

Backgrounder

EPSON – History and Milestones

The Seiko Epson Corporation is part of the Seiko Group*, along with Seiko Corporation and Seiko Instruments Inc. It was established in 1942 as Daiwa Kogyo Ltd., a manufacturer of watch parts, in Suwa, Nagano where it still has its headquarters. In 1943, Daini Seikosha Co. Ltd. (currently Seiko Instruments) established a factory in Suwa to manufacture Seiko watches with Daiwa Kogyo Ltd. In 1959 Daiwa Kogyo merged with Daiwa Seikosh's Suwa plant to form Suwa Seikosha Co. Ltd., whose focus was developing time piece technologies. It established a subsidiary company, Shinshu Seiki Co. Ltd. in 1961 to supply precision parts for Seiko watches.

The Seiko Group was selected as official time keeper for the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 for which they produced a printing timer to be used for the events. Shinshu Seiki Co. Ltd. developed an electronic printer as part of the timer and went on from there to create the world's smallest and first digital printer, the EP-101, which was launched in September 1968. The Epson brand was established in June 1975, after the next generation of the EP-101 was developed and released to the public. The name had evolved from "Son of EP-101", to "Epson" expressing the wish that the Company would continue to produce many successful "sons" of the EP-101. In July 1982, Shinshu Seiki Co. Ltd. officially became the Epson Corporation and in November 1985 it merged with the Suwa Seikosha Co. Ltd. to form the Seiko Epson Corporation.

Today the Seiko Epson Corporation has 109 group companies, 27 in Japan and 82 overseas. Its main areas of business are the development, manufacturing, sales, marketing and servicing of:

- Information-related equipment - Computers and peripherals, including PCs, printers, scanners and projectors.
- Electronic devices - Semiconductors, displays, and quartz devices.
- Precision products - Watches, plastic corrective lenses, and factory automation equipment.
- Other products - Business incubation projects, Intra-Group service business, factory automation and others.

The following outlines the key milestones in the history of the Corporation

- May 1942 – Daiwa Kogyo Ltd. (the predecessor of Seiko Epson Corporation) is established in Suwa, Nagano, Japan. The company helps to clean the heavily polluted Lake Suwa and makes a commitment to ensuring that it remains unpolluted in the future.
- May 1959 – Daiwa Kogyo Ltd. and the Suwa Plant of Daini Seikosha Co. Ltd. (now Seiko Instruments, Inc.) merge under the name of Suwa Seikosha Co. Ltd.
- Dec. 1961 – Shinshu Seiki Co. Ltd. (name changed to Epson Corporation in 1982), a subsidiary of Suwa Seikosha Co. Ltd., is established.
- Oct. 1964 – The Seiko Group is selected as the official timekeeper for the Olympic Games in Tokyo. The Crystal Chronometer QC – 951, the world's first portable, high accuracy, battery-operated quartz timer, and the Printing Timer both play important roles in the event.

- Sep. 1968 – The EP-101, the world's smallest and first digital printer, is launched.
- Dec. 1969 – The world's first analog quartz watch, the Seiko Quartz Astron 35SQ, goes on sale.
- Jun. 1975 – The Epson brand is established following the creation of Epson America Inc., the first overseas sales subsidiary.
- Oct. 1984 – SQ-2000, the first commercial Epson inkjet printer goes on sale worldwide.
- Nov. 1985 – Suwa Seikosha Co. Ltd. and Epson Corporation merge to establish Seiko Epson Corporation.
- Dec. 1988 – 1st Environmental Benchmark Year: Begins CFC free initiatives and establishes CFC phase out centre.
- Jan. 1989 – VPJ-700, the world's first compact, full-colour liquid crystal video projector is launched.
- Jan. 1990 – Epson Europe B.V., Epson's European regional headquarters for EMEA, is established in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- Oct. 1992 – Complete elimination of specific CFCs from production processes is achieved at all factories and affiliates in Japan. Epson receives the 1992 Stratospheric Ozone protection Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- May 1993 – Complete elimination of specific CFCs from all production processes, worldwide, is achieved.
- May 1994 – The Epson Stylus Color, the world's first 720 dpi color inkjet printer, is launched.
- Apr. 1995 – ISO 9000 Series Certification for Quality Management Systems is acquired by all Epson plants in Japan.
- Sept. 1997 – Epson receives EPA Award: Best-of-the Best Stratospheric Ozone Protection Award.
- Feb. 1998 – The Seiko Group is chosen as the official timekeeper for the Olympic Winter Games in Nagano.
- Apr. 1998 – 2nd Environmental Benchmark Year: Establishes General Environmental Policy and Epson Recycling centre.
- Oct. 1999 – Epson becomes one of the first companies to voluntarily collect and recycle used information equipment (printers, scanners, projectors, POS systems etc) from companies.
- Jul. 1999 – Epson releases its first sustainability report
- Dec. 2000 – Epson ecology label is launched.
- May 2001 – ISO 14001 Certification is obtained for Environmental Management Systems at all the Company's business sites around the world.
- Jun. 2002 – Epson receives the Corporate Innovation Recognition Award from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. (IEEE).
- Apr. 2002 – 98.6% elimination of lead in solders, electrode parts and materials for metal parts, is achieved as a result of the work of its Lead Free Promotion Committee.
- Jun. 2003 – Epson is listed on the first section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange.
- Mar. 2004 – Zero emissions (Level 1 - the 100% recycling of all waste generated from business activities) achieved at all Epson companies in Japan + all Epson manufacturing companies outside Japan.
- Jul. 2004 – Epson joins the UN Global Compact which outlines ten universal principles, focused on respect for human rights, labour, the environment and prevention of corruption, which members must incorporate into their business practices.
- Oct. 2004 – Sanyo Epson Imaging Devices Corp. is established.

- Nov. 2004 – Seiko Quartz Astron 35SQ, the world’s first quartz watch receives the IEEE milestone award.
- Jul. 2006 – Epson meets the requirements of the RoHS Directive which bans the placing, on the EU market, of new electrical and electronic equipment containing more than agreed levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) and polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardants.
- Dec. 2006 – Sanyo Epson Imaging Devices Corporation becomes the wholly-owned subsidiary, Epson Imaging Devices Corporation.
- Apr. 2007 – Epson works with the World Wildlife Fund to create its paper procurement policy that takes into consideration the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the forests where the wood for its paper production is sourced.
- Oct. 2007 - Epson Stylus Pro 3800 Wins Ecohitech Award for Energy Saving and CO2 Reduction
- Jun. 2008 – 3rd environmental Benchmark Year: Seiko Epson Corporation launches its environmental targets and its 2050 Long-Term Environmental Strategy.

* The Seiko Group was founded in Japan by the Hattori family who established their original watch company in 1881. The three companies are managed and operated completely independently although they still have some common shareholders including members of the Hattori family.

For Further Information see:

Seiko Epson Corporation:

http://www.epson.co.jp/e/company/company_index.htm

Corporate Profile:

<http://www.epson.co.jp/e/company/pdf/epson2008.pdf>

Sustainability Report:

http://www.epson.co.jp/e/community/sr/2007/pdf/2007_en_sr.pdf

Milestones Products:

<http://www.epson.co.jp/e/company/milestones.htm>

Corporate History:

<http://www.epson.co.jp/e/company/history.htm>