

Our History

Enriching People's Lives for 160 Years

Our story is, in many ways, the history of globalization and charts the rise of Asia from its initial opening to where we are today, the Asian century.

In 1865, three Swiss pioneers – Casper Brennwald, Wilhelm Heinrich Diethelm, and Eduard Anton Keller – made their

way to Asia and founded flourishing trading houses. Over the next 160 years, these companies grew, diversified, and merged; offering high-quality products and services to enrich people's lives across the region.

Our history has laid the foundations for the company we are today and feeds the entrepreneurial spirit that remains at the heart of DKSH. See the milestones below:

Three Swiss entrepreneurs embark on a journey to Asia

● 1865 - 1871

Siber & Brennwald founded in Yokohama, Japan (1865)

Eduard Anton Keller joins C. Lutz & Co. in Manila, Philippines (1868)

Wilhelm Heinrich Diethelm joins Hooglandt & Co. in Singapore (1871)

Establishing flourishing trading houses

● 1885 - 1887

Keller acquires C. Lutz & Co. and renames it Ed. A. Keller & Co. (1887)

Diethelm acquires Hooglandt & Co. and sets up Diethelm & Co. Ltd. (1887)

Creating local industries and the beginning of globalization

● 1890 - 1900

Siber & Brennwald enjoys leading position in raw silk market and promotes Japanese silk industry (1890)

Diethelm & Co. markets kerosene, a new phenomenon used for lighting, in Singapore and beyond (1892)

20th century opportunities and challenges

● 1900 - 1940

SiberHegner & Co. in Japan hit by Great Kanto Earthquake, and made into public company (1932)

Diethelm & Co. opens new offices in Penang (Malaysia), Saigon (Vietnam), and Bangkok (Thailand)

Continued



Tiger Economies, Asian crisis, and death of trading companies prophesized

● 1980 - 2000	Rejuvenated Asian economies deliver impressive growth until outbreak of Asian financial crisis (1997)	SiberHegner is re-structured and turns around (2000)	Diethelm and Keller join forces to found Diethelm Keller Holding Ltd. (2000)
● 2002	DKSH is founded and reinvents business model to specialized service provider		
● 2006	New category is created: Market Expansion Services		
● 2012	DKSH goes public on SIX Swiss exchange		
● 2015	DKSH celebrates 150th anniversary		
● 2020	DKSH launches revised Identity: your trusted partner		
● 2025	DKSH celebrates 160 years of enriching people's lives		

Stories From Our History

“Go East, Young Man”

The DKSH journey began in 1865. Asia’s vast, untapped opportunities encouraged three Swiss entrepreneurs to sail into the unknown to reach new territories. Caspar Brennwald, Eduard Anton Keller, and Wilhelm Heinrich Diethelm established flourishing trading houses in Japan, The Philippines, and Singapore respectively, importing goods from Europe to Asia. And so began our role in helping to establish local industries and facilitating globalization.

A Bear Keeps Us Ahead in Thailand

After World War II, Diethelm Bangkok took over the rights to sell a sweetened condensed milk product for the Bernese Alpine Milk Company, called Bear. It was challenging to sell as cow’s milk was not part of the Thai diet. The company used floating cinemas – boats equipped with a film projector and screen – which travelled along Bangkok’s canals to promote the brand in less accessible districts. The publicity blitz was very powerful indeed – so powerful that people might have got the impression this milk actually came from bears.

Illuminating Asian Metropolises

Seizing the opportunity of the opening up of trade flows in and out of Japan and China, one of the first big industrial consignments SiberHegner had shipped from Europe to Japan via the Suez Canal was a set of gas lamps from Switzerland destined for Yokohama. In autumn 1872, the Japanese port city, which at that time already counted more than 300 foreign merchants, saw its first gas lamps burning thanks to DKSH’s forefathers. Shortly after, we also supplied gas lamps for the iconic Bund in Shanghai.