

Since
1936

Company History

[Topics]



1936 - 1969

Starting out

—entering the business machine field



Ricoh's origins date to a decision of the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research to commercialize the fruits of its R&D by setting up Rikagaku Kogyo. In 1936, Rikagaku Kogyo established Riken Kankoshi Co., Ltd. (renamed Riken Optical Co., Ltd., in 1938, and Ricoh Company, Ltd., in 1963), to manufacture and sell sensitized paper. The Company started its camera business in 1937. In 1950, it created Japan's first mass production structure for cameras, driving their popularity among consumers. The company entered the business machine field in 1955 by launching the Ricopy 101.

1970 - 1984

Coining Office Automation acronym

1985 - 1999

Driving digitization

2000 - 2009

Going global

2010 - Present

Creating New Value

Company History

<http://www.ricoh.com/about/company/history/>

Feb. 6, 1936

The sensitized paper division of Rikagaku Kogyo split off to be established as Riken Kankoshi Co., Ltd. (–1938)

Founder Kiyoshi Ichimura

Ricoh's origins date back to a decision by the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research to commercialize the fruits of its R&D by setting up Rikagaku Kogyo. Since its formation in 1927, the business venture has placed on the market numerous products developed by the research institute, including sensitized paper.

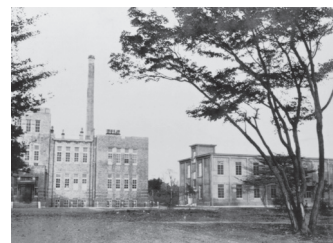
On February 6, 1936, the sensitized paper division was split off to be established as Riken Kankoshi Co., Ltd., a precursor of Ricoh, under the directorship of Kiyoshi Ichimura (1900-1968). As the founder of Ricoh, Ichimura led the successful development of the business that started with 350,000 yen in capital and a staff of 33.

Kiyoshi Ichimura formulated The Spirit of Three Loves: "Love your neighbor," "Love your country," "Love your work," and ever since, they have been respected as the Ricoh Group's Founding Principles, which provide every employee with a guide for business and encourage individuals to constantly improve and contribute to the wellbeing of all stakeholders, including families, customers, and society at large.

The Birth of RICOH



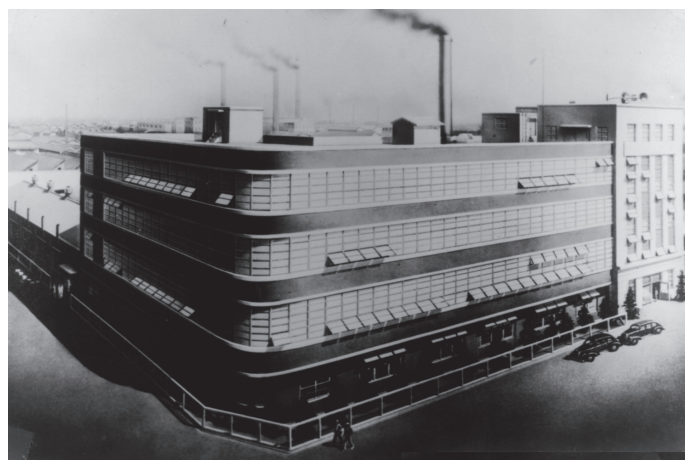
Kiyoshi Ichimura



Institute of Physical and Chemical Research in the earliest days (Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo)



Head office of Riken Optical Co., Ltd., renamed from Riken Kankoshi Co., Ltd. (Ginza, Tokyo, 1938)



Oji Plant, the main factory of Riken Optical for manufacturing sensitized paper as well as cameras and binoculars (1938)

Mar. 1950

Launches the 6x6 format TLR Ricohflex Model III, which spurred the popularization of cameras in Japan

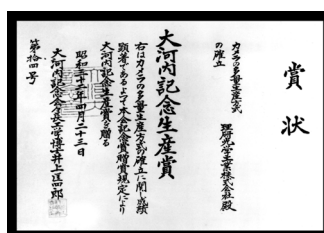
Ricoh was the first company in Japan to introduce a belt-conveyor system for manufacturing cameras, achieving a production capacity of 10,000 units/month —more than ten times the capacity of the then standard level of less than 1,000 units/month from the conventional handicraft industry. Successfully adopting this method of camera mass production, Ricoh offered the Ricohflex Model III at an affordable price, which was remarkably low for an iconic luxury item in those days. This model became highly popular among Japanese consumers, reportedly representing more than 50% of total national camera production during its sales peak.



In 1953, Ricoh became Japan's first manufacturer to introduce a belt-conveyor production system. For its successful establishment of the mass production system, Ricoh was recognized by the Okochi Memorial Foundation with a production award



Ricohflex Model III (1950)



Ricoh was awarded the Okochi Memorial Production Prize for the successful establishment of a mass production system (1957)

Nov. 1955

Introduced Ricoh's first diazo copier, Ricopy 101
—Included in the Mechanical Engineering Heritage list

In 1955, Ricoh launched its first office copier, the Ricopy 101. The product became widely popular in the late 1950s, sparking the coining of the term “make a Ricopy” meaning to “make a copy” in Japan, a representation of the brand that came to be recognized as being synonymous with the concept of duplication. Ricopy 101 and the following desktop diazo-wet copier Ricopy series brought about a revolutionary improvement in office work efficiency, ushering in an age of office automation. The model received the Mechanical Engineering Heritage Certification No.54 for fiscal year 2012.



The oldest existing Ricopy 101 model



Advertisement for Ricopy



Production line of Ricopy 303 and 505 models (1957)

Related website

Ricopy 101: Forerunner of Office Automation

<http://www.ricoh.com/about/company/history/2000/ricopy101.html>

Apr. 1962

The Numazu Plant's functions enhanced to establish an integrated production system for sensitized paper

A paper factory was completed in April 1960 in Numazu, Shizuoka Prefecture. Two years later, the plant was expanded by building facilities for manufacturing sensitized paper on the same premises, thereby establishing an integrated production system for sensitized paper that included the base paper manufacturing process—the first of its kind in the world.



Current Numazu Plant (South Plant)



Paper machine in Numazu Plant, completed in March, 1960



Electrofax paper coating line (Numazu Plant)

May. 1962

Ohmori Plant and General Research Laboratory completed

In May 1962, the Ohmori Plant (for manufacturing office machines) and General Research Laboratory were completed on the premises where the head office was located. They served as strong Ricoh bases to support expansion of its business areas of microphotography cameras, offset printers, data processing systems, and many others.



Completion of the Ohmori Plant (for manufacturing office machines) and the General Research Laboratory



Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda at the opening reception with Ricoh president Kiyoshi Ichimura in May 17, 1962



Nov. 1962

Introduces the Ricoh Auto Half, a half frame camera that proves to be a massive hit

Ricoh is a leading pioneer in the field of automatic camera technologies. In 1960 it released Ricoh Auto 35, the first electric-eye camera developed by a Japanese company; and then in 1962, rolled out the more advanced and handy Ricoh Auto Half—a half-frame, fully automatic camera with automated exposure, focusing and film-winding functions. Being compact, purse-sized and requiring no manual control skills, the world's smallest popular-model automatic camera of the times proved to be a huge hit, particularly with female consumers.



Ricoh Auto Half (1963)



Ricoh Auto 35



Size comparison to a tobacco box



Auto Half series

Apr. 1963

Changes corporate name to Ricoh Company, Ltd.

Since being renamed Riken Optical Co., Ltd. in 1938 to represent its diversified business more accurately, the corporate name remained unchanged for a quarter century until April 1963 when the present name, Ricoh Company, Ltd., was adopted in recognition of the company reaching the key milestone of 10 billion yen in sales in the early 1960s. The company made a fresh start under the new name, aiming to make further quantum leaps.



Introduction of RicoH's corporate logo in 1963

**理研光学は
4月1日より
「株式会社リコー」
に社名を変更
いたします**

カメラと事務機の総合メーカー
RICOH

当社は、昭和11年2月に創立され、以来まもなく独自の道を歩んでまいりました。その間、進歩的ながさずの大衆カメラを送り出した「リコーカメラ部門」、リコービームをはじめとして複写、管理、計算の分野まで進出した「リコー・事務機部門」、世界的な水準を達成した「リコー・感光紙部門」の各製造部門と、独自の研究陣を擁した類のない総合メーカーに発展し、製品のすべては、「リコー」の名のもとに親しまれるようになりました。このため、当社名を、製品ブランドとしての「リコー」と一致させ、みなさまに一層愛される企業に脱皮することを、かねがね急務と考えてまいりました。第です。

また昨年、貿易の自由化と、海外への伸展にそなえて、英文社名をRICOH COMPANY LTD.と改めましたのも、此度の新社名への布石であります。

いまや全社員は、業界における「リコー」の地位に誇りをもち、わが国生活文化の向上と、世界企業への躍進を期しております。これを機会に、なにとぞ「リコー」のブランドを、一層深く愛してくださるようお願い申し上げます。ご挨拶とさせていただきます。

新社名 株式会社リコー
旧社名 理研光学工業株式会社
取締役社長 市村 清

Advertisement announcing the change of corporate name (1963)

Related website

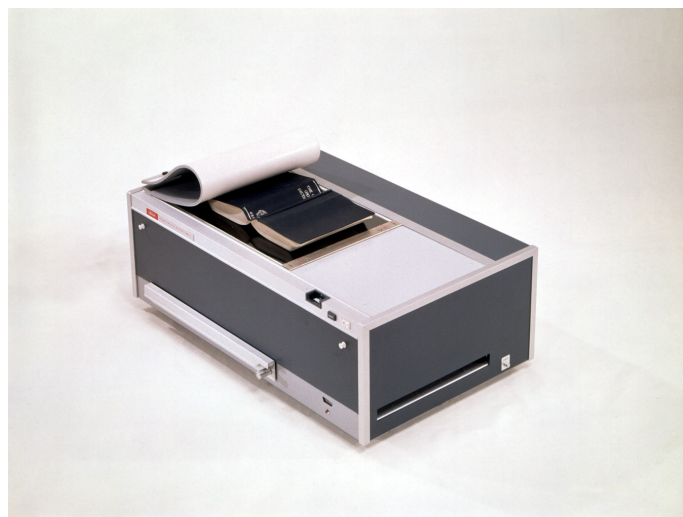
Corporate logo history

<http://www.ricoh.com/about/company/history/logo/>

Sep. 1965

Introduces the Ricopy BS-1 as its first electrostatic copier

Ricopy BS-1 was introduced in 1965, and turned out to be a key revenue earner that supported the company in its recovery from slumping business. Employing a fixed-platen structure, which marked the world's first desktop copier to adopt that assembly, the product featured increased availability in terms of type of subject to be copied, covering not only paper sheets but also almost everything from books, textiles, jewelry, and machine parts to kitchen utensils. Ricopy BS-1 was viewed as a forerunner in an age when technological progress enabled the "duplication of anything you like," while serving as a driving force for Ricoh's global business development.



Ricopy BS-1 (1965)



Campaign advertisement for Ricopy (1965)



Ricopy BS-1 installed on the Fuji Antarctic researchship (1966)