



*From the MixCache.com library*

SAMPLE COPY

# Bemis Company

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

## Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1** The Birth of Bemis: St. Louis, 1858
- **Chapter 2** Judson Moss Bemis: Pioneer and Innovator
- **Chapter 3** The Brothers' Partnership and Early Expansion
- **Chapter 4** Cotton, Burlap, and the Bag Revolution
- **Chapter 5** Bidy the Cat: Emblem of Integrity
- **Chapter 6** Growth Across America: New Factories and Cities
- **Chapter 7** Transition to Paper: The Early Twentieth Century
- **Chapter 8** From Family Hands to Corporate Leadership
- **Chapter 9** Navigating Two World Wars
- **Chapter 10** Machineries of Progress: In-House Engineering
- **Chapter 11** Entering the Plastics Era
- **Chapter 12** Mergers and Acquisitions: Expansion by Integration
- **Chapter 13** The Name Change: Bemis Company, Inc.
- **Chapter 14** Innovations in Flexible Packaging
- **Chapter 15** Serving the Food Industry: Building a Clientele
- **Chapter 16** The Printing Powerhouse: Graphics and Labels
- **Chapter 17** A Family of Companies: Bemis Manufacturing and Bemis Associates
- **Chapter 18** Global Growth: Entering International Markets
- **Chapter 19** Leadership Through the Decades
- **Chapter 20** Corporate Responsibility and Charitable Endeavors
- **Chapter 21** Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship
- **Chapter 22** Navigating Economic and Industry Challenges
- **Chapter 23** The Merger with Amcor: Shaping a Global Leader
- **Chapter 24** The Enduring Legacy of Bemis
- **Chapter 25** Lessons from Bemis: Innovation, Adaptation, and the Future

## Introduction

The story of Bemis Company is not just the history of a business, but a chronicle of American industry, innovation, and resilience. Founded in 1858 by Judson Moss Bemis in St. Louis, Missouri, the company's origin story is one of humble beginnings. Starting from a small workshop on the second floor of a machine shop, Bemis and his family built an enterprise that would grow to impact not only the packaging industry, but the way Americans and people around the world receive, store, and consume everyday goods.

From its earliest days, the company distinguished itself by reimagining the art and science of the humble bag—a staple in every household and business. Judson Moss Bemis's decision to machine-sew bags and guarantee their quality was radical for its time, signaling a commitment to innovation and customer trust that would become Bemis's hallmark for generations. An emblematic mascot, Biddy the cat, came to encapsulate the values of honesty and approachability that permeated the company's culture.

As the company expanded beyond St. Louis, opening new factories and entering new industries, it demonstrated a fierce adaptability. Navigating periods of war, economic uncertainty, and technological upheaval, Bemis invested in new materials, from cotton and burlap to paper and eventually flexible plastics. Each strategic pivot reflected an acute awareness of shifting market needs and a willingness to embrace change—qualities that would ensure its place atop the packaging industry for more than a century and a half.

Successive generations of Bemis leadership maintained the core values of integrity, innovation, and customer focus while steering the company into new eras. Strategic acquisitions diversified the company's product offerings and geographic reach, while ongoing investments in research and development kept Bemis at the forefront of packaging technology. By serving blue-chip customers and introducing award-winning products, Bemis cemented a reputation as not only a business success, but as an industry leader whose influence extended well beyond the factory floor.

Corporate responsibility was integral to Bemis's identity. The company's emphasis on sustainability, community involvement, and ethical governance mirrored broader societal expectations and enhanced its standing as a trustworthy and progressive enterprise. Whether through environmental initiatives, employee safety, or philanthropy, Bemis strived to make a positive impact on its stakeholders and the wider world.

The culmination of this remarkable history came in 2019, with Bemis's merger into Amcor—a transformative moment that created a global packaging powerhouse. While Bemis's independent existence ended, its legacy lives on, not only in the technologies and products that shape our daily lives, but in the principles and spirit that have defined American businesses for generations. This book explores that journey in detail, tracing Bemis Company's evolution from local bag maker to global industry leader, and considering what its story reveals about innovation, perseverance, and the ever-changing nature of commerce.

SAMPLE COPY

## CHAPTER ONE: The Birth of Bemis: St. Louis, 1858

In the bustling, rapidly expanding American landscape of the mid-19th century, innovation was not just a buzzword, but a daily necessity. Cities like St. Louis, Missouri, served as vibrant hubs where new ideas could take root and flourish. It was here, in 1858, that the seeds of the Bemis Company were sown by a young man named Judson Moss Bemis. Just 25 years old at the time, Judson embarked on a venture that would, over the next century and a half, profoundly shape the packaging industry and become a testament to American entrepreneurial spirit.

Judson Moss Bemis was born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, on May 13, 1833. His early life was marked by movement and adaptation, as his family, seeking new opportunities, relocated to Big Flats, New York, and then, in 1838, ventured further west to the frontier lands of Illinois. Life on the Illinois plains was far from easy, especially after his mother's death when Judson was just six years old. His father, Stephen, later tried his hand at the California gold rush, leaving young Judson to largely fend for himself from the age of sixteen. He supported himself through farm work during summers and continued his education at Mount Morris Academy in the winters. These early experiences likely instilled in him a strong sense of self-reliance and a pragmatic approach to business.

Before establishing his own company, Judson Moss Bemis had already gained valuable experience in the world of commerce. At the age of fifteen, he moved to Chicago, and after three years, he made the move to St. Louis. It was in this dynamic city that he recognized a burgeoning need in the marketplace. While wooden barrels were the conventional method for transporting goods like flour, they were cumbersome and increasingly expensive. Judson envisioned a more efficient and economical solution: the cotton bag.

With just \$2,000 of his own savings and a keen eye for opportunity, Judson Moss Bemis set up shop in St. Louis. His initial factory was far from grand, occupying the second floor of a machine shop. This seemingly modest location, however, offered distinct advantages. The machine shop provided readily available steam power for his printing presses and a convenient source of maintenance personnel for any equipment repairs. This resourceful use of existing infrastructure speaks to Bemis's early ingenuity and practical approach to business.

The prevailing method for creating bags at the time involved hand-sewing and stenciling. Judson Moss Bemis, however, was not content with the status quo. He was an innovator, and his primary aim was to revolutionize bag manufacturing. He pioneered the use of machine-sewing and printing for his cotton bags. This was a

significant departure from traditional methods and offered the promise of greater efficiency and consistency.

However, introducing a new product to a market accustomed to traditional methods often presents its own challenges. There was a natural skepticism among customers regarding the durability and reliability of machine-sewn bags, especially compared to their hand-stitched counterparts. To overcome this hurdle and build crucial customer trust, Judson Moss Bemis implemented a bold strategy: he offered an unconditional guarantee on every bag his company produced. This guarantee was a powerful statement of confidence in his product and a testament to his commitment to customer satisfaction.

The very first order Judson Moss Bemis secured was for 200 half-barrel sacks. While a seemingly small beginning, it marked the official commencement of Bemis Brothers Bag Company, a venture that would expand far beyond its initial scope. This early focus on manufacturing printed cotton bags for food products laid the foundation for what would become a global leader in packaging. Judson's vision and willingness to embrace new technologies, coupled with his unwavering commitment to quality, set the stage for the remarkable journey of the Bemis Company.

---

*This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.*

Visit [MixCache.com](https://MixCache.com) to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY