

P&G — Production & Growth

What's 99.44/100% pure and floats? The answer is Ivory soap. But it didn't always float, and it wasn't always called Ivory. An accident changed that. In 1879, Procter & Gamble Company was producing a new white soap by boiling and stirring various ingredients with a steam-powered mixer. One day, a worker went off to lunch and forgot to turn the mixer off. Upon returning, he discovered a foamy mixture overflowing from the vat. The unusual mixture still looked like soap, so workers poured it into molds, cooled it, cut it into cakes, and shipped it off for sale.

Floating Soap

Not long afterward, customers began asking for "the floating soap." At first, no one at Procter & Gamble knew what their customers meant. But someone remembered the accident, and the company decided to conduct more experiments. Once they figured out what had happened, the soap floated from that day on.

Procter & Gamble originally called the new soap P&G White Soap, but the owners wanted a catchy name instead. Finally, a name was found during a Sunday church service, when the minister quoted Psalm 45:8, which refers to ivory palaces. What's more, a chemical analysis showed that all the ingredients that weren't pure soap equaled only 0.56 percent. Subtracting that tiny percentage from 100% meant that the pure soap totaled 99.44% of

each bar. So Procter & Gamble named the new soap Ivory and began selling it as "99.44/100% pure." Today, a package of Ivory still says, "99.44/100% PURE®:IT FLOATS."

These events would not have occurred had it not been for two terrible illnesses. When James Gamble was 16 years old, he and his family left their home in Northern Ireland to go to Illinois. Towards the end of that trip, they were floating down the Ohio River on a flatboat when James became very ill. So his parents rushed him ashore at Cincinnati to find a doctor. Luckily, James recovered, but he and his family stayed and made Cincinnati their home. The year was 1819.

At the time, Cincinnati's main business was the slaughtering of hogs. Soap making was also an important industry because a main ingredient of soap was animal fat from local packinghouses. No wonder James eventually entered the soap-making business.

During that same period, William and Martha Procter were traveling from England to a new home in Kentucky. They, too, were traveling down the Ohio River on a flatboat when illness suddenly struck. In this case, Martha became seriously ill with cholera, so they also stopped in Cincinnati to look for a doctor. Tragically, Martha died a few days later, leaving William Procter alone and grief-

stricken. He decided to stay in Cincinnati, however, where he eventually started his own candle-making business.

The Proprietor

The business William started was a proprietorship because he was the sole owner. A

proprietorship is a company owned and run by one person who receives its profits and bears its losses. William had no trouble starting a proprietorship because he didn't have to fill out any legal papers or sign any agreements. He just opened his small store

Before reading further in the story, answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper:

- 1. What type of business organization did William Procter use when he began to produce and sell candles in his small shop in Cincinnati?**
- 2. Name a business in your community that illustrates the same type of organization used by William Procter in his original candle-making business.**



in Cincinnati and started selling his candles.

Okay, Partner

The work was hard and his life was lonely, so William must have been very happy when he found a new wife. His new wife's sister was married to James Gamble, so James Gamble, the soap maker, and William Procter, the candle maker, became brothers-in-law. After a few years, James and William decided to combine their businesses by forming a partnership. A partnership is just like a proprietorship, except two or more people own and manage the business. Like a proprietor,

partners in a business receive any profits or bear any losses. James and William signed a formal partnership agreement in 1837, and Procter & Gamble was born.

The partners became widely known as honest people who produced high quality soap and candles. As years passed, the company prospered and grew. In 1851, William's oldest son joined the company and eventually became a third partner. In later years, sons from both families joined the partnership. Still later, a member of the third generation, Cooper

Procter, joined the business. By the company's 50th birthday in 1887, annual profits had grown, and the number of family partners had risen to seven. The company's future looked bright, and the partners

wanted to develop and market many new products. But producing new products costs a lot of money. The company would have to build new plants, buy new equipment, and conduct new research.

Answer the following questions:

3. When James Gamble and William Procter started the Procter & Gamble Company in 1837, the business was a partnership. Briefly explain the difference between a partnership and the type of business you identified in question 1.

4. What advantage did a partnership offer James Gamble and William Procter?

5. Did limited liability apply to William Procter's candle-making business or to the partnership formed by William and James Gamble in 1837?



Let's Incorporate

These new projects would cost more than the partners could afford. So the youngest partner, Cooper Procter, suggested that the partnership become a corporation. Cooper believed that, as a corporation, the company could raise enough money to develop and sell its new products.

A corporation exists independently of the particular stockholders who own it and of the managers who run it. It's a legal entity with rights and responsibilities just like a person. So changing the partnership into a corporation was a big step. In a partnership the owners and managers are usually one and the same. As partners, the family members were legally responsible for all taxes, expenses, or debts their business produced – even if they had to pay with their savings or sell their property.

A corporation, however, conducts business

and pays its expenses as a separate legal entity. The owners risk their money when they buy shares of stock in a corporation. But, unlike a proprietor or a partner, their potential loss is limited to the amount invested in their shares of stock.

Having this “limited liability” is an attractive feature of corporations. But a corporation's separate legal status also gives investors another advantage: They know they're investing in a business that will last. The stockholders and managers of a corporation may change, but the business will continue. Compare the life of a corporation with that of a proprietorship or a partnership. If an owner of a proprietorship or a partnership dies, the business dies, too. As a result, these types of businesses usually don't last as long as a corporation.

A corporation's long life and stockholders' limited liability help make this type of business appealing. Investors also like corpora-

tions because they can easily sell their shares of ownership in the stock market. Investors in a corporation may also benefit from managers who have specialized knowledge and abilities. As a corporation, for example, Procter & Gamble was able to hire managers with special skills and knowledge. The abilities of these managers then benefited stockholders by helping to make the business more profitable.

Potential investors in a corporation see the benefit of limited liability, long life, ease of transferring ownership, and specialized management. These benefits allow corporations, in general, to raise more money for expansion and growth than a proprietorship or a partnership could. No wonder Cooper Procter recommended that Procter & Gamble become a corporation. The partners agreed, and the company was incorporated in 1890. As a corporation, Procter & Gamble was able to raise lots of money for growth by selling new shares of stock to many investors.

Procter & Gamble has since grown to one of the largest companies in the world. It produces nearly 300 different products for consumers and employs more than 100,000 people. On sales of more than \$40 billion in 2002, it earned about \$4 billion for its many shareholders – or about \$3 per share, from which it paid an annual dividend of more than \$1.50.

Sources:

Alex Groner and the Editors of American Heritage and Business Week, *The American Heritage History of American Business & Industry* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Company) 1972.

Brand History, “Ivory Story,” Procter & Gamble <<http://www.ivory.com/history.com>> (July 2003).

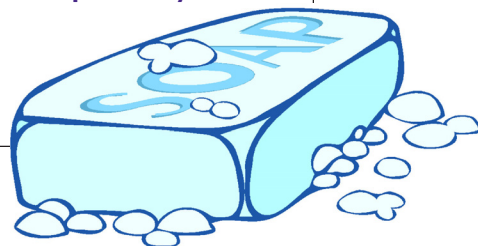
Oscar Schisgall, *Eyes on Tomorrow: The Evolution of Procter & Gamble* (Chicago: J.G. Ferguson Publishing), 1981.

P&G History, Procter & Gamble <http://www.pg.com/about_pg/overview_facts/history.jhtml> (July 2003).

Robert Sobel and David B. Sicilia, *The Entrepreneurs: An American Adventure* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company) 1986.

Answer the following questions:

6. By 1887, the partnership had grown to include 5 sons. Why did Cooper Procter recommend ending the partnership and turning the business into a corporation?
7. What is a corporation?
8. Compared with a proprietorship or a partnership, a corporation is usually better at raising funds for growth. Describe at least two features of a corporation that make it attractive for potential investors.
9. Look in a newspaper’s stock tables and find two businesses that sell products or services you bought during the last week.
10. The businesses you named in the previous question are all corporations, rather than proprietorships or partnerships. Why do you think this is so?



ANSWER KEY

1 What type of business organization did William Procter use when he began to produce and sell candles in his small shop in Cincinnati?

Sole proprietorship

2 Name a business in your community that illustrates the same type of organization used by William Procter in his original candle-making business.

Answers may vary.

3 When James Gamble and William Procter started the Procter & Gamble Company in 1837, the business was a partnership. Briefly explain the difference between a partnership and the type of business you identified in question 1.

In a partnership, two or more people own and manage the business, receive its profits and bear its losses, while in a sole proprietorship, there is one owner who receives its profits and bears its losses as well.

4 What advantage did a partnership offer James Gamble and William Procter?

A partnership offered them both a bigger, growing company and more family partners.

5 Did limited liability apply to William Procter's candle-making business or to the partnership formed by William and James Gamble in 1837?

Limited liability applied to the partnership formed by William and James Gamble in 1837.

6 By 1887, the partnership had grown to include 5 sons. Why did Cooper Procter recommend ending the partnership and turning the business into a corporation?

Cooper suggested that they end the partnership and turn the business into a corporation to expand, develop and sell its new product.

7 What is a corporation?

A corporation exists independently of the stockholders, who own it, it conducts business and pays its expenses as a separate legal entity, and the owners risk their money when buying shares of stock.

8 Compared with a proprietorship or a partnership, a corporation is usually better at raising funds for growth. Describe at least two features of a corporation that make it attractive for potential investors.

One feature that potential investors like about corporations is that they can easily sell their share of stock in the stock market. Another feature may be that the liability is limited.

9 Look in a newspaper's stock tables and find two businesses that sell products or services you bought during the last week.

Answers may vary.

10 The businesses you named in the previous question are all corporations, rather than proprietorships or partnerships. Why do you think this is so?

Answers may vary.