

Home / This is Bayer / History / The Bayer Cross

History & Background

The Bayer Cross – Logo and Landmark

Bayer's trademark is seen on products, at sports events, and in TV commercials and glows at the head quarter's site in Leverkusen

The Bayer Cross, symbol of the Bayer Group which was founded more than 150 years ago, is one of the world's best-known trademarks. It was registered in the patent register more than 110 years ago, on January 6, 1904. Initially, the Cross was registered for use for "medications for people and animals, disinfectants, preservatives, tar dyes, and chemical preparations for dyeing and photographic purposes." Since 1914 it has also been used for the company's crop protection products.

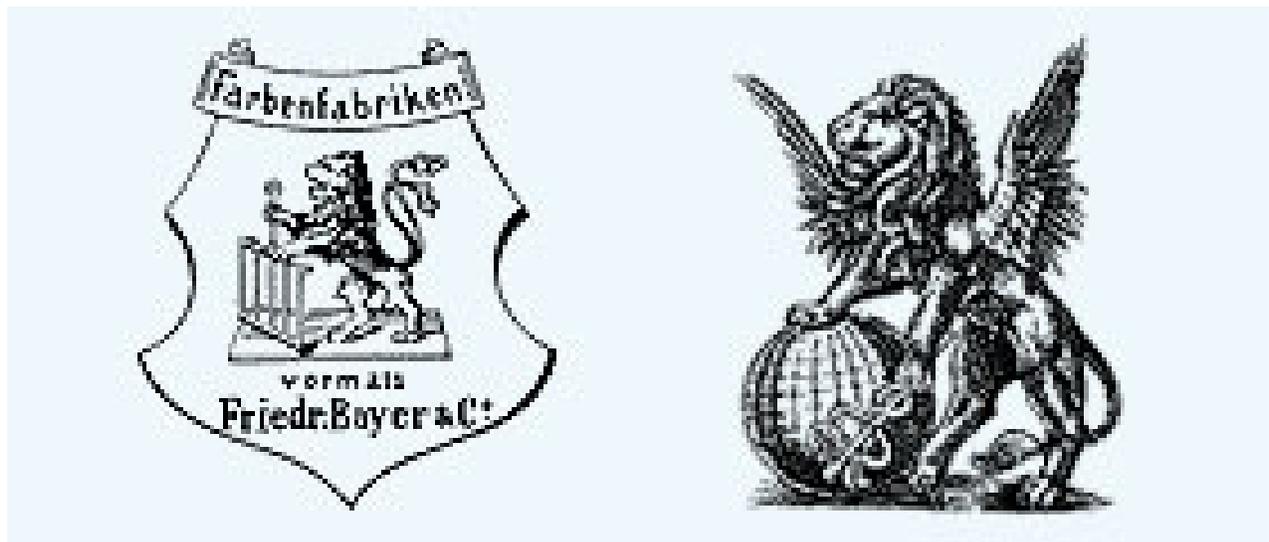


The predecessor of today's Bayer Cross was linked to the company's history.

It is not clear exactly who "designed" the Bayer Cross as the company's archives contain two different versions of its origins. One ascribes the initial idea to Hans Schneider, who worked in the Scientific Department in Elberfeld, Germany. An eye-witness wrote: "It was in 1900. While I was discussing a few things with him [Hans Schneider], he wrote the word Bayer in capital letters on a piece of paper - once horizontally and then again vertically. The result was the Bayer Cross. He tore the page from his notepad, excused himself and took his sketch to the management, where it was greatly admired."

The second version names Dr. Schweizer as the "inventor" of the Bayer Cross. Schweizer worked in Bayer's New York office in the 1890s. His job was to interest American physicians' in the products from Germany. Apparently, the company's long name at that time - *Farbenfabriken vormals Friedr. Bayer & Co., Elberfeld*, - made communication difficult so Schweizer developed an eye-catching company stamp in the form of the cross that is now so well-known. The cross also received approbation from the company's headquarters in Elberfeld.

Out with the Lion – in with the Cross



The lion with the grid (left). The picture on the right shows the lion with the caduceus and the globe.

Whoever came up with the original idea, the new logo made its mark around the world and eventually replaced Bayer's original lion trademark. This predecessor to the Bayer Cross was linked to the company's history. When the company was granted with its first German patent for crocein acid in 1863 it needed a trademark as a seal of quality and a unique identifier. It chose a heraldic emblem based on the coat of arms of Elberfeld, where it was headquartered at the time: a two-tailed lion holding the grid on which the town's patron, Saint Lawrence, was martyred. A

few years later, a helmet and further embellishments were added. It was modified again in 1895, becoming a winged lion holding a caduceus and standing over a globe.

Every year in spring and fall the lights of the **Bayer Cross** are switched off for some hours so **migratory birds do not get disoriented**

In the first years after its registration, the new Bayer Cross trademark was used alongside the lion and the company's name in Europe, whereas Bayer's offices outside Germany used only the new emblem on all documents and packaging. Over time, it also replaced the Bayer lion in Europe.

A milestone in the popularity of the logo and a smart marketing idea was the decision to stamp the new logo on tablets, especially Aspirin™. From 1910 this protected the company's pharmaceutical products from counterfeiting and soon became familiar to consumers as a symbol of premium quality.

Today there are more than **47 large illuminated advertising sites** featuring the **Bayer logo**

A New Painting



Bayer's trademark has been updated several times since it was first in 1904. In 2002 the cross got a new coat. It was the first colored version of the Bayer Cross in the company colors of blue

and green and should symbolize Bayer's modernity and freshness.

After a modification in 2010 the Bayer Cross was slightly redesigned in 2017. With this graphic evolution it is now ready for the digital age. As there is not a huge change the different lies in the detail. The color gradients in the circle are gone and the colors were modified. This makes it easier to use the logo in the digital media and gives the trademark a more modern and up-to-date look.

The Bayer Cross Becomes a Landmark



1933 the illuminated Bayer-Cross became a landmark at the Leverkusen site

In 1929 the trademark was modified and updated for the first time when the previously slightly italicized letters were straightened. Marketing ideas reached a new peak on February 20, 1933 with a technical sensation. The Bayer Cross was displayed as a flashing illumination between two smokestacks at the Leverkusen site, 72 meters in diameter with 2,200 electric light bulbs. An illuminated circle appeared first, then the letters lit up. The Bayer Cross in Leverkusen has been redesigned and modernized several times since then. It is now 51 meters in diameter, has letters 7 meters high, and is illuminated by 1,710 bulbs- making it the biggest trademark in the world. In 2009, the original bulbs were replaced by innovative, energy-saving light-emitting diodes.

- **1933: The first Bayer Cross**

The first Bayer Cross became operational between two smokestacks at the Leverkusen site illuminated by 2,200 light bulbs. With a diameter of 72 meters the Bergische Post newspaper declared it as the “world’s largest illuminated advertisement”.

- **1958: The second Bayer Cross**

On September 2, 1958 the new Bayer Cross was inaugurated in a different place, as the old one had been dismantled after the war and production facilities constructed in its place. Thus a completely new structure was erected a few hundred meters away. With a diameter of 51 meters it is not as large as its predecessor.

- **2009: The Bayer Cross seen in a new light**

At the end of 2009 new lamps light up the Bayer Cross: The 1,710 conventional 40-watt light bulbs are taken out of service and replaced by innovative light-emitting diodes (LEDs). This generates energy savings of more than 80 percent to accompany numerous other initiatives under the Bayer Climate Program. The new light-emitting diodes are filled with white oil and are weather-resistant and pollutant-free.

- **2016: Modernization of LED Lamps**

The 1,710 LED lamps in the 120-meter-high wire-supported structure have been replaced with more efficient state-of-the-art lamps. This change reduced the energy consumption by a further 20 percent. It has also made the Cross brighter again. Because compared with the previous LEDs, both shade and brilliance correspond to those of the conventional light bulbs used before.

The Bayer Cross - and by extension the company as well - is present not just in Germany, but everywhere in the world. For example, as long ago as 1934, Bayer installed a large illuminated cross over the entrance to the Suez Canal. The cross had a diameter of 20 meters. Although this advertising sign is no longer present in Port Said, the idea of anchoring the Bayer Cross in people's consciousness has survived the test of time. Today there are more than 47 large illuminated advertising sites featuring the Bayer logo, including stationary facilities such as sculptures, as well as revolving Bayer Crosses and large-dimension lettering on the outer facades of buildings.

The Treaty of Versailles, which was signed in 1919 by Germany and the Allied powers to end World War I, brought an abrupt end to the successful company's expansion plans. Bayer's foreign assets were seized, along with its patent and trademark rights, which included both the Bayer Cross and Aspirin™, an extremely important product. At the time, the Alien Property Custodian sold the patents of the German chemical industry for only US\$ 250,000 - a heavy blow

for the Farbenfabriken. This meant that in the United States, the Bayer name no longer belonged to Bayer, but to Sterling Drug. It wasn't until 1994 that Bayer regained the right to use its name and corporate logo in the United States by acquiring the North American non-prescription drug business of Sterling Winthrop. After more than 74 years, however, the price had risen dramatically: Bayer paid \$1 billion for the right to use a uniform corporate logo throughout the world.

[> back](#)