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Company History

Nintendo Co., Ltd., of Kyoto, Japan, is the acknowledged worldwide leader in the creation of interactive entertainment. To date, Nintendo has sold more than one billion video games worldwide, created such industry icons as Mario and Donkey Kong and launched franchises like The Legend of Zelda and Pokémon. Nintendo manufactures and markets hardware and software for its popular home video game systems, including Nintendo GameCube and the Game Boy series - the world's best-selling video game system.

As a wholly owned subsidiary, Nintendo of America Inc., based in Redmond, Washington, serves as headquarters for Nintendo's operations in the Western Hemisphere, where more than 40 percent of American households own a Nintendo game system.

1889 - Fusajiro Yamauchi began manufacturing "Hanafuda," Japanese playing cards in Kyoto.

1902 - Mr. Yamauchi started manufacturing the first playing cards in Japan. Originally for export, the product became popular in Japan as well as abroad.

1933 - Established an unlimited partnership, Yamauchi Nintendo & Co.

1947 - Began a distribution company, Marufuku Co. Ltd.

1950 - Hiroshi Yamauchi, grandson of the original president, took office as President and absorbed the manufacturing operation of Yamauchi Nintendo & Co.

1951 - Changed the company name from Marufuku Co. Ltd. to Nintendo Playing Card Co. Ltd.

1952 - Consolidated factories were dispersed in Kyoto.

1953 - Became the first to succeed in manufacturing mass-produced plastic playing cards in Japan.

1959 - Started selling cards printed with Walt Disney characters, opening a new market in children's playing cards. The card department boomed!

1962 - In January, listed stock on the second section of the Osaka Stock Exchange and on the Kyoto Stock Exchange.

1963 - Changed company name to Nintendo Co. Ltd. and started manufacturing games in addition to playing cards.

1969 - Expanded and reinforced the game department; built a production plant in Uji City, a suburb of Kyoto.

1970 - Stock listing was changed to the first section of the Osaka Stock Exchange. Reconstruction and enlargement of corporate headquarters was completed. Started selling the Beam Gun series, employing opto-electronics. Introduced electronic technology into the toy industry for the first time in Japan.

1973 - Developed laser clay shooting system to succeed bowling as a major pastime.

1974 - Developed image projection system employing 16mm film projector for amusement arcades. Began exporting them to America and Europe.

1975 - In cooperation with Mitsubishi Electric, developed video game system using electronic video recording (EVR) player. Introduced the microprocessor into the video game system the next year.

1977 - Developed home-use video games in cooperation with Mitsubishi Electric.

1978 - Created and started selling coin-operated video games using microcomputers.

1979 - Started an operations division for coin-operated games.

1980 - Announced a wholly owned subsidiary, Nintendo of America Inc. in New York. Started selling "GAME & WATCH" product line.

1981 - Developed and began distribution of the coin-operated video game "Donkey Kong." This video game quickly became the hottest selling individual coin-operated machine in the business.

1982 - Merged New York subsidiary into Nintendo of America Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary headquartered in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., with a capital of \$600,000.

1983 - Built a new plant in Uji city to increase production capacity and to allow for business expansion. Established Nintendo Entertainment Centres Ltd. in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, to operate a family entertainment center. Raised authorized capital of Nintendo of America Inc. to \$10 million. In July, listed stock on the first section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Started selling the home video game console "Family Computer" employing a custom CPU (Custom Processing Unit) and PPU (Picture Processing Unit).

1984 - Developed and started selling the unique 2-screen interactive coin-operated video game "VS. System".

1985 - Started to sell the U.S. version of Family Computer "Nintendo Entertainment System" (NES) in America. The system

included R.O.B. - Robotic Operating Buddy - and the games Duck Hunt and Super Mario Bros. Mario and Luigi became as big a hit as the NES.

1986 - Developed the "Family Computer Disk Drive System" to expand the functions of the Family Computer. Began installation of the "Disk Writer" to rewrite game software. Game Counselors were organized and players from all over the world could call Nintendo for advice on games and strategies.

1987 - Sponsored a Family Computer "Golf Tournament" as a communications test using the public telephone network and Disk Faxes to aid in building a Family Computer network. The NES achieved the status as the #1 selling toy in America and The Legend of Zelda became the first new generation home video game to exceed sales of one million units.

1988 - Nintendo of America Inc. published the first issue of Nintendo Power magazine in July. Researched and developed the Hands Free controller, making the NES accessible to many more Nintendo fans. The game library for the NES grew to 65 titles, helping to broaden the demographics to include more adults.

1989 - Released "The Adventure of Link," sequel to the top-selling game "The Legend of Zelda" in the U.S. Started "World of Nintendo" displays in U.S. to help market Nintendo products. Studies show that children are as familiar with "Mario" as they are with Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny! Introduced Game Boy, the first portable, hand-held game system with interchangeable game paks. Nintendo Power magazine became the largest paid-subscription publication in its age category.

1990 - Nintendo Power Fest featuring the Nintendo World Championships tours the country. Japan enters the 16-bit market by releasing the Super Famicom in the fall.

1991 - The 16-bit Super Nintendo Entertainment System (Super NES), along with "Super Mario World," is released in the U.S.

1992 - The Super NES Super Scope and Mario Paint with the Super NES Mouse Accessory were released. The long-awaited "Zelda" sequel, "The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past," arrived for the Super NES. Nintendo of America Inc. developed portable Fun Centers to assist the Starlight Foundation in bringing happiness to hospitalized children by allowing them to enjoy their favorite video games during hospital stays.

1993 - Nintendo announces the advent of the Super FX Chip, breakthrough technology for home video systems. The first game using the Super FX Chip, "Star Fox," is released in April.

1994 - The Super Game Boy accessory was released, expanding the library of games that could now be played on the Super NES! Everyone's favorite heroine, Samus, returns in another long-awaited sequel, Super Metroid. Nintendo helped pioneer the development and implementation of an industry-wide rating system. This year also saw the introduction of a game that would set a new standard in video game excellence. Using proprietary Advanced Computer Modeling (ACM) graphics, Donkey Kong Country took the holiday season by storm! Nintendo Gateway projected to reach 40 million travelers.

1995 - Thanks to the outstanding success of Donkey Kong Country, ACM graphics were introduced to the Game Boy system by way of Donkey Kong Land. Along with this great boost to the Game Boy system line, Nintendo also introduced the Play It Loud! series of Game Boy systems. ACM graphics made another appearance on the Super NES with the release of the arcade smash-hit, Killer Instinct. At the same time, Nintendo introduced a 32-bit Virtual Immersion system known as the Virtual Boy. Next, Nintendo responded to the demands of fans with the release of Yoshi's Island: Super Mario World 2. Nintendo even enhanced the quality of ACM graphics for the upcoming release of Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy's Kong Quest. Cruis'n USA and Killer Instinct available in local arcades. Celebration of the one-billionth game pak being sold.

1996 - Nintendo 64 launches in Japan on June 23. Thousands line up to be the first to experience the world's first true 64-bit home video game system. In early September, Nintendo introduces the Game Boy pocket, a sleeker, 30-percent smaller version of the world's most popular hand-held video game system. On September 29, Nintendo 64 launches in North America. Super Mario 64 is proclaimed by many as "the greatest video game of all time!" For the Super NES we saw the release of the third game in the continuing Donkey Kong series, Donkey Kong Country 3: Dixie Kong's Double Trouble.

1998 - Nintendo introduces Game Boy Color and innovative devices Game Boy Camera and Printer, bringing new life to the longest running hit in the history of interactive entertainment. Pokémon, a breakthrough game concept for Game Boy, was introduced to the world and generated a nationwide craze to collect 'em all! The most anticipated video game ever, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time for Nintendo 64 was released, setting new standards and breaking records for pre-sell for any video game to date.

1999 - The success of the Pokémon franchise expands even further with the release of Pokémon Pinball, Pokémon Yellow, and the first Pokémon title for the Nintendo 64, Pokémon Snap. Nintendo releases several notable N64 titles including Star Wars: Episode 1: Racer, Mario Golf, Super Smash Bros., Donkey Kong 64, Mario Party, and Perfect Dark. At E3, Nintendo announces development plans for a new system, code-named Dolphin, that will utilize an IBM Gekko processor and Matsushita's proprietary optical disk technology.

2000 - Nintendo sells its one hundred millionth Game Boy unit, ending the year with more than 110 million sold. Game Boy is responsible for 47% of all U.S. hardware system sales (an all-time high for a portable device). Pokémon Stadium is the top-selling console game, followed by The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask, both for N64. Pokémon Gold and Silver for Game Boy Color make their U.S. debut in October, becoming the fastest-selling games of all time by selling a combined 1.4 million copies in one week and 6 million through December.

2001 - Beloved Nintendo characters Mario and Donkey Kong celebrate their 20th anniversaries. Nintendo launches its highly anticipated Game Boy Advance in Japan on March 21. The portable powerhouse debuts in the U.S. on June 11, and sells one million units in six weeks. Following the success of the Game Boy Advance, Nintendo launches the Nintendo GameCube home video game console in Japan on September 14. The U.S. launch on November 18 smashes previous U.S. sales records, becoming the fastest-selling next generation hardware system.

2002 - After 52 years at the helm of Nintendo Co., Ltd., Hiroshi Yamauchi steps down and names Satoru Iwata his successor. Nintendo releases a slew of hot titles for the Nintendo GameCube including Super Mario Sunshine, Mario Party 4, Animal Crossing, Eternal Darkness, and the game that many laud as the greatest title of 2002, Metroid Prime. Nintendo releases their first online game for the Nintendo GameCube, Phantasy Star Online. By the end of 2002, more than 25 million Game Boy Advance units are in homes around the world.

2003 - Nintendo takes an already successful system and makes it better, with the introduction of the Game Boy Advance SP. Its stylish flip-top design and rechargeable battery help it become the must-have system across all age groups. Following up the previous year's critically-acclaimed success of Nintendo GameCube titles, Nintendo launches The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker. The game's cell-shaded style breaks the mold and is hailed as one of the best Zelda games ever. Giving fans further ways to enjoy their Nintendo products, the release of the Nintendo GameCube Game Boy Player allows gamers to play their Game Boy and Game Boy Advance games on their televisions.

2004 - Nintendo launches the innovative, new, dual screen handled video game system: the Nintendo DS. The Nintendo DS offers touch screen controls, wireless multiplayer, and backwards compatibility with Game Boy Advance games. The demand for the Nintendo DS makes it one of the year's hottest items. Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen launch for the Game Boy Advance, continuing the success of the Pokémon franchise. Metroid Prime 2: Echoes hits the scene for the Nintendo GameCube, and is lauded by critics and fans alike.

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