

Week 6 Summary and learning

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Video – 1 : Post It Notes Accidental Inventions Documentary

The **Post-it Notes** invention story is a classic example of accidental innovation. It all started in **1968** when **Spencer Silver**, a 3M researcher, was tasked with creating a stronger adhesive for the aerospace industry. Instead, he accidentally developed a weak adhesive that could be easily removed without leaving residue. At first, the adhesive was considered a failure, as it didn't fulfill its intended purpose.

The turning point came in **1974**, when **Art Fry**, another 3M researcher, had trouble keeping his place in hymnal books at church. He recalled Silver's adhesive and realized it could be used to create a bookmark that stuck to pages without damaging them. This idea led to the creation of the first **Post-it Notes**.

An additional "accident" occurred when the team could only find yellow paper scraps to use in their initial experiments. This resulted in the signature **yellow** color of Post-it Notes, which has become iconic. Despite the early excitement, the first attempt at launching the product in **1977** under the name "Press 'n Peel" did not do well in the market, as people didn't know what to do with the product.

The breakthrough came in **1979** with a targeted marketing campaign called the **Boise Blitz**, where free samples were distributed to offices in Boise, Idaho. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with over 90% of recipients reordering the product. This led to the rebranding of "Press 'n Peel" to **Post-it Notes** and their launch on a national scale in **1980**. Today, over **50 billion Post-it Notes** are sold annually across more than 150 countries.

The Post-it Note story exemplifies how innovation can arise from unexpected circumstances, and how persistence and serendipity often play key roles in turning an accidental discovery into a global success.