

Toy Industry Newsletter – Holiday Edition

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I. Our thanks

In the midst of “*The Great Recession*” I continue to be very thankful for all of the great clients and candidates that continue to work with my firm day in and day out, 365 days a year. A client called a few days *before* Thanksgiving and asked if we could bring in creative talent, ready, willing and able to finish a project within 5 days time...of course I knew we could and we did. The day *after* Thanksgiving another client called and said that his salesperson quit a week before his meeting at Wal-mart and could we find a Wal-mart person with great references who could make it to that meeting and who would fit into his corporate culture? Of course we could and we did.

We know we can be successful but we know we don’t do it alone. We only exist and succeed because we work with excellent people like yourself and we appreciate your loyalty. I appreciate all those who read the newsletter cover to cover, keep up with the website and search **DAILY** our [CuteOrCool](#) website for creative talent. Times are tough and 2010 might be tougher but if we are all working together then we shall succeed. Dr. King said it best when he said, “We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope”. We agree with Dr. King and champion that message. We have hope for our toy industry and expect you too as well. There is a lot of work to be done next year!

Happy Holidays to you and yours from David

II. Looking for a business to acquire

We are looking for a small business with sales under \$5MM that is interested in being acquired by a private individual. Business must have products appropriate for Wal-mart.

If you are interested in selling your business, or know of a business that might be interested, please [email David](#).

III. Still looking for a...

Licensing Manager

Well-established (almost 40-years-old) company is looking for a detail oriented **Licensing Manager** in the **NY tri-state area**. You will be responsible for securing and closing basic license agreements. You will interpret, negotiate, prepare, write, and finalize license agreements as well as manage the on-going business issues under the license agreements

and communicate effectively with licensors. Prior experience with Disney a plus but not required.

Position may be upgraded in title and pay for a qualified candidate. Range is \$50,000 to infinity. No, they won't actually pay you infinity dollars but they will pay handsomely for a superstar. Company offers full health benefits and a 401k. If you or someone you know is interested, please email [David](#) about this opportunity.

Supply Chain Guru

- Spec: SAP, MRP and knowledge of the ENTIRE process. Plus the ability to IMPROVE the process, fix errors and assure product is made and shipped on time.
- Location: North East
- Salary: \$100,000 - \$150,000 (Based on Experience)
- Contact [David](#) to be a Guru in the Supply Chain.

Sales Rep to become a Sales Manager

- Spec: Well-established company is looking for a Sales Rep who wants to take the next step to managing reps and being the boss. Will also be required to direct sell. Client base will be determined by your past experiences. Excellent opportunity.
- Location: Queens
- Salary: \$125,000 - \$140,000 (Based on Experience)
- Contact [David](#) to take the next step in your career.

IV. Management Theory – Generational Difference by David E. Fitzgibbons, CPC

Please review the chart below for the terms I will be using within this article.

Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Matures
Born 1978 or later	1965 – 1977	1946 – 1964	1925 - 1945
30 or younger	31-43 yrs old	44-62 yrs old	63-83 yrs old

In the course of my work I am frequently called on by hiring authorities to replace an employee who does not mesh with a manager. This may be the result of a generation gap between the two parties. A "generation gap" is a social disconnect between people of different ages due to cultural differences. We often think of an *older* manager firing a *younger* employee however, a younger employee quitting is just as troubling from a HR point of view. It is a recruiting axiom that employees don't quit companies, rather they quit managers. You can lose a very-talented rising super-star because s/he can't mesh with their immediate supervisor. In an effort to better help you deal with and understand your coworkers, here is a short course on what has molded each generation.

Millennials are arguably the toughest to manage because they are the farthest removed from the "rest of us". Millennials are the most unique of all employees. Millennials have experienced more violence than any other generation; including school shootings, terrorism on U.S. soil and endless war. Understandably so Millennials tend to be **anxious**. Millennials are **well-educated** and are therefore very **confident**. Millennials **live life in the present** and how can you blame them considering what they have seen. That is important to note

as you promise long-term rewards or promotions for hard-work. Millennials are **socially** and **politically conscious** as proven by record voter turnout in the last Presidential election. The Millennial's work ethic is that of an **eager** employee who wants to make money, but finds it **more important to make a difference**. It goes without saying that Millennials are the largest and most advanced users of **technology** in all forms.

Generation X'ers were born of Michael Jordon and Melrose Place. Life was good for them and they rode the winds of change (and there were many, from the collapse of communism to computers in classrooms, the CD and the now ubiquitous cell phone) with ease. X'ers are **flexible, entrepreneurial, self-sufficient** and **pragmatic**. X'ers seek the opportunity to **work hard** and to **play harder**; it is their hope they are rewarded in both endeavors. X'ers are motivated at work to *get it done*, no matter how and that can cause friction in the work place. X'ers want the opportunity to **grow** within a company as long as they have some opportunity to **do their own thing**.

It's my opinion that generations weren't formally recognized UNTIL the **Boomers**. Much has been written regarding the Boomers and frankly, the Boomers were the ones writing it! Boomers live to **break the rules**. Boomers are **driven, idealistic** and **independent**. Boomers strive for **excellence** and for **adventure**. Within a company they require a **variety of assignments** to be fulfilled and demand a **voice** within the company.

As if living through (or riding the baby wave of) the Great Depression wasn't enough, life has thrown the **Matures** one more kick in the pants; the stock market melt-down. Matures are back in the work force and likely here to stay. Matures possess everything you want in an employee as they are **disciplined, loyal, dedicated** and have a **respect for authority** not shared as deeply by any other generation. They are also fiercely **patriotic** as living through WWII can make you. Matures do feel they have put their time in and *punched the clock* but they still want to **contribute**. I am one of the FEW people on the planet that feel they have something to contribute. Matures can be excellent hires as they don't need large salaries to take, or stay, with the job. Matures don't require heavy supervision and won't be taking off to take little Johnnie to the doctor much less leave for 6 months to have a little Johnnie in the first place. Matures can have great **connections** and **industry experience** that will likely be lost if it isn't mined.

Conclusion: Part of the solution is not being part of the problem. Being an *Alpha* Boomer doesn't preclude you from successfully managing, or god-forbid working for, a *Beta* Millennial. As we continue to age, and with the current economy, we will see a much wider age range within our companies. It is best to understand your coworker for the ultimate success of the business and your career.

V. Siftables – a glimpse at the future of toys?

What are Siftables? Do you remember the preschool wooden blocks with letters on them? Well, now imagine what those blocks would look like in the year 2525. Designed by David Merrill, a PhD from MIT, Siftables are cookie-sized computers that resemble building blocks. Only these building blocks will blow your mind with their motion-sensing ability, their neighbor detection, graphical display, and wireless communication. They act in concert to form a single interface: children physically manipulate them - piling, grouping, sorting - to interact with digital information and media. Siftables can play words games, teach math, create new colors, cartoon animation, music and more.

Understanding that Siftables in their present incarnation are likely a price-prohibitive concept, it is important to understand this concept and how it is a precursor to the type of products we will need to produce in order to survive and thrive in the toy industry. The toy industry needs to be able to harness the power of technology and implement it into its product lines and not just shoehorn in a sound chip and a LED.

I recommend you view the [short video about Siftables](#) taken from the TED Conference. If you don't know what the [TED Conference](#) is, you need to. TED stands for Technology, Entertainment and Design (that is what the toy industry should stand for as well) and showcases the best and brightest minds in the world. Let Siftables open your mind to the possibility of what lies ahead for our industry. **Editors Note:** We have no financial interest whatsoever in Siftables; we are merely showing a product we feels is a harbinger of the future. We hope you agree.

VI. Parting Shots - the Recruiter's Lament

The concept of recruiting confuses some people and I admit I was once one of them. When I was a child I went to a friend's house to play. Until that day I had never actually seen real art on someone's walls and boy did this family have art. In fact they had lots of things I wasn't acquainted with like maid-service and people who tended to gardens and such. My family had those too but they were in the form of my older brother and I and we didn't wear uniforms, nor get paid, while we did our work. When I asked my friend what her dad did for a living she said he was a recruiter and owned a recruiting firm. "What does a recruiter do" I queried? Her answer was simply that he "...found people for jobs". "That's the dumbest thing I ever heard" I said; shocked that people couldn't find their own jobs! The grade school friend, wise beyond her years, waved her hand around the room in a sweeping motion and said "look at our beautiful home...it doesn't seem so dumb now does it?" She was right and from that point forward I knew I was going to be a recruiter no matter what.

Recruiting is the greatest job on the planet; that cannot be denied. Recruiting means meeting smart, successful people and helping them achieve what they want most in life and that is extremely satisfying. Being a recruiter is a privilege. Choosing to be a toy recruiter does however have its challenges. The problem is everyone wants to be in the **toy** industry. On a daily basis I get badgered by school teachers because *they know kids so well* and by stay-at-home moms because *they have two kids that would be great product testers*. I get bombarded by 35-year-old men who loved action figures as a child and now want to quit their job as a gas station attendant, warehouse supervisor, used-car salesman, mail-carrier, lawn-cutter or snow removal agent to make, market and/or sell toys. And if they aren't qualified for that...well my constant need for a degreed Mechanical Engineer with knowledge of CPSIA with experience in QC in Asian factories will fit them just as well they argue. See, I realized that my brother/sister recruiters don't suffer the same pitfalls as I do. One fellow recruiter finds people to make/market/sell the computer chips that go into vending machines. I'll bet you that he never, ever, ever gets anyone on the phone that tells him how s/he longs to be in the vending machine business because as a kid s/he purchased a shiny new RC Cola from a vending machine.

Alas, in my next life I shall be a recruiter but next time I'll only recruit for people to make/market/sell those cardboard rolls that paper towels and toilet paper come on. Nobody could ever want to make those. Come to think of it...a person who DID make those toilet paper rolls called me and wanted to work in the toy industry. After learning what she did for a living however...I didn't blame her.

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