

Our Origins

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 pioneering spirit of the Company's management has been passed down as the foundational DNA of the Kuraray Group. Since the beginning, it has been important to Kuraray, even before the phrase "corporate social responsibility" became mainstream.

Corporate Statements

Our Mission

We are committed to developing new fields of business using pioneering technology that improves the environment and enhances the quality of life throughout the world.

"For people and the planet—to achieve what no one else can."

Our Values

Philosophy

- Respect for individuals
- Close cooperation to attain shared goals
- Constant creation of new value

Guiding Principles

- Safety is the cornerstone of everything we do
- Customers' needs are our top priority
- We act on ideas in the workplace

Our Commitment

- We will constantly develop and provide safe, high-quality products and services.
- We will maintain a sound relationship with society through good communication.
- We will strive to preserve and improve the global environment, and to secure safety and health in all our workplaces.
- We will value all members of the Kuraray community and respect their rights.
- We will always conduct businesses in a free, fair and transparent manner.
- We will honor all intellectual property and secure data and information in a proper manner.



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

Throughout its history, the Kuraray Group has continually sought to develop new technologies and markets, and has launched numerous pioneering businesses. "For people and the planet—to achieve what no one else can." Grounded in this mission, we have drawn on our creativity and resourcefulness to overcome technical challenges, giving rise to highly distinctive products that offer new value to society. These products have found widespread use throughout the world.



View of head office plant
(at the time of founding)

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

Businesses and products that have helped to address social issues and advance economic development

Social issues and historical context

1926–

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

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.

Ensuring sufficient daily commodities, developing social infrastructure

- World War II
- Growth of heavy and chemical industry
- High economic growth period
- Oil crisis

1980–

Creating highly functional synthetic fibers

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.

Making life more convenient and more comfortable

- Plaza Accord
- Deregulation of telecommunications sector, privatization of national railways
- Flourishing of the electronics industry
- Bubble economy

1990–

Growth of telecoms business, overseas expansion of chemicals and resins businesses

As the spread of the Internet and mobile phones were 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.

Spread of the Internet, lifestyle changes

- Bursting of bubble economy
- Spread of Internet and mobile phones
- Adoption of Kyoto Protocol



Celebration to mark full-scale operation of the SEPTON™ production facility in the United States (2002)



Acquisition of MonoSol, LLC (2012)

Businesses and products that have helped to address social issues and advance economic development

Social issues and historical context

2000–

Development of environmentally friendly products, expansion of vinyl acetate business through acquisitions

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.

Globalization, mounting environmental awareness

- Izanami Boom (2002–2008 economic expansion period in Japan)
- Flourishing of IT and venture companies
- Global financial crisis

2010–

Expansion of businesses, products that contribute to the natural and living environments

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.

Realizing a sustainable society

- World population surpasses 7 billion
- Paris Agreement
- SDGs adopted by UN
- Spread of COVID-19

2022–

Striving to build a more sophisticated business portfolio

Our Mission sets target fields for social issues needing to be addressed to achieve sustainable growth, in light of macro trends. Meanwhile, we aim to build a more sophisticated business portfolio by using the two axes of social and environmental value and economic value to assess our businesses, while also taking into account market growth. We are channeling resources into strategic businesses such as EVAL™ EVOH resin, PVOH resin, optical-use poval film, water-soluble PVOH film, advanced interlayer solutions, GENESTAR™ heat-resistant polyamide resin, activated carbon, dental materials, and VECTRAN™ liquid crystal polymer fiber.

Positioning efforts to address social issues as an engine for growth

Net Sales in Japan and Overseas (Billions of yen)

