

## KNOW YOUR ZIPPER

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### ABSTRACT

The research is about the difference between our national zipper manufacturers and the international zipper manufacturers. The quality of the international manufacturers are incomparable than our national players. The study is to bring awareness to our national manufacturers about the quality and research & development made by the international players.

**KEYWORDS:** Garment Zippers, Quality Zip Fasteners, Metal Garment Accessories

### INTRODUCTION

Evolution of zippers from 18th century to the present day situation and multi-various needs of the industry are deeply discussed from the historical period. To know the present industry better we take the trendsetter and leader “the YKK zippers”.

It is easier as well as foolproof method to blindly follow YKK zippers straight from raw material to the end product.

YKK’s social compliance have crossed the excellence bar. Labour practices and sustainability policies are beyond comparison so explaining the functions and activities of this company will be more appropriate to define a quality zip and a zipper industry as a model.

The zipper is one of those inventions—along with the bicycle—that seems as though it should have occurred much earlier in history. How complicated could it be to assemble two wheels, two pedals, and a chain? Or to align two jagged strips of metal teeth and shuffle them together? There is no complicated chemistry here, but it still works to be the apt mode of transport even for present day situations all over the world.

More confounding still: Now that the zipper has been around for nearly a century, you’d think that something so simple might have been perfected—becoming a 100 percent reliable commodity.

Manufacturers produce zippers by the billions each year, but the device wasn’t always such a success. In the early stages of development, zippers went through design revisions, unsuccessful marketing attempts and a few name changes. Zippers are abundant today due to the tremendous patience of investors, an engineer who gave the product its crucial final touches and World War I, when the zipper was mass produced for the first time. First Zipper Versions the first semblance of a zipper model traces back to Elias Howe, the founder of the sewing machine. In 1851, he created a patent for a device named An Automatic Continuous Clothing Closure, which had a similar function to the modern zipper, although the composition was significantly different. The product operated as individual clasps that were joined manually and pulled shut by using a string, creating a “gathered” effect. Ultimately, Howe did not continue developing his model, and several years went by before another patent was created.

More than 40 years later, inventor Whitcomb L. Judson began devising the patent “Clasp Locker or Unlocker for Shoes.” The design was essentially a guide (now known as a fastener or slider) that was used to close the space between a shoe’s clasps on one side to the attachments on the other. The guide could be removed after use, and had the double function of pushing the bulky clasps down and subsequently pulling them together to close. The guide was difficult to produce due to its very specific functions, and was also seen as time consuming. Whitcomb’s second patent in 1893 was a transition from the former bulky clasps to hooks and eyes. This device, later called “C-curity” was a series of loops (short metal extensions) that were manually laced into the boot or shoe. The improvement was significant because the device functioned as a unit instead of as individual clasps. Eventually, it proved to be ineffective because it had a tendency to spring open. Engineer Gideon Sundback ultimately enhanced the previous zipper models by devising a model called the “Plako fastener.” The design featured oval hook units that would protrude from the tape they were attached to, and provided a more secure fit than the previous “C-curity” design. Although the model had a tighter fit, it was not flexible. Also, it did not stay closed when it was bent and posed some of the same problems as the earlier hook design.

## THE FINAL DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

In 1913, Sundback revised and introduced a new model, which had interlocking oval scoops (instead of the previously used hooks) that could be joined together tightly by a slider in one movement or swoop. This final model is recognized as the modern zipper, which took many months to find success in the industrial market. Retailers, who were prone to sticking with traditional materials and design methods, were slow to purchase the product. In the early stages of production, zippers were used exclusively for boots and tobacco pouches. During World War I, military and navy designers acquired zippers for flying suits and money belts, ultimately helping the reputation of the device’s durability. It was B.F. Goodrich, (which used the product for boots and galoshes in the 1920’s) that gave the device the name zipper, after the sound, or “zip” that the slider created. Originally, manufacturers produced metal zippers, which are effective when used for heavy weight or thick materials. These metal zippers were made in aluminum, nickel and brass and were eventually incorporated into every day wear, such as denim. Designers accelerated the success of zippers with even more materials, such as plastic zippers, which are soft, pliable and easy to maintain. Gradually, manufacturers saw the product’s selling ability and versatility, and zippers, now available in a variety of materials and designs like coils and colored metallic, finally achieved widespread success.

But that hasn’t happened. There are still tons of faulty zippers out there. Teeth that break. Pulls that pop. Herkyjerky sliding and irreparable lockups. One zipper gone wrong can render an entire garment unwearable. Thus consistent quality is a must for reputable fashion brands. For decades now, apparel makers who can’t afford to gamble on cut-rate fasteners have overwhelmingly turned to a single manufacturer. , the Japanese zipper behemoth becomes inevitable for us to say about YKK who makes roughly half of all the zippers on earth. More than 7 billion zippers each year becomes a synonym for zip over a period those three capital letters are ubiquitous and forgotten from which three letters to which three letters evolved —no doubt you’ve seen them while zipping up your windbreaker or unzipping someone else’s jeans. How did YKK come to dominate this quirky corner of industry?, For ZIP..

Founded by Tadao Yoshida in Tokyo in 1934 YKK stands for Yoshida Kogyo Kabushikikaisha (which roughly translates as Yoshida Company Limited). The young Yoshida was a tinkerer who designed his own customized zipper machines when he wasn’t satisfied with existing production methods. One by one, Yoshida brought basically every stage of the zipper making process in house: A 1998 *Los Angeles Times* story reported that YKK “smelts its own brass, concocts its own polyester, spins and twists its own thread, weaves and color-dyes cloth for its zipper tapes, forges and molds its scooped zipper teeth ...” and on and on. YKK even makes the boxes it ships its zippers in. And of

course it still manufactures its own zipper manufacturing machines—which it carefully hides from the eyes of competitors. With every tiny detail handled under YKK’s roof, outside variables get eliminated and the company can assure consistent quality and speed of production. (When the Japanese earthquake hit last year many supply chains were shredded, but YKK kept rolling along.)

Yoshida also preached a management principle he termed “The Cycle of Goodness.” It holds that “no one prospers unless he renders benefit to others.” In practice, this boiled down to Yoshida striving to produce ever-higher quality with ever-lower costs. It seems intuitive, but it’s far from easy to do. And in the end, the secret to YKK’s success is equally uncomplicated but equally impressive: YKK makes incredibly dependable zippers, ships them on time without fail, offers a wide range of colors, materials, and styles, and never gets badly undercut on price. But YKK is still a brand of sorts. It still has an image and a reputation. Its target demographic is trim buyers and production managers in the apparel industry. They’re the folks for whom “YKK” has real meaning.

There used to be a saying among corporate technology workers—or, as you might call them, I.T. guys— which held that “you’ll never get fired for using Microsoft.” Sure, you could take a risk on some upstart competitor and maybe save a little dough, or even get slightly better performance. But if anything goes wrong your boss will wonder why you didn’t opt for old reliable. YKK, for decades now, has established itself as old reliable. “A zipper will never make a garment,” says Turk. “But it can break a garment.”

“YKK becomes an easy name to explain a scientific invention.”

## REFERENCES

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