



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**From Pencil Manufacturer to Stationery Powerhouse:
A Look Inside Tombow's 105-Year History**

ATLANTA – It all started with a pencil. For 105 years, Tombow has been dedicated to the pursuit of excellence. What began as a 28-year-old man's dream to follow in the footsteps of his father has now grown to a worldwide brand inspiring its customers to create their best work.

Founded in Tokyo on Feb. 11, 1913 as Harunosuke Ogawa Shoten, the predecessor to today's Tombow was focused on creating pencils for an economy that had put an emphasis on education just 41 years prior. Incorporating trends into product design and taking cues from popular movies in Japan and abroad, Harunosuke Ogawa Shoten carved out a niche in the Japanese domestic pencil market.

"Even today we still lean on trends and pop culture for product and marketing inspiration," said Cathy Daniel, Director of Marketing at American Tombow Inc. "One of our most popular products – the Dual Brush Pen – has been seen on television and movie screens in addition to hundreds of thousands of posts on social media related to hand lettering, illustration and journaling."

Keeping a business growing and thriving for 105 years is no easy feat, especially when enduring wartime struggles, economic downturns, and the growing pains that come with expanding globally. But Tombow has managed to do just that, and has kept ownership of the business within the founding family.

In 1927 Harunosuke Ogawa Shoten officially became known as Tombow, meaning dragonfly in Japanese. The following year, Japan's most expensive pencils to date, the Tombow Drawing Pencils, were introduced along with the tagline "The highest quality: Tombow pencils."

"For 90 years now we've lived by that tagline," said Jeff Hinn, President & CEO of American Tombow Inc. "To this day, each drawing pencil we sell has a quality stamp on the barrel to reflect the dedication we have to providing the best quality products to our customers."

Over the years, education has been the driving force behind the Tombow brand. When the Tombow Drawing Pencils were first introduced, the people of Japan were unaware that pencils came in varying densities. Tombow chose to educate their customers by including a user manual card in every pack of 12 pencils, explaining the pencil grades and their different uses. Today, many Tombow products are still packaged with educational materials and additional free educational tools are available online.

"Education is really the cornerstone of our marketing strategy in North and South America," Daniel said. "We provide free educational resources on our website, our marketing team travels the country teaching workshops to consumers, and we've even partnered with other companies to create courses dedicated to educating people on using our products."

Since the 1970s, Tombow has evolved from a writing instrument manufacturer to a comprehensive stationery manufacturer, producing thousands of different products. From pencils and erasers to fine pens to glues to markers, Tombow creates products meant to inspire and encourage its customers to be creative. Tombow is redefining common practices and traditions to offer customer excitement and satisfaction.

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About Tombow

Tombow is today's market leader for arts, crafts and office products. Serving consumers and businesses around the globe, Tombow was established in Japan in 1913 as the wood-case pencil provider for Japanese students. Since these beginnings, we have upheld a history of unparalleled customer service. Tombow has grown the company's portfolio to a worldwide provider of art markers, liquid glue and adhesive tape, fine writing pens, correction tape, drawing pencils, colored pencils and erasers manufactured in facilities located in Japan, Vietnam and Thailand. Worldwide operating divisions distribute Tombow branded products in their respective geographies. For more information visit www.TombowUSA.com.

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