

# Post-It Notes

# INNOVATION



The 3M Company encourages creativity amongst its employees. The company allows its researchers to spend 15 per cent of their time on any project that interests them. This attitude has brought fantastic benefits not only to the employees but also to the 3M Company itself. Many a time, a spark of an idea had turned into a successful product and had boosted 3M's profits tremendously.

Some years ago, a scientist in 3M's commercial office took advantage of this 15 per cent creative time. This scientist, Art Fry, came up with an idea that went on to become one of 3M's best-selling products. It seems Art Fry had to deal with a peculiar problem every Sunday as he sang in the church choir. The small pieces of paper that he

used for marking his pages in the hymnal would invariably fall out all over the floor.

Suddenly, an idea struck Fry. He remembered an adhesive developed by a colleague that everyone thought was a failure because it did not stick very well. "I coated the adhesive on a paper sample," Fry recalls, "and I found that it was not only a good bookmark, but it was great for writing notes. It will stay in place as long as you want it to, and then you can remove it without damage."

Yes, Art Fry hit the jackpot. The resulting product was "Post-it!" notes and it became one of 3M's most successful office products ever.

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*Chance happens to all but to turn chance to account is the gift of few.*  
– Bulwer Lytton