Join us on a journey around the world of 3M.
Our Vision:

3M Technology Advancing Every Company. 3M Products Enhancing Every Home. 3M Innovation Improving Every Life.

Science is simply science – until it is applied to helping make daily life better. And that is exactly what drives us. This is 3M Science. Applied to life.™

You will be surprised at all the ways 3M technologies make a difference in your life. After all, you are rarely more than three meters away from the results of our science.

3M is a global science-based innovation company. Our technologies can be found almost everywhere: in your home, in your office, at the hospital, at the dentist, in your phone, in your computer, or in your car.

They help you navigate safely on roads and travel securely in trains and planes. Reliable energy and data networks help to connect you with the entire world. 3M Science is improving our lives in hundreds of ways every day.

In order to continue developing solutions for our customers and partners, we at 3M live a unique culture of innovation. We give our people the freedom to develop their own ideas and use their initiative to connect these ideas with our technologies in the most innovative ways.

From concept to creation, we manufacture our products to the most demanding quality standards. We are committed to ensuring that our core focus is always on the well-being of our employees, our society and our planet. Founded in 1902, we have a proud history as one of the most innovative and ethical companies in the world.

Nowadays, we can find 3M Science in every corner of our lives – either as an unseen technology or as a tangible product that we use every day.
3M at a glance

More than 96,000 employees worldwide

One third of our sales revenues are from products developed within the past five years

More than 85,000 products

Operations in 70 countries, sales in more than 190 countries

You are likely to encounter 3M Science more than 100 times every day

In the last years we have invested $1.9 billion in research and development

We support our customers in four core business areas

Safety & Industrial

More sustainability, more safety, more efficiency. 3M products open up new possibilities: from the processing of surfaces, the adhesion and bonding of a wide variety of materials to the protection of people at work. With thousands of innovative solutions, we strengthen our customers’ processes in a wide variety of industrial markets – in production and processing as well as in the skilled trades.

Health Care

Nothing is more precious than our health. This is why 3M conducts research worldwide into the most effective solutions to improve the treatment and care of patients. Our portfolio ranges from infection prevention and wound care, dentistry and orthodontics to software solutions for hospitals and health insurance companies. Our focus is always on people.

Transportation & Electronics

Modern life is mobile, networked and digital. 3M solutions help make this possible and many are developed in partnership with our customers. It is not unusual for this approach to yield outstanding, forward-looking solutions – for example, for climate-conscious mobility, secure data networks and smart road markings.

Consumer

3M solutions for household, office and leisure use are an integral part of everyday life. They include Post-it® sticky notes, Scotch® adhesive tapes, Scotch Brite™ cleaning sponges and Nexcare™ bandages – all hard-working helpers that make our lives easier. And more than that: they help people live their best lives, be more productive, communicate more effectively and express themselves creatively.
A culture of innovation

Our culture encourages us to think – and act – differently. It’s what pushes us forward and ensures that we stay at the forefront of scientific technological innovation.

Investing in innovation

As a world-leading innovation company, we are constantly looking for new ways to support our customers. That is why over the past five years we have invested approximately six percent of our global sales back into research and development.

Our task is to recognize today what our customers will need tomorrow. Our goal of one third of our sales coming from products launched within the past five years keeps us firmly focused on our customers and their future needs.

The McKnight principles

William McKnight became president of 3M Company in 1929 and chairman of the board in 1949. The principles that he set out during his tenure remain the backbone of our values and culture today. Among them are the principles of taking the initiative and being given autonomy, captured in his words from 1948:

“As our business grows, it becomes increasingly necessary to delegate responsibility and to encourage men and women to exercise their initiative.”

“Mistakes will be made. But if a person is essentially right, the mistakes he or she makes are not as serious in the long run as the mistakes management will make if it undertakes to tell those in authority exactly how they must do their jobs.”

“Hire good people and leave them alone.”

Creative freedom

Ideas need the freedom to grow, which is why our culture works hard to cultivate creative thinking. It is found in every corner of our business. We encourage our employees to challenge the status quo and give them the freedom to research new ideas.

Our researchers and scientists have the opportunity to spend 15 percent of their time on projects of their own choice. This frees them up from their day-to-day work and fuels their enthusiasm to identify innovative solutions to the challenges facing our customers.

This is the culture that lies behind thousands of products that 3M has introduced over the years.

Customer inspired innovation

We work closely with our customers to understand their issues and apply our science to solve their problems. Our focus on our customers’ processes, specifications and challenges inspires us to develop customized solutions that help them to succeed and reach their goals.

In many cases, our innovative solutions exceed all expectations and solve problems our customers weren’t even aware that they had. This is also 3M Science. Applied to Life.” Today, we help customers in more than 190 countries where our teams work directly with local customers to solve their unique challenges.

For one week, a 3M scientist monitored various procedures in a hospital and noticed how often nursing staff had to remove dressings to examine wounds and infusion sites. He realized that with a transparent dressing this would be much faster and less painful. His idea led to the development of our innovative range of products for modern wound care that enable quick and, above all, painless monitoring.

Our ability to innovate is always inspired by our customers’ real-world challenges:

In the 1920s, the young 3M employee Richard Drew visited a local car body shop to deliver sandpaper samples. At that time, two-tone cars were in vogue. Drew observed how the workers laboriously covered the body parts with adhesives and newspaper before they started to paint. Nevertheless, it was more or less impossible to achieve a clear dividing line. Drew spent the next two years developing a more efficient solution for this application: he invented an adhesive tape that bonds well but is still easy to remove. Richard Drew invented Scotch® masking tape.
Improving lives in a multitude of ways

Did you know that you encounter 3M technologies and products more than 100 times every day? Our 55,000 products and our technologies are everywhere. Some you may know, whereas others are invisible, but vital, ingredients that improve modern life. Here are some examples of 3M Science. Applied to Life.™
Connected thinking
A spirit of collaboration underpins everything we do. As a community of innovators, we are constantly connecting people with knowledge and experience from different fields to answer our customers’ challenges. At the same time, our technology platforms allow us to apply science from one area to advance another. From unexpected market applications to the limitless possibilities of merging different technologies, we create solutions for challenges together with our customers.

3M technologies drive innovation
When developing products, 3M’s business groups can draw on 51 technology platforms. These platforms, which are the engine of our company’s innovation, include adhesives and abrasives as well as sensors and electronics materials, to name but a few.
The importance of science

For us at 3M, science is at the heart of everything. But what does the general population think? What do people expect? How does science influence their lives? In order to answer these questions and more, 3M conducts a survey among 14,000 people in 14 countries around the globe every year. The survey’s findings are the basis of our State of Science Index (SOSI), which reflects changes in people’s attitudes towards science worldwide.

Despite some skepticism, international perceptions of science are largely positive. For example, 80 percent of people interviewed globally say that they are more likely to believe information that comes from a scientist than be skeptical of it.

However, most respondents feel that scientists should share their results in a relatable way to everyday life (84 percent) and in easily understood language (88 percent).

87% of respondents say that science is needed to solve the world’s biggest challenges.
59% believe that scientific progress will benefit future generations.
40% believe that science will help them live a longer and healthier life.
87% are enthusiastic about medical advances that cure chronic diseases, such as cancer.

More than ever, the world today needs science to help solve the planet’s greatest challenges. All the greater is our commitment to improving the world through the targeted use of our technological expertise. We hope to inspire others to recognize the potential of science.

For nearly 50 years, 3M has developed and funded programs to support STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) education, promote gender equality in STEM occupations, and develop the workforce of tomorrow.
3M is committed to challenging the status quo and promoting sustainability. We firmly believe that there is a solution to every challenge. And that science can help tackle these challenges. We use our technological expertise to solve some of the world’s greatest challenges in the fields of raw materials, water, energy and climate, health and safety, education and development. Our goals are always ambitious. And we do everything we can to achieve them.

Our commitment: Every new product that enters 3M’s new product commercialization process must have a Sustainability Value Commitment, demonstrating how it drives impact for the greater good. The impact is global in scale as 3M launches approximately 1,000 new products each year.

Our commitment: 3M’s global headquarters is now powered by renewable electricity. This is the first step in our commitment to move our entire global operations to 100% renewable sources of power, and innovating for a carbon-free future.

Our commitment: Contribute our passion and expertise through our global skill-based volunteering program, 3M Impact. Teams of 3Mers travel around the world working with local NGOs or government agencies, helping design solutions for a pressing social or environmental issue.

Imagine a world where every life is improved

At 3M, we look at Sustainability in terms of shared global needs. The challenges we must solve for a sustainable future don’t always follow clear rules or methods – but we see them clearly.

And we understand the impact we make in improving our business, our planet, and every life can be far greater if done in partnership with our customers, communities, and partners.

At 3M we believe science is just science until you use it to change the world.

You can read more at www.3M.com/sustainability