BOLD DECLARATION
Honda company founder Soichiro Honda boldly declares that a Honda motorcycle will enter – and win – the world-famous Tourist Trophy (TT) races on the Isle of Man.
HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
With just eight associates, the new storefront office at 4077 Pico Boulevard in Los Angeles, California opens for business.
HIGH HOPES
As the first general manager of the new American Honda Motor Co., Inc., Kihachiro Kawashima sets an ambitious monthly sales goal of 1,000 units of the Dream, Benly, and Honda 50 motorcycles.
Supercub

Inspired by a friend who had a small generator engine, Mr. Honda said “Let’s use this to power a bicycle.” Bata Bata was the nick name for the bicycle with the tiny 50cc engine. The innovation made a powered bicycle affordable. Over time Bata-Bata evolved into the SuperCub reflecting Mr. Honda’s belief about making products that are friendly.
GROWING PAINS
Sales records of Honda Motorcycles reach new levels. During this era Honda introduces the H1300 demonstrating an unending obsession for the air cooled engines. The Vietnam Era provided a slowdown of sales prompting America Honda to offering optimal accessories and special models while developing new products for the American Consumer.
GREAT MARKETING
Los Angeles-based agency, Gray Advertising, helps spread the word about Honda motorcycles through their clever You Meet the Nicest People on a Honda advertising campaign. Honda has continued to partner with great marketing firms, most notably RPA, to produce highly creative and award-winning advertisements for Honda products.
GROWING GARDENA
Just four years and one day after the start of Honda’s U.S. sales operations, American Honda celebrates the opening of its new 58,000-square-foot headquarters building in Gardena, California.
BLUE OCEANS
Soichiro Honda continues to dream of a clean, healthy planet and the world’s first outboard, four-stroke marine engine is born.
NEW ERA
Initially sold in the state of Hawaii, the N600 signals the dawn of a new era: American Honda is officially in the automobile business and as a result, a new Automobile Division is established to set up sales for the entire U.S.
YOUTH PROGRAM
Honda and YMCA team up to launch the National Youth Program Using Minibikes (NYPUM) which combines the attractiveness of riding a motor bike with incentives tied to achievement of individual success goals.
FUEL SIPPER
The compound vortex combustion controlled (CVCC) engine offered in the Honda Civic is the first and only power plant to meet the U.S. EPA’s Clean Air Act requirements using regular leaded gasoline, without the need for a catalytic converter; the EPA also rates the car No. 1 in fuel economy. Many in North America call the Civic their car!
GENERATING GROWTH
Shortly after Honda generators are introduced to the U.S. market, a Power Products Division and separate Auto and Motorcycle Service Divisions are established.
BUILD CARS
U.S. manufacturing operations begin and following the first motorcycle coming off the assembly line in Marysville, Ohio, a fax message from Japan is received at the plant which reads: “Proceed with automobile production.”
USER SAFETY
Honda’s first lawn mower is introduced; the HR-21 Rotary Lawn Mower employs a blade brake for enhanced user-safety – a technology that would later be required by the federal government on all lawnmowers manufactured and sold in America.
RUST RESOLUTION
Honda vehicles imported from Japan suffer from rust issues – to which American Honda responds by putting the customer first and replacing parts and in some cases, giving owners a brand-new car.
CREATING THE DEALER CHANNEL
While Honda’s first automobile marketed in the U.S., the N600, was sold primarily through motorcycle dealers, Honda needed a more robust dealer channel for the Civic. A team of just 12 America Honda associates divided the U.S. into territories and hit the road. Overcoming heavy resistance of dealers wedded to the Big 4 (GM, Ford, Chrysler, and American Motors), they got Civics placed on car lots across America.
MATCHING QUALITY
Just months after starting motorcycle production in Marysville, Ohio, Honda announces plans for the Marysville Auto Plant (MAP) – confident that U.S.-made* Accord Sedans will achieve the same quality level as those built in Japan.

*using domestic and globally sourced parts
Marysville Auto Plant production begins with the Accord, which by the end of the decade becomes the best-selling car in America. Adding plants in North America allows more domestic products. Consumers learn Civic Hatchbacks are made in Canada.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH
American Honda celebrates its 25th anniversary in the U.S. and the American Honda Foundation is created to broaden Honda’s community outreach.
ACURA LAUNCH
American Honda announces plans for the “Channel II” luxury auto brand, requiring the creation of both a new line of cars and a luxury-oriented dealer network. Within two years the Acura division begins sales of the Legend Sedan and Integra models.
GROWTH RECIPE
Honda announces a “Five-Part Strategy” to accelerate the localization of Honda production and R&D operations; fulfillment of the strategy begins almost immediately and has profound impact on Honda’s success in the coming decade.
American Honda Finance Corporation commenced operations, first offering wholesale financing on a nationwide basis in the United States to motorcycle and power equipment dealers, and then to Honda and Acura dealers. A few years later, retail consumer financing was offered. From its inception, Honda Finance is dedicated to customer service.
Acura jumpstarts the decade with the exciting all-aluminum bodied NSX super sports car, which at the time is cited by Motor Trend as the “best sports car ever built.”
TOUGH TIMES
Moving into a new headquarters in Torrance, California, American Honda faces a recession triggered by the Persian Gulf War and the bursting of Japan’s “bubble economy.”
WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT
Honda’s board of directors approves the establishment of the Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center in Estes Park, Colorado; every aspect of the daily program is designed to build the students’ sense of responsibility to themselves and the community.
STRUGGLING DOLLAR
The dollar hits an all-time low of 79 yen and Honda responds with two “Strategy for the Americas” plans that will move Honda to the next phase of its growth in North America.
GREEN DREAMS COME TRUE
The Insight Hybrid becomes America’s first hybrid car, achieving 70 miles per gallon EPA-highway fuel economy. Additionally, Honda introduces the first gasoline low-emission vehicle (LEV) in North America, a 360-degree inclinable mini 4-stroke engine for handheld power equipment, and a whole line of outboard motors with unprecedented low emissions.
ARROGANCE AND ACCORDS
A 10-year FBI investigation of Honda’s sales organization reveals widespread kickbacks and bribe-taking. The investigation indicted more than two-dozen ex-Honda managers, dealers, and vendors, and resulted in jail sentences for many – including sales legends Jack Billmyer and Jim Cardiges.
After a bribery scandal tarnished Honda’s public image, Dick Colliver takes over as head of American Honda car sales. Under Colliver, American Honda developed stronger relationships with dealers, set up regional marketing programs, developed leasing and certified pre-owned programs, and stayed away from fleet sales and consumer cash incentives.
PILOT WINGS
A dream of Michimasa Fujino, concepting, building, and testing of a flying Honda began as far back as the 1980s. After great perseverance, HondaJet makes its public debut at the Air Venture Aviation Show in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.
NO. 10,000,000
The 10,000,000th Honda vehicle made in North America rolls off the assembly line in Marysville, Ohio, on April 10th.
NEW OPPORTUNITIES
Demonstrating incredible flexibility, Honda manufacturing facilities add production of light trucks, personal watercraft, general purpose engines, and other new products to help the North American region take advantage of new marketplace opportunities.

Honda Philosophy Core Values in Action

HONDA HISTORY CARDS
GLOBAL RECESSION
The world is hit by a major global recession triggered by the U.S. subprime mortgage crisis and financial crisis.
SAFETY RATINGS
Rounding out the decade, Honda and Acura have 10 vehicles — more than any other automaker — that earn top safety ratings from both NHTSA and IIHS — two comprehensive crash safety tests that are very different in nature.
TSUNAMI DEVASTATION
An earthquake off the Pacific coast of Tōhoku results in a catastrophic tsunami that cripples Japan and is the costliest natural disaster in world history.
CIVIC REDESIGN
After a new Civic design failed to achieve a Consumer Reports “recommended” rating, Honda does a redesign on the Civic in a single model year. Improving everything from interior materials to steering feel, the new Civic roars back to the good graces of the auto press and American car lovers.