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Avery Dennison Corp

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Introduction

Avery Dennison Corporation stands as an emblem of American ingenuity, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to progress. Tracing its roots back to the energetic streets of 1930s Los Angeles, Avery Dennison's journey is one of transformative ideas, relentless innovation, and shrewd expansion. What began with R. Stanton Avery's modest \$100 loan and a visionary invention would evolve, over the decades, into an S&P 500 heavyweight influencing industries and daily life around the globe.

This book chronicles the remarkable evolution of Avery Dennison: from the invention of the world's first self-adhesive label to the digital identification and sustainability solutions shaping its present and future. It is a story not just of business success, but of people whose ideas and determination shattered boundaries. As you explore these pages, you will meet visionaries like Stan Avery and H. Russell Smith, whose partnership and creativity propelled the company across the United States and, soon enough, the world.

The story of Avery Dennison is indelibly marked by a spirit of adaptation. Through world wars, economic upheavals, and the digital revolution, the company continuously reinvented itself—whether merging with Dennison Manufacturing to consolidate expertise and product lines or pioneering technologies such as RFID and innovative pressure-sensitive materials. Strategic acquisitions further cemented its status, as the company harnessed new capabilities and markets to fuel sustainable growth.

Yet Avery Dennison's legacy is more than one of impressive financials and technical milestones. Deeply embedded in its DNA is a commitment to social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and cultivating a corporate culture where innovation and collaboration thrive. With operations spanning over 50 countries and a workforce of more than 35,000, the company's reach is global, but its impact is also keenly local, woven through the fabric of communities in which it operates.

Today, Avery Dennison is defined not only by its market leadership but by its bold response to the challenges of our era: a push toward net-zero emissions, circular economy solutions, and wide-ranging contributions to sustainable global supply chains. Its journey is far from over. As we look to the future—a future shaped by technology, sustainability, and ever-evolving consumer needs—Avery Dennison remains a company on the move, determined to lead, adapt, and inspire.

In these chapters, we invite you to dive into the history, present reality, and forward-looking vision of Avery Dennison. This is the story of how an American company became a force for good, innovation, and transformation—one label, one

breakthrough, one partnership at a time.

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CHAPTER ONE: Foundations: R. Stanton Avery and the Birth of Kum Kleen Products

The story of Avery Dennison, a global titan in materials science and digital identification, begins not in a gleaming corporate office, but with the grit and inventive spirit of one man: R. Stanton Avery. Known to most simply as Stan Avery, he was a visionary with an uncanny knack for seeing potential where others saw only problems. His journey, and by extension that of the company he founded, commenced in 1935 in the bustling city of Los Angeles, California.

It was an era still reeling from the Great Depression, a time when ambition often collided with economic hardship. Yet, amidst this challenging backdrop, Stan Avery harbored a bright idea that would fundamentally change how products were labeled and identified. With a modest loan of \$100—a sum that feels almost impossibly small for such a grand ambition today—he set out to bring his invention to life. This wasn't merely about creating a better label; it was about inventing an entirely new way of labeling.

Before Avery's breakthrough, labels were a messy affair. They typically required moistening, much like postage stamps, to adhere to surfaces. This process was cumbersome, prone to smudges, and often left behind sticky residue or tore easily when removed. Stan Avery envisioned something different: a label that was inherently self-adhesive, easy to apply, and, crucially, could be removed cleanly without leaving a trace. This seemingly simple concept was, in fact, revolutionary.

His initial foray into this new world of adhesive technology led to the establishment of Kum Kleen Products. The name itself was a clever piece of marketing, directly advertising the primary benefit of his innovative labels: they "come clean." The very first products to roll off his makeshift production line were simple, round price stickers. These humble circles, designed to be easily applied and removed without marring the product, marked the genesis of a multinational corporation.

Avery's ingenuity extended beyond just the label itself. He understood that mass production required specialized machinery. So, with a resourcefulness born of necessity, he fashioned his first label-cutting machine from an unlikely assortment of parts: a washing machine motor, components from a sewing machine, and a saber saw. This contraption, pieced together in his Los Angeles workshop, was the nascent heart of his manufacturing operation.

In these early days, the operations were lean. Avery reportedly paid himself and his

small team a modest \$20 a week. His business model was equally pragmatic: he only produced labels when an order came in, a testament to his initial lack of capital. This made-to-order approach ensured that he wasn't sitting on unsold inventory, a common pitfall for fledgling businesses.

As demand for his innovative Kum Kleen labels grew, so did the need for more sophisticated production. When customers began requesting their names or other specific information be printed on the labels, Avery invested in his first printing press. This marked an important step in expanding the utility and customization of his products, moving beyond generic price tags to more tailored solutions. The self-adhesive concept was proving its worth, and the business, though small, was steadily gaining traction.

The growth of Kum Kleen Products was a testament to the undeniable appeal of Stan Avery's invention. The convenience and cleanliness of his labels stood in stark contrast to the existing options, making them an attractive solution for retailers and other businesses. From his modest beginnings, Avery was laying the groundwork for an industry that few could have imagined would become so ubiquitous. His \$100 loan was already proving to be a wise investment, not just for him, but for the future of labeling itself.

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