leave.

In fact, at the beginning with the reaction from Bill was that way, I was just walking out, I said, I don't have to take this thing from you. I already said what I said, I'm leaving.

I started taking my things and going out. That was the first day of three days. But then again, Ballmer came in, and then as I said, I give a lot of credit to these guys. I mean, these people were and are amazing leaders that step up to having the courage to listen, even though at the beginning it was shocking, right?

And Bill came back the day after at breakfast and said, listen, I heard what you said and it hurt, but tell me more. I want to know more.

I mean, that's amazing, right?

And you can tell what Bill is today, this amazing person giving these amazing contributions, I'm not talking about money. I'm talking about what he does every day, which just shows the evolution. So yeah, I was ready to quit.

Mario Juarez: That's wild.

Orlando Ayala: And a year later, I came back and said, I don't want to do this anymore.

I would like to dedicate the rest of my time on trying to take the company portfolio, turning it into value, not for Ford and Boeing and all these people, but to cities and governments.

And that's how I spend my time. I spend my time, a lot of my time engaging a lot of public officials in being basically a promoter of how technology can enable society and how they should invest things in like digital cities and all of that. I came up with an idea of the company proposing a national plan on technology. So every country was tasked to, okay, sit down. I don't want you to just be focused on doing your quota this month.

I want you to sit down, look at what you have in your country, the uniqueness of your country, and put together a document, in partnership with the government that gets presented to society as an agenda to enable better society itself.

That's how we made a lot of progress. And as I said, we're able to turn around and what we are right now, it's just amazing. I don't think there's any other reference in the history of technology where a company has been able to sell effectively through waves, through major waves of technology. And this company is doing that right now.

Mario Juarez: What was it that you were seeing? What did you see? There's a lot of smart people in the company and many people that were thinking in terms of trustworthy computing was a big thing.

Orlando Ayala: I remember that. All that was part of it of why people were unhappy.

Mario Juarez: What were you seeing that informed this vision? Tell me about how you, at that point in your life were viewing the state of the market, and the actual meaning of technology?

Orlando Ayala: Well, it was listening to people. I said, listen, I'm getting fired for being a CTO, or the guy that drives technology or the guy that drives technology in a company, and not seeing the benefits, right?

You have to have a scorecard. I remember one of the actions that Steve Ballmer took that was very, very important after that incident and all that happened is that he moved the scorecard with a very large percentage of how we get paid, came against customer feedback. That was unprecedented, and that was a very important step that Steve, I'm sure with Bill's agreement moved the compensation of people on a heavy, heavy weight on this area.

So it's all listening. You have to listen. People tend to just sit there and think that they know everything. That's the worst disease in humans, the worst disease. Listen, are you really listening? So that's what happened.

I was in front of the fire. I was sick and tired of being called an arrogant money-focused type of guy, that the rest didn't matter. I just got tired of that. I was never chasing a title, that never really attracted me. It was about the meaning of the job. And in that sense, it was very easy to make the transition.

And yeah, I took a little bit of a downgrade, but I was happy and I was doing things that every day gave me satisfaction and made me even more passionate. I spent a lot of my time engaging and bringing feedback back. And the good thing is a lot of the sales and marketing people in the field started to do the same. We trained the people that way. And I think some of that work actually was adopted after I left by Jean-Philippe. And anyway, that has been, and I think Brad Smith was another one that was very supportive on doing those things.

Mario Juarez: It always felt to me in watching it, that you were seeing meaning in technology in a different way. Tell me about the meaning of technology and how that informed what was driving you in those latter stages of your career?

Orlando Ayala: When you go to remote places and you see kids getting sustained access to something like a computer and the internet, and you see what they do, the presentations they do, because we used to do that sitting just in a classroom, letting them just roll. You sit there and says, we have to do better. This has to get to every single person... Food and shelter, all important for a human to survive. But the amount of potential being wasted because people don't get education enabled by things like this is tremendous.

Part of the biggest problems we have in the world is there is still a huge divide between the haves and have-nots. And in that sense, that's what it's, you just got to go there, feel it. That's why I think people like Melinda, Melinda French, or Gates and Bill and others do when they go to these places and see the people and see what's going on.

See that actually the intervention is providing outcomes, that you can say, if this gets to a scale, it can really change the world. And that's what it is.

So I don't know. I'm not anymore in the company, and I don't understand exactly how the culture has evolved. Actually, Satya has done an amazing job in keeping some of those themes alive and very up there. But I'll say that's what the company needs to continue to do is never forget, go back to basics on understanding people, what they do and how technology can enable them. So that's why this AI stuff is pretty amazing. And again, as I said, I think Microsoft is the only company that so far has been able to ride the two waves despite this big challenge that we had a few years ago.

Mario Juarez: One of the things that we talk about in all these interviews is impact, the impact of the company. For those closer to the mothership, often this is about the mechanics of the technology and how all these innovations at a technical level happened. Listening to you talk, I'm also thinking about impact on a broader scale as a company, part of it is giving and philanthropy.

Orlando Ayala: Yes.

Mario Juarez: Talk to me a little bit about what your view of that is. You were taught as a young person to give back, how did that carry over into your work? What did you see in the culture that reflected that? Talk to me about giving.

Orlando Ayala: Well, again, I cannot divorce the giving from what I did in my last years with the company because it was about giving my time and as much as I could, to try to generate the infrastructure for people to use technology to do better for themselves and others.

Of course, we all participated in the giving campaigns of the company, but to me that's a more premeditated and well-defined way of doing it. You get the money, the United Way and all that stuff, and that's all good and can be got to do very good things, but if you really want to scale, I still remember something I heard Bill say one day, and it still sticks to me in everything I do, or I try to do that is new. And he used to say, "I don't understand anything that I don't multiply by a billion."

But he was not referring to money, he was referring to the transformation impact of ecosystems of a scale. Everything they can do on a scale is the only thing that, that's why I think he has been very focused in terms of the vaccines thing.

It's not about just one country and one city, it's how can you, if you're God, and you want to get rid of something that is really killing humans, you have to think of having in your head a model to

map ways to go to scale. And there's no way to go to scale by doing it with a single human. You have to create ecosystems. You have to basically ensure that everything permeates downstream to a big ecosystem that can enable all this capability. So I tend not to, I like philanthropy and that's all fine, but I would say businesses should not say, this is kind of philanthropy and this is what I do, which is just selling things.

I think that's wrong. You have to think what your mainstream does, still making money, what's really the veneer that is not fake, that allows you to do "philanthropy" that benefits millions and millions and millions of people. That's what will solve very big problems, because I just think with the pure direct philanthropy, I don't think you fix really at the scale you need to do to be able to... That's why I really think Microsoft is in a position to do amazing things because I think this AI stuff, truly, I mean you don't in a responsible way, could take things to the next level of what the regional vision was of a computer on every desk and in every home. And that's where I think the company is right now.

Mario Juarez: Thank you for that. This is just a fully beautiful statement, and I'm struck by the notion of making sure that you don't just segment your innovation from your philanthropy. And I feel like that's kind of a legacy of yours was maybe we were one of the really first people at a very senior level to say, we need to change how we work so that we are thinking differently about it. Is that a true statement? Tell me more of that.

Orlando Ayala: Well that would be too pretentious to say that I was the only one, certainly I put it in the center of my own ways of feeling good about myself.

Now, some people picked up that ball quicker than others, but I would say it was really the offer of the company to drive towards that. There was other people that were there. I think people like Brad Smith is a guy that you don't need to explain any of this stuff

to him and others. And I think even the R&D guys, many of them call and say, okay, I want to know more. How can I just drive more products that do this stuff that really gets me excited?

So it's all about the infectious capability, to create that infectious capability in a positive way so every parts of the company get permeated around this idea of use our products to do better for people. And to me, there is no more powerful way of philanthropy than that one.

Mario Juarez: That is fantastic. And I'm also struck at the way that you talk, the way that you characterize the company, you're very gracious, and I think... The phone is buzzing. Okay, I want to make sure that if you need to get it, you can get it.

Orlando Ayala: No, it's fine.

Mario Juarez: Boy, my memory of Microsoft in the nineties was it was pretty rough place, not everybody shared this notion of ethics and treatment of people.

And we could go... You know what I'm talking about? How did you not just survive, but thrive in a culture where there were no guardrails, not a lot of boundaries.

Orlando Ayala: Well, I have to confess that I was one of those very take no prisoners type of person, I was known by, I did things that... I mean, you look back and were not good.

Things like going to a review meeting with a general manager that made a loud presentation and firing that person on the spot in front of all the team, get out of there and just go.

Bad. There's ways to do things, but that characterized the fact that in many ways, having no guardrails is also a problem. And many of these meetings were nasty and people were abused and things like that. But it was not until I was able to engage a lot of our



constituencies at scale, customers, partners, when I realized this is fundamentally wrong. This company has to move to a different place or we will not survive. It won't survive. And many of the things had happened actually had happened in a very interesting way.

I think the transition from Steve to Satya is an amazing story in which Steve, he did incredible contributions to the company, but we all have a time. And as my time was over for certain things, his was over in others.

And then a new leader comes and can do good things or could be screwing up things even more. So it was that, it was being confronted with reality and not hiding from reality that really enables you to see this stuff and stand up to power.

When power is not listening, that's not easy to do at all.

Look at the politics today.

Mario Juarez: Most people can't do it.

Orlando Ayala: Well, they are too into, "Oh, my title is this and I'm not going to have that title anymore. Or All my stock now is going to cut by 20% because my grant is not going to be as big..."

Is that worth it? Feeling that you put a price to everything?

No, I mean, at least I cannot do that. And I think part of the sickness of society today happens because many of these people don't have the courage and the capability, and they're too tied to their title and their politics and everything, and they just go and basically ignore themselves.

So the situation is hard right now, and we need some time at the right place and at the right time, some disruptive people that do it the proper way, without burning down everything.

Mario Juarez: Let's look forward in a moment. But wrapping up looking back, I want to talk about legacy. I want to talk first about what do you hope your legacy at the company was? Give me a statement that says When I think about my legacy, or something like that, set that up.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah. When I think about legacy, I think it's very simple and I would characterize it like this, every single baby in the first minute that baby is born is born with huge amount of potential, and the question is, are we going to realize it or not? It's that simple.

And I hope a lot of what we have done throughout the years, not only me, but many of the contributions made by many people continue to have companies like this, thinking that way first and foremost before the profit, which needs to happen and it could happen, is thinking about how that potential gets realized.

But for both, and especially for women, which we all know are still far away from getting the same opportunities we do. So that would be what I hope, that's the legacy.

Mario Juarez: You feel like you made a dent?

Orlando Ayala: Well it's never enough, but I think you can create the first few steps of the sustained walk on that path, yeah, I think it needed a shock at a certain point in time, which somebody characterized me as being a Taliban move, that throwing a bomb, which is the way people characterized that session in 2003 in Semiahmoo.

And I don't know if that was the right way or not the right way, but looking back I think that helped getting the company to understand that we are able to do better focusing on people and its potential.

Mario Juarez: How do you gauge the legacy of Microsoft?

Orlando Ayala: Well, yeah, the legacy of what we have done and then moving forward because I think those are connected for sure, and it is

basically not too distant from what I just said. This is the first company that has been able to bring computing to the masses. Yeah, others help too, the Intels, and all those guys.

But I would say the personal computer continued to be a very amazing thing in different forms now, but continues to be an amazing vision. That's a huge legacy that started with Bill thinking about it and they came all the way to all these people that came together, and many of us that had the benefit to work on that.

So that legacy as a principle now in different forms, in different scenarios is by far the largest legacy, which downstream generated opportunity for millions and millions and millions of people around the world; monetarily opportunity, but most of all being able to realize their capabilities.

So that's for sure. And moving forward, well we all know this AI story is a pretty fascinating one.

I track the company very closely because by the way, I still own 90% of the stock this company gave me, so I'm glad I didn't do anything with it, so I feel pretty good now.

Mario Juarez: There's a lesson in that, isn't there?

Orlando Ayala: It's a total lesson on that. Always The long term is going to be more important than the short term in my view, and that's how Microsoft has to conduct business or continue to conduct business. Think 10 years out and do the right things now, especially with this AI and responsible AI, we know all the dangers and crevasses you can fall in if that's done not properly.

But I see the story out there by people like Satya and Brad and others taking an active role on ensuring the definition of the next wave to be very positive and truly impactful on realizing the potential of people.

So in some way that legacy shouldn't change because it's all about that, it's all about making people better... Helping people, not making them better, helping people do better.

Mario Juarez: When you look at the hard-earned lessons of the company, boy, and you were there for so many of them. How does the legacy of those lessons inform what the company is doing today with AI, and how you feel about it?

Talk to me about what is essentially Microsoft, and has been gained over time that you think differentiates the company?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, there's two angles, which one, is very straightforward, and it's the fact that you have to invest ahead of technology and I think the investment done in OpenAI was an amazing thing and that's pretty important.

And then the other one which is really informed from the hard lessons, I continue to see this effort on trying to ensure that all the audiences that can change, mold the legislation and other things, understand the implications or using the power of a technology like artificial intelligence to do good.

And in that sense I'm so glad that now we're in that area where there is a lot of opportunity and people should understand joining the company at this time, in many ways it's very different, but in many ways it feels like 1992, because it's the very start of something truly big and transformational where you can be part of it. And the past has informed us how to do that in a more proper way, essentially by listening,

Listening, and don't fool yourself thinking that everything, and arrogance will always be a bad, bad thing for an individual, a company or a country.

And in that way, I think Microsoft, I'm not inside anymore, but I could see from an outsider point of view, it's good to look at some of these things and see if I feel that that's happening, I kind of feel that it's happening, that the company really is trying hard in the very early stages of AI to be that company bringing to the table the hard conversations about how this cannot be just for the profit motive.

Mario Juarez: To just resonate on this from a somewhat different angle, I'm trying to imagine the guy who took a pay cut, a massive pay cut to leave an established company and join an idea, back in another lifetime ago and who you were.

And if you tune into that person, knowing what you know now and thinking of that guy walking in the door and maybe think about a contemporary version, the guy that's walking in the door today on the new campus, what's the most salient, important wisdom that you could impart?

So give me a statement along the lines of if I could say one thing to myself or one thing to somebody coming into the company?

Orlando Ayala: Well I go back to what I already said, you cannot hide from reality and the only way you're going to get reality is through reaching out to a broad sense of people that are actually using your products and seeing you performing.

So confronting reality is a very hard thing to do. Most people basically walk in it, lie to themselves, go with the flow and just end up in a bad place.

So yeah, I would say very early, when I made that change, which made me make an evolution from feeling old already at 35, and then feeling like 15 years old when I joined again, because that was the fact at that time, by not using time as usually as in NCR, you always have to be with time.

But anyway, so I go back to your question, it's that, you have to remind yourself that you don't know it all, that you can't sit here in a lab and think those things. Not necessarily you have to do everything that you hear people want, but the worst thing you could do is do nothing, to what you're hearing, do nothing is never a good answer. And most often is you have to do a lot more than you think you have to do.

Mario Juarez: Awesome. That's great. What else? What haven't we talked about that was top of mind.

When you look back at your career, the whole thing.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, we have pretty much covered most of the angles.

Mario Juarez: What a ride, huh?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, it was a ride and I don't change it for anything. The good times, lots 10 million mile cards after all that flying. But looking back, this is all the great people I work with.

Mario Juarez: Any regrets?

Orlando Ayala: Looking back, I have no regrets. A lot of lessons learned, which as I said are very important to inform the future. And in many ways, every day I remind myself that, never to lose that perspective of using past times as a great informer of what's coming up.

And again, translates back to what the company is doing now and I hope they continue to be very sensitive about ensuring that we're fulfilling the promise of enabling people's capability, people potential.

Mario Juarez: What's next for you?

Orlando Ayala: Well, I've been in boards since 2011, I've been in public boards and I think that stage is pretty much gone. I already did that and it was

fun. It was good seeing other companies, and I'm very focused right now in family.

All those times that I was not around, I'm trying, now that they are all grownups, I have now two grandkids that I don't know very well, but I'm spending now time with them.

So that's important. Maybe I come back to the mainstream... I'm going to be almost 70 years old, so it is not that I'm young anymore, I'm going to be 68 this year.

Mario Juarez: You're wearing it well.

Orlando Ayala: I'm trying. So yeah, that family I think is now in the forefront and I still am very tuned in, I read a lot. I love reading and being informed, track a lot of the trends and try to inform myself about that. And then that's the short term. We had unfortunately a very sad situation in the family and lost one of our kids.

Mario Juarez: Oh, I'm so sorry.

Orlando Ayala: That's a very tough thing, yeah in 2020, so it changes perspective in major ways.

So there is time to do things, in a way that the timing matters when you do them. And at this point in time, I think me spending the best quality time with family in the time being is my priority number one.

Mario Juarez: A life well lived.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, trying to.

Mario Juarez: So are you still a football fan?

Orlando Ayala: I'm a huge football fan and of course Columbia first. And yeah, I played a lot of football in my early years. I was part of the varsity team with my high school and yeah, I'm very passionate about it.

Yeah, I have had the opportunity to go to Two World Cups, no, three actually, and two of them were finals, one in LA and the other one in Germany, amazing.

In TV you see these things and the close-ups and all that but the whole ambience at the stadium is just something that you cannot replicate outside.

Mario Juarez: It's coming here, isn't it?

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, and I'm already lining up to see how I'm going to go to as many games as possible.

Mario Juarez: So the national team's big. Who's your favorite pro team, I know you had a connection-

Orlando Ayala: We didn't talk about this.

Mario Juarez: We didn't talk about this.

Orlando Ayala: That was a story that is very interesting.

Mario Juarez: Well give it to us.

Orlando Ayala: Well, the story has to do with the fact that as part of this idea of national plans, and I took on the sports segment in last four years with the company, and through a friend that was very close, he is the consul of Spain. He told me, listen, Real Madrid is coming to Seattle, and he invited me to go and see some of this.

And from that point I got a conversation with Florentino Pérez, which is basically the CEO of the team. And he said, "Hey, why don't come and visit, I would like to see what Microsoft can do for us."

And then I went there, I spent a lot of time with them and we ended up closing one of the biggest sports deals with the largest team in the world, which is Real Madrid. You watch the LaLiga, which is



where they play, you'll see still the banners Microsoft, that comes from that deal that actually Chris Capossela helped me with a lot. So it was great.

Mario Juarez: I've been in that stadium.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, Bernabéu, which now is very different, very nice. And we got to know Ronaldo and all these guys and it was a lot of fun. And we ended up basically doing, the Real Madrid app is done with Microsoft Technology. If you load it, that's what it is.

Mario Juarez: Football's not so tech heavy.

Orlando Ayala: It's not so tech heavy, but could benefit a lot from, it, especially it's statistics, they track a lot of things for players and actually the actual game and how people move and that's what they do, Microsoft does is all these heat maps where you can show every player and where they spend most of their time and they use it for training. Again, going back to realizing potential, how can I do better as a football pro player?

And you can apply to anything. And again, the idea there was like, okay, I want this team to do better. And that was an amazing example of how the company went in and I don't think that there's any other that has done a deal that's that big with a pro team like that.

Mario Juarez: Yeah, I know, I actually spent two days in Milan with AC Milan hanging out with Kaká because they had a similar sort of thing where they were doing analytics and sensors.

Orlando Ayala: Yeah, a lot of analytics. Yeah, and we ended up talking to La Roma, now we got a deal with LaLiga so now all the teams get access to that stuff.

So anyway, there's also some legacy in an area that make us all passionate because sports is one thing that really makes people thrive in their emotions.

Mario Juarez: That's great. Oh, wonderful. That's all I got. What a fantastic conversation. Thank you so much.

Orlando Ayala: Thanks for the good questions. And looking forward to what you guys are going to do.