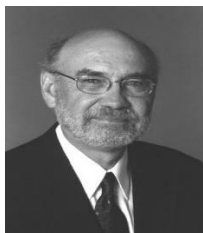




# SPENCER SILVER



Born: 1941 in San Antonio, Texas, USA.

He is famous for inventing the adhesive (glue) used to help create the Post-it Notes. Today, Spencer Silver is retired, but still enjoys investigating new adhesives and painting.

## EARLY LIFE

Silver was born in 1941 and grew up in San Antonio, Texas. It was during his junior high and high school years when he developed a keen interest in science. He graduated with a B.S. in chemistry from Arizona State University in 1962 and achieved a PhD in organic chemistry from the University of Colorado in 1966 before taking a position as a senior chemist at 3M that same year. A loyal and hardworking part of the adhesives team, Silver worked there until his retirement in 1996.

## UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY

In 1968, Silver was developing a new adhesive with an extra strong bond. Whilst creating this new adhesive, Silver by accident created a different adhesive. The adhesive's grip was strong enough to hold papers together, but weak enough to allow the papers to be pulled apart again without being torn. It could also be used again and again. This adhesive was patented (obtain the exclusive rights to an invention or process) in 1972. Silver's bosses were not happy, they wanted a super strong adhesive. So, stopped him from working on this weak adhesive, which they thought was useless.

## MEETING ART FRY

Over the next five years, Silver continued to see potential in this unique adhesive and tried to interest various departments at 3M. Unfortunately, a marketable form of the product proved elusive. That was until he demonstrated his adhesive to colleague Art Fry, who happened to sing in the church choir. Fry was frustrated with the paper bookmarks he used to mark the songs in his hymn book because they didn't stay in place. He realized that Silver's reusable adhesive would provide precisely what he needed — a bookmark that would stay in place, without damaging the hymn book. For several years, Silver and Fry made these removable bookmarks for use in their own offices, before convincing executives to try using them in 1977. 3M finally began test-marketing "Press 'n' Peel pads" in 1978, and after two more years of market research, the product was formally introduced into American stationery stores as Post-it Notes in 1980 — 12 years after Silver first discovered the adhesive.

## THE REST IS HISTORY



The original notes' yellow colour was chosen by accident, as the lab next-door to the Post-It team had only yellow scrap paper to use. 3M launched the product as "Press 'n' Peel" in stores in four cities in 1977, but results were disappointing.

A year later, the product was sold as "Post-Its" in 1979 when the rollout introduction began and was sold across the United States from April 6, 1980. The following year they were launched in Canada and Europe. In 2003, the company came out with "Post-It Brand Super Sticky Notes", with a stronger glue that adheres better to vertical and non-smooth surfaces.



FIND OUT MORE...

<https://www.invent.org/inductees/spencer-silver#:~:text=In%201968%2C%20Spencer%20Silver%20was,a%20low%20degree%20of%20adhesion.>

[http://www.msthalloffame.org/spencer\\_silver.htm](http://www.msthalloffame.org/spencer_silver.htm)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVroPfuJ60I>

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EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. Which year was Silver born?
2. Why are original Post-it notes yellow?
3. Which year did Silver patent the adhesive?
4. True or false Silver invented the adhesive by mistake?
5. What was the original name of the Post-it Note?