

A History of Value Creation

Our founder, Magosaburo Ohara, and second President, Soichiro Ohara, sought to build the business through technological innovation while emphasizing the importance of fulfilling the Company's social responsibilities, such as the response to environmental issues, focusing on addressing social issues through the Company's business activities. The Company's management possessed a pioneering spirit even before the phrase "corporate social responsibility" became mainstream, and that spirit continues being passed down as the Kuraray Group's foundational DNA today. Our pioneering products deliver new value to society and have found widespread use around the world.



Magosaburo Ohara
First President

"All the wealth gained from society should be returned to society."

Magosaburo Ohara established the Ohara Institute for Social Research, the Kurashiki Institute for the Science of Labour (now the Ohara Memorial Institute for Science of Labour) for the improvement and reformation of labor conditions, the Kurabo Central Hospital (now the Kurashiki Central Hospital), and the Ohara Museum of Art. These facilities contributed to the advancement of local medicine, welfare, education, culture, and people's standard of living.



Soichiro Ohara
Second President

"Any profit that a company might gain should be confined to those profits that come from technological innovation and from consideration of the social and economic benefits it brings to the entire nation."

Soichiro Ohara was among the first to mention corporate responsibility for emissions at a time when the word "pollution" was still a rarity. In 1950, he pioneered the commercialization of KURALON™ PVA fiber, the first synthetic fiber made in Japan using proprietary technology. He continued to help address social issues and advance economic development through business activities, such as the development and commercialization of CLARINO™, the world's first man-made leather to replace natural leather.

A History of Addressing Social Issues and Advancing Economic Development through Business Activities

	Historical context and social issues	Businesses and products that have helped to address social issues and advance economic development
1926–	<p>Ensuring sufficient daily commodities, developing social infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World War II • Growth of heavy and chemical industry • High economic growth period • Oil crisis 	<p>Company founded with the aim of commercializing rayon, giving rise to Japan's first synthetic fiber, KURALON™ PVA fiber, and birth of a new business</p> <p>Kuraray was founded in 1926 as Kurashiki Kenshoku Co., Ltd. in Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture for the purpose of commercializing synthetic rayon. In the 1950s, Kuraray became the first company in the world to commercialize PVA fiber, the first synthetic fiber made in Japan. These synthetic fibers replaced arboreous cotton, helping to ensure a sufficient supply of fabric for clothing and other daily commodities. Since then, we have launched a series of new businesses, including PVOH resin, CLARINO™ man-made leather, EVAL™ EVOH resin, isoprene chemicals, and dental materials.</p>
1980–	<p>Making life more convenient and more comfortable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plaza Accord • Deregulation of telecommunications sector, privatization of national railways • Flourishing of the electronics industry • Bubble economy 	<p>Creating highly functional synthetic fibers</p> <p>We sought to diversify our business, focusing on the advantages of synthetic fibers, such as strength, weatherability, and resistance to chemicals. In 1983, as a substitute for asbestos, which poses a danger to health, we developed PVA fiber for cement reinforcement, entering into a long-term export agreement with a major European building materials manufacturer. We then developed VECTRAN™ liquid crystal polymer fiber, newly adding it to our product lineup of core fiber materials. In these and other ways, we worked to shore up the comprehensive strengths of the industrial materials business and speed up market development.</p>

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Historical context and social issues	Businesses and products that have helped to address social issues and advance economic development
<p>1990–</p> <p>Spread of the Internet, lifestyle changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bursting of bubble economy • Spread of Internet and mobile phones • Adoption of Kyoto Protocol 	<p>Growth of telecoms business, overseas expansion of chemicals and resins businesses</p> <p>As the spread of the Internet and mobile phones was changing the way people lived, we developed VECSTAR™ liquid crystal polymer film, which supports faster communications. In 1999, we commercialized GENESTAR™ heat-resistant polyamide resin, anticipating brisk demand for use in electrical and electronic components for computers and mobile phones as well as automotive components. Meanwhile, in our chemicals and resins businesses, backed by strong product appeal, we increased sales overseas, expanded market share, and built a global production framework.</p>
<p>2000–</p> <p>Globalization, mounting environmental awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Izanami Boom (2002–2008 economic expansion period in Japan) • Flourishing of IT and venture companies • Global financial crisis 	<p>Development of environmentally friendly products, expansion of vinyl acetate business through acquisitions</p> <p>In response to mounting global awareness of environmental issues, in the United States we started full-scale operation of a newly completed production line for SEPTON™ thermoplastic elastomer, used as a substitute for vulcanized rubber and vinyl chloride. In the vinyl acetate segment, we reinforced the value chain and scaled up the business through overseas acquisitions. Due to these measures, the Kuraray Group's unique technologies and products found widespread use throughout the world, leading to dramatic growth in the ratio of overseas sales.</p>
<p>2010–</p> <p>Realizing a sustainable society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World population surpasses 7 billion • Paris Agreement • SDGs adopted by UN 	<p>Expansion of businesses, products that contribute to the natural and living environments</p> <p>Through ongoing overseas acquisitions and alliances, we achieved the global expansion of businesses and products that contribute to the natural and living environments, including activated carbon that aids in water and air purification, and PLANTIC™ biomass-derived gas barrier material that helps lower the logistical burden and reduce food loss.</p>
<p>2020–</p> <p>Era of change and challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread of COVID-19 • Accelerating shift toward circular economy • Increasing geopolitical risks • Management conscious of cost of capital and stock price 	<p>Striving to enhance our business portfolio</p> <p>We aim to enhance our business portfolio by using the three axes of social and environmental value, economic value, and market growth potential to assess our businesses, with the added perspective of whether Kuraray is the best owner of a particular business. We are channeling resources into growth and expansion businesses such as EVAL™ EVOH resin, water-soluble PVOH film, SentryGlas™ ionoplast interlayers, GENESTAR™ heat-resistant polyamide resin, dental materials, activated carbon, and VECTRAN™ liquid crystal polymer fiber, as well as in base businesses such as optical-use poval film and Trosifol™ PVB film.</p>
<p>2026</p>	<p>Positioning efforts to address social issues as an engine for growth</p>