

Toy Industry Newsletter – April 2010 Edition

In this issue:

- I. Looking for Puzzle and Game concepts
- II. Looking to sell your small business?
- III. Do you work for a Zombie Company? By **David E. Fitzgibbons, CPC**
- IV. The future as per **Jesse Schell**
- V. Ask Dave – Employment Advice
- VI. Product manager Needed
- VII. Book Review – “Why We Buy – The Science of Shopping” by **Paco Underhill**
- VIII. Cute AND Cool Design Contest (Contest Ends April 30th!)

I. Looking for Puzzle, Game & mind-powered concepts

TheGreatToySearch.com is currently looking for unique puzzle and game concepts. If you have a mind-powered concept that is fun and unique our [site](#) would like to review it as soon as possible!

II. Looking to sell your small business?

If you are looking to sell your small business the **Executive Search Group** might be able to help. If your company is currently servicing the toy/consumer goods industry with hard line items (plastic) with **solid distribution** and sales of approximately \$1MM USD (I did say *small!*) please contact David [via email](#) or at 330.867.7725.

III. Do you work for a Zombie Company? By David E. Fitzgibbons, CPC

Do you work for a “*zombie*” company? Don’t know what a zombie company is? A zombie company is a company that behaves in a profoundly self-defeating way. A company that fails to respond to the changes that confront them; they fail to make meaningful decisions and fail at the challenge of reinvention. **General Motors** is an example of a zombie company. Oil is a non-renewable energy source and yet GM invested heavily in SUV’s, trucks and Hummers when they should have been allocating money for vehicles with a long-term future like Toyota and Honda have. GM didn’t start designing the Chevy Volt (electric car) until 2008; that is missing the market.

Sometimes entire industries become zombies. Case in point would be the Newspaper industry. Few people under 35 receive a hardcopy newspaper and chances are they never will. The industry still hasn’t yet figured out how to monetize the web (no, online ads aren’t paying the bills yet either) so what are they to do? How will they adapt to the changing marketplace? My guess is that most (print) newspaper companies are zombies and will eventually go out of business. The record industry displayed classic zombie behavior – they fought against digital music to the bitter end and in the end the industry changed them – not the other way around. The average greetings card customer is a 60-year-old female; that’s a demographic that ought to keep those company presidents up at night. The movie industry is the next zombie in waiting as they don’t understand that hard copy DVD’s (red ray or blue ray) aren’t the future of their industry. Yet they will hang onto DVD’s like a life raft at sea...frankly I see them more as an albatross around their neck and a harbinger of

their ultimate demise. Being a zombie is all about getting innovation wrong, or worse, just not doing anything at all while the world around you changes.

The questions of the future won't be about products like cars, newspapers, music or media because we will (likely) always have those entities. The questions of the future will be what are the markets of the future? How will we reinvent our value chains and how do we fundamentally redesign our business models to serve them? If your company doesn't address these issues or worse yet, think these issues don't apply to them, then you should be wary of staying within that organization.

IV. The Future as per Jesse Schell

Jesse Schell is a Professor at **Carnegie Mellon University** and President of his design firm, Schell Designs, specializing in interactive toys, computer/web games and interactive theme park rides for **Disney**. Jesse recently gave a speech at the DICE (Design, Innovate, Communicate and Entertain) Summit and it addresses how today's child (and adult for that matter) plays. From Club Penguin to the Wii and Webkinz to Facebook "game play" is creeping into every facet of our lives. No less than **Ford Motor Company** has placed a "virtual pet" in the dashboard of their new hybrid; drive more economically and watch the leaves on the tree grow. Jesse envisions a world where game theory, micro-transactions (ideally suited to the toy industry) and disposable electronics integrate themselves into everyday items like toothbrushes, cereal boxes and even soda cans.

Jesse is a blue sky genius and his video is worth watching if you want to learn more about how game play will affect every product we purchase from books we read to cereal we eat. >>>[Jesses video can be found here](#)<<<

[Credit for this video referral goes to Marc Zak; inventor and toy developer (formerly of **Hasbro** and recently as the Advanced Concepts Manager at **Wild Planet**). Thanks Marc.]

V. Ask Dave – Employment Advice

Dear Dave:

I work for a California company that is famous for making a doll that begins with the letter "B". I want to start a blog about the crazy (and yes interesting) inner-workings of how this doll is brought to market as I think this topic, and my blog, would have mass appeal. What do I need to do to make sure this doesn't impact my current job or my career?

Dave Says: That's easy to answer...don't do it! Professionally there is virtually zero upside to blogging about your employer. There is however a long and storied history of employees getting fired for their blogs. The most famous example is that of Ellen Simonetti who was fired by **Delta Airlines** for posting "inappropriate" images of herself on her blog while wearing a Delta Airlines uniform. [Ms. Simonetti's bra was "visible" in one of the pictures.] Like most companies, Delta Airlines doesn't address *web-logs* (blogs) in their employee manual; most companies don't. That fact however won't prevent a company from executing their legal right to fire you for it. Of course if you stick to "words only" you still aren't safe. **Microsoft** and **Google** have fired employees for their blogs and they ENCOURAGE their employees to blog!

My advice would be to channel your energies and internet acumen into a more worthy cause. Perhaps your alma mater, local charity or your child's school could put your passions and abilities to work. The world will be a better place because of it.

VI. Looking for a...

Product Manager – Northern New Jersey

We are currently looking for a Product Manager in the Northern New Jersey area. If you or someone you know has experience in product management and would like to work for a fun, profitable and stable company then please contact David via [email](#).

Sales Rep – Board Games

Client has an amazing line for you to review and represent. Work from home. Please [email David](#) if you or someone you know might be interested in this opportunity.

VII. David's 60-Second Book Review: "Why We Buy – The Science of Shopping"

Three editions and twenty seven languages later this National Best Seller by Paco Underhill is a treatise on what is wrong with retail and how to improve it. Paco's company **Envirosell** has been employed by hundreds of retailers in thousands of stores filming millions of hours of video tape (now digital) all watching how we shop to best determine how to maximize the dollars customers spend at retail.

What has Paco learned from these millions of hours? Basically that the retail experience really stinks and we are poorly served. Paco states that *"you can't know how much shoppers will buy until you make the shopping experience as comfortable, easy and practical as possible"*. Sounds simple but it isn't. Most retailers have absolutely no idea who their shoppers are or how best to serve them. Paco offers hundreds of insights into shoppers behaviors and retail revelations; here are a few random ones (and I mean random):

- 25% of women buy jeans after taking them to a fitting room as opposed to 65% of men.
- 60% of what we purchase at the grocery store isn't on our list.
- Women (and men) buy more from women which is why Radio Shack is trying to hire more female store managers. Best Buy meanwhile can directly correlate store sales to the number of female associates on the sales floor. You go girls!
- If you want to keep teenagers from loitering in your store/parking lot – play classical music.
- 90% of all new grocery items fail. The other 10% succeed in large part due to free samples.
- Mirrors slow shoppers down and increase sales.
- Average time spent in a Wal-Mart is 30 minutes although I personally never made it that long
- Underhill can tell the gender of a Wal-Mart Manager in any store based solely on how recently the women's dressing room has been painted.

Paco gives a virtual roadmap on how to best dress your store to keep people coming in, keep them there longer and keep them spending more. Paco's ideas are great, like having a working

kitchen in the middle of the grocery store, cooking food, giving samples, offering the recipe then selling the ingredients - I just wish the stores I went to would heed his advice.

WHY WE BUY – THE SCIENCE OF SHOPPING BY PACO UNDERHILL ISBN: 0-684-84913-5

VIII. REMINDER! 2010 Cute AND Cool Design Contest– Grand Prize: Apple Nano

THE WHAT>

CuteOrCool.com is calling all designers to the 2010 Cute AND Cool Design Contest. It is the **Year of the Tiger** and we would like your graphic interpretation of a cute AND cool Tiger.

THE WHY>

Several reasons. First is that your artwork will be judged by leading members of the toy industry and that is a valuable networking tool for you. Second is that the winning design, along with the honorable mentions, will be showcased on the CuteOrCool.com website for ALL of our clients to review and that is another great networking opportunity. Lastly, the winning design will receive a **Grand Prize of an 8GB Apple Nano MP3 Player** (your choice of colors).

THE HOW>

It's easy! Send as many design submissions as you wish (in jpeg form) to David @ searchgroup@mindspring.com. Just make sure your tiger is cute AND cool; you decide on how best to accomplish that. You may NOT have your contact information (name, email addy, website, phone number, etc) on the actual image (for judging purposes) but you can include it in the file name. Your artwork will NOT be used on any product(s), we aren't going to sell it, trade it, barter it or give it to anyone for use. We will showcase the winning, and best, images on our websites for all of our clients to enjoy.

THE HOW LONG>

The contest runs until April 30th. All entries must be emailed prior to midnight EST on April 30th, 2010. Winning design will be announced no later than May 30th, 2010.

For any questions please contact David E. Fitzgibbons, CPC of ToyIndustryJobs.com at searchgroup@mindspring.com. Your submission acknowledges acceptance of the contest rules. [Click here](#) for complete contest rules.

The **Toy Industry Newsletter** © is published by www.ToyIndustryJobs.com All Rights Reserved.

David E. Fitzgibbons, CPC of the Executive Search Group may be contacted directly at 330.867.7725

If you wish to UNSUBSCRIBE to the Toy Industry Newsletter – send an [email](#) with the subject heading UNSUBSCRIBE and you will be promptly removed.