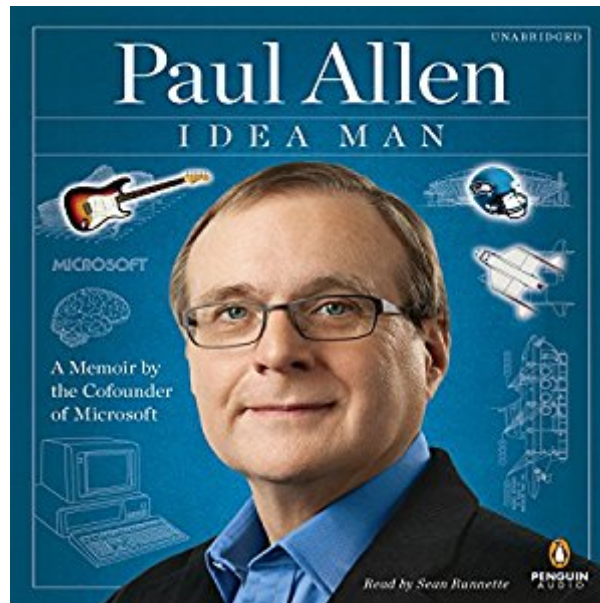




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Idea Man: A Memoir By The Cofounder Of Microsoft



Synopsis

By his early 30s, Paul Allen was a world-famous billionaire. And that was just the beginning. In 2007 and 2008, Time named Paul Allen, the cofounder of Microsoft, one of the 100 most influential people in the world. Since he made his fortune, his impact has been felt in science, technology, business, medicine, sports, music, and philanthropy. His passion, curiosity, and intellectual rigor - combined with the resources to launch and support new initiatives - have literally changed the world. In 2009 Allen discovered that he had lymphoma, lending urgency to his desire to share his story for the first time. In this long-awaited memoir, Allen explains how he has solved problems, what he's learned from his many endeavors - both the triumphs and the failures - and his compelling vision for the future. He reflects candidly on an extraordinary life. The book also features previously untold stories about everything from the true origins of Microsoft to Allen's role in the dawn of private space travel (with SpaceShipOne) and in discoveries at the frontiers of brain science. With honesty, humor, and insight, Allen tells the story of a life of ideas made real.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book details Paul Allen's story on the beginning of Microsoft and his relationship with Bill Gates. The 2nd half of the book deals with his sport teams (TrailBlazers and Seahawks), space planes, investments, life as a wealthy mogul, and recent events. Contrary to the press reports, this book draws a neutral portrait of Bill Gates. He is both highly praised and criticized. The book truly delivers an unvarnished view of Bill Gates and the beginnings of Microsoft. If you are into tech-history, this book should not be missed. I think the title "Idea Man" is spot-on. Paul is the

founding Visionary of Microsoft. He had the world-changing ideas and inspirations. But it was mostly Bill Gates who sorted them out and drove Paul Allen and rest of Microsoft's employees to execute those ideas into a reality. It is important to note that game changing ideas at Microsoft were somewhat lacking after Paul Allen left Microsoft. Instead, Microsoft became more like Bill Gates, an entity that is ruthless, successful, and technically brilliant. Yet, Microsoft lacked a vision and played mostly catchup to other visionary companies and ideas (Netscape, Apple, smartPhones, tablets, game consoles etc). I am convinced that Microsoft may have been a different and a more visionary company if Paul Allen had stayed. I have also read the two books written by Bill Gates. In both books, Bill Gates gives strong endorsement and credit to Paul Allen for the co-founding of Microsoft. The two men have known each other for over 40 years and grew up together. The bond between the two seems very deep.

Pros: 1) This book is written in an extremely fluid style. I am not sure if Paul hired a ghostwriter, but if the book was mostly first-hand written, then I am impressed. 2) Paul Allen provides details on his days with Bill Gates at Lakeside school, Harvard, and Microsoft. When Paul Allen asked Bill Gates how large their software company could be, Bill replied "about 35 employees" and Paul Allen thought that was little ambitious. 3) The story of the founding and the early days of Microsoft was very engaging. It kept me up until 4am reading this book.

Cons: 1) Where is the sage advice? What would have Paul Allen done differently? He takes a passive retroactive account of his past, and does not delve too much into the lessons he has learned from them. 2) Where is the analysis of the past, the current, and the future state of technology? I am especially interested on Paul Allen's take on technology's future 10-20 years down the road. 3) This book is missing huge parts of Paul Allen's life. Paul Allen writes mostly about his relationship with his parents and Bill Gates. I don't think one could categorize this book as a complete autobiography.

Overall, I highly recommend this book. This book is not written as a completely autobiography. Yet, it provides rich details on many things people would find interesting and engaging.

Super insight into so many aspects of this interesting man and the things he has been involved in up to the time of the writing. Paul Allen is underrated I think - big time - a brilliant man and so many little tidbits in the book illustrate it. No question Gates is smart too, but this really gives some insight into Paul Allen and the significance of him in Microsoft's development. I don't think people realize the other things he is doing - his brain project for instance - these are things that could and are having tremendous impact on humanity. I came away with not only good insight, but certainly food for thought about much larger things. For one - when you read about the education he and Gates were getting in high school and junior high - it pales to mine and probably most others. I think it shows

how the 'right' education, early enough, is really important.

A realistic account of how two school chums formed the company, Microsoft. Mr. Allen mentions his family, as having a warm caring mother who spends her time reading everything she can get her hands on. His father he says is quiet and hardly talks at all. All the while, I wonder if Mr .Allen even suspects that while he is smart and talks that he is likened to his father when he is thinking and he spends much of his time thinking. He lays on our shoulders his feelings of first learning he has cancer. His sleepless nights, his idea that perhaps its time to stop and smell the roses. From his explanations we learn that he is compassionate, caring and most sensitive, and agree that he needs to be drama free which also means that he must leave Microsoft and those around him which cause him mental anguish. I recommend this book for an in depth look into a family who was not rich but struggled to provide the best for their children.

I enjoyed reading this book. You get to see the curiosity, the searching, the dreamer, and the risk taker that he is. We all know parts of the Microsoft story but to hear his take on it is interesting. You see some similarities between Paul Allen and Steve Wozniak of Apple both being tech guys that want to be know for their ideas and solving problems. Both end up on the outs with the company they help found but wealthy enough not to complain or work again. They invest their millions into some things that are successful and some passion projects that loose money. With Steve it was music festivals and with Paul it was professional sports teams where they took some losses but had fun. I found this book interesting because the more I read it I found Paul interesting. If he thinks something can be done or believes in someone else, then he'll chase it or fund it, or help with it, and help it become a success. Here's a guy that's been involved in so many things over the years that pushed what was possible. He picked great projects to get involved in. Even now, he writes about current trends and where he thinks things are going, you know he's still mulling over what else is possible. I think he's still itching a little to accomplish something else in the next 10 years, and if so, we could see a second edition on this book years from now with added chapters...Very, very cool book and worth reading...

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