

Our Innovation History

Olympus was born in 1919 with the purpose of manufacturing microscopes domestically. The Company succeeded in developing the world's first practical gastrocamera roughly 30 years later. From the delivery of its first product up until today, Olympus has continued to be driven by its corporate DNA to create new value for society.

Surgical Devices



1975
Entered medical surgical endoscopy field

1979
Acquired rigid endoscope manufacturer Winter & Ibe GmbH

Medical Equipment

Gastrointestinal Endoscopes

Photographing

Diagnosis

Treatment

First step toward early diagnosis of cancer



1950
Developed world's first practical gastrocamera

Contributions to diagnosis and treatment



1964
Introduced GTF fiber gastroscope

Beginnings in biopsies



1966
Launched Olympus' first biopsy scope and endotherapy devices (biopsy forceps and cytology brushes)



1982
Launched GF-UM1 / EU-M1, world's first ultrasonic endoscopy system



1985
Introduced EVIS-1 endoscopic video system

Evolution of Medical Business

Development of World's First Practical Gastrocamera

Olympus succeeded in creating a gastrocamera through joint development between the Company's R&D team and a physician at the Department of Gastroenterology of the University of Tokyo who stated that, "I somehow want to cure the gastric cancer that afflicts so many Japanese people." The introduction of fiberscopes made it possible to see directly inside a patient's stomach in real time. In the years that followed, Olympus continued to work closely with physicians to refine these scopes, driving rapid advances in the development of diagnosis technologies for gastrointestinal diseases.

Entry into Surgical Device Business

Predicating that endoscopes would eventually be used in surgery, Olympus acquired German rigid endoscope manufacturer Winter & Ibe GmbH in 1979 and expanded its business into the surgical endoscope field.

Scientific Solutions and Imaging Products

1920



Introduced Asahi 600x microscope

1936



Introduced Olympus' first camera, the Semi-Olympus I, marking entry into camera business

1963



Launched the Olympus Pen F, the world's first half-size SLR camera

1968



Launched Company's first industrial-use fiberscope, marking entry into industrial endoscopy field

1969



Developed world's first microcassette tape recorder

1983



Introduced New Vanox-AH2 top-caliber photographing microscope, world's first to feature autofocus function

From the Founding of Olympus and the Path to Business Modernization 1919–1950s

- 1919** Established as Takachiho Seisakusho to manufacture microscopes in Japan
- 1921** Registered trademark as Olympus
- 1949** Name changed to Olympus Optical Co., Ltd. Company listed on Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE)



Founder, Takeshi Yamashita



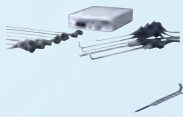
"Olympus" trademark

Evolution as an Integrated Optical Manufacturer and Expansion of Overseas Sales Networks 1960s–1980s

- 1964** Established Olympus Europe
- 1968** Established Olympus Corporation of America
- 1979** Established U.S. location in California (currently world's largest endoscope service center)
- 1989** Established Beijing residential office and corporation in Singapore

Diversification of Medical Business 1990s–2010

- 2001** Commenced collaboration with Terumo Corporation
- 2004** Acquired Celon AG
- 2008** Established first training center in China (Shanghai)
Acquired Gyus Group PLC to strengthen surgical area of Medical Business



2002
Launched VISERA integrated video system and SonoSurg ultrasonic surgical system



2006
Launched VISERA Pro, integrated surgical video endoscope system



2011
Introduced VISERA ELITE integrated surgical video endoscope system



2012
Introduced THUNDERBEAT, world's first energy device to integrate both advanced bipolar and ultrasonic energy



2013
Launched 3D laparoscopy system and 3D laparoscope with world-first deflectable tip



2015
Introduced VISERA 4K UHD surgical endoscopy system incorporating 4K technology



2002
Launched EVIS LUCERA, world's first HD endoscopy system



2002
Commercialized world's first IT knife specially designed for ESD



2006
Introduced EVIS EXERA II and EVIS LUCERA SPECTRUM, endoscopic video systems that include NBI technologies



2010
Launched VisiGlide™ disposable guidewire for use in endoscopic treatment of biliary and pancreatic ducts



2012
Introduced EVIS EXERA III and EVIS LUCERA ELITE next-generation platform systems for gastrointestinal endoscopy



2016
Launched EZ Shot 3 plus single-use aspiration needle for Endoscopic Ultrasound-Fine Needle Aspiration (EUS-FNA)

New Era of Videoscopes

The development of videoscopes, which feature imaging elements such as charge coupled devices (CCDs) built into their distal tips, contributed to a substantial increase in the accuracy of diagnoses. This increase in accuracy came from the ability to display images on monitors for multiple physicians to view.

Development of Endoscopic Surgery

Endoscopic surgery created a revolution in the field of surgery, and the spread of these surgeries accelerated in tandem with technological progress. Olympus fueled this progress with the release of innovative products, including HD surgical endoscopes, the world's first surgical energy device to integrate both advanced bipolar and ultrasonic energy, and 3D and 4K surgical endoscopes.

Advent of Observation Using Specific Light Spectra

Olympus continued to advance technologies at an accelerated pace as the world was introduced to its first HD system and then to narrow band imaging (NBI) technologies that use optical technology to enhance the visualization of lesions. As a result, endoscopes evolved from being mere observation tools to becoming medical devices capable of treatment and therapy.

1996



Introduced first Olympus digital cameras C-MEDIA C-800L and C-MEDIA C-400L

2006



Introduced OmniScan IX non-destructive testing system

2009



Introduced first Olympus mirrorless camera, OLYMPUS PEN E-P1

2012



Introduced the IX3 Series (IX83, IX73, IX53) inverted research microscopes

2013



Launched flagship mirrorless camera OLYMPUS OM-D E-M1

Transition from Stage of Reconstructing Management to Stage of Sustainable Growth and Development 2011–Present

2011 Deferred recording of past losses discovered
2012 Appointed new management team
Announced medium-term vision (corporate strategic plan)
Formed business and capital alliance with Sony Corporation
Transferred Information & Communication Business

2013 Security on Alert Designation placed on Company stock by TSE removed
Procured capital through public offering in overseas markets (approx. ¥110 billion)
Established Sony Olympus Medical Solutions Inc.
Constructed Company's largest training and service center in China (Guangzhou)

2014 Withdrew from biologics business
2015 Integrated three companies and shifted to matrix style operational structure

2016 Increased production capacity (completed construction of new buildings) at medical endoscope development and production sites (Aizu, Shirakawa, and Aomori)
Announced new medium-term management plan, 16CSP