Toy Industry Newsletter

OCTOBER 2011

I. Jobs Available

Toy Designer – Premiums
Here is your schedule for the week. Monday: Read the script of the next blockbuster movie to get your creative juices flowing for the brainstorming session. Tuesday: Storyboard some ideas for premium products. Wednesday: Dog Day. Bring your dog to work on Wednesdays. Play with dogs. Thursday: Visit movie set to see blockbuster being filmed. Friday: Get some work done BEFORE *cocktails*; Margaritas (blended or on the rocks), Cosmos, Dirty Martinis and Long Island Ice Teas close out the week. Next week? Do it all over again.

Based in Los Angeles this opportunity is for the rabidly creative designer who is a pop culture junkie (you know Brian Griffin is a talking dog right?) and who HAS PREMIUM EXPERIENCE. Resumes without premium experience will not be reviewed by the client.

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Creative Engineer – Premiums
Read above (↑) to learn your schedule. The difference in this job is you need to know how to make those unique mechanisms/features common to premiums. As such, you should be able to shoot a basketball while holding a martini; it's not as easy as you think.

Salary is open and negotiable on both positions, Top tier medical, BONUS paid. Relocation assistance offered. Yes jobs are real.

Click here to see all of our Current Jobs

Please email David if you or someone you know might be appropriate for either position.

II. Ask David

Dear David: I recently had an in-person interview for a position I am ideally suited for and with a company I am very eager to work for. During the interview I met with representatives from Human Resources and Finance. The interview went so well that the VP of Finance brought in another member of the senior staff (and my future superior) to further interview me.

All told, I spent half the day there and after what I felt was a very successful series of interviews, the VP of HR informed me that they would be deciding within 2 weeks. I then sent thank you letters and followed up with a call a week later. With no response, I called again only to be able to leave messages. After that, I heard nothing...no turn-down letter or email. It has been 2 months and the same job is now on several job boards. Should I re-apply?

David Says: No, you should not reapply for this job. In today's buyer's market it takes very little to be disqualified for a position, and clearly you were disqualified. Their lack of response to your calls is testament to the fact that they have already moved on – albeit with an utter lack of professionalism.

Some might say, "What could it hurt to reapply? Maybe the company forgot about you?" Wrong. It could hurt your chances in the future. You will seem weak and desperate, and perhaps even childish for reapplying for a job you already interviewed for. There is always the chance of interviewing with the company again in the future and you don't want to be tagged as someone who "*kept applying online even after the interview".*

III. How your Weight Affects your Career

Throughout the years, in my capacity as an executive recruiter, I have been witness to discrimination based upon an applicant's weight. Shockingly, many clients have come out and told me that although it was not the only factor in their decision, an applicant's weight was a "…significant contributor to their rejection," and, "…did affect their decision not to hire [applicant]." No federal laws against weight discrimination exist, although some cities, including Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, have banned weight discrimination locally.

Studies have shown that reported discrimination based on weight has increased 66% in the past decade, up from approximately 7% to 12% of U.S. adults, says the journal *Obesity*. Another study, in the *International Journal of Obesity*, says such discrimination is common in both institutional and interpersonal situations — and in some cases is even more prevalent than rates of discrimination based on gender and race.

Further studies show that obese women have a much more difficult time achieving corporate success than their slimmer female counterparts, while men actually improve their chances of career advancement when they gain weight.

Men actually improve their chances of career advancement when they gain weight

Studies of 11,253 Germans and 12,686 Americans by Timothy Judge of the University of Florida found very thin women, weighing 25 pounds less than the group norm, earned an average $15,572 USD a year more than women of normal weight. Women continued to experience a pay penalty as their weight increased above average levels, although a smaller one. A woman who gained 25 pounds above the average weight earned an average $13,847 less than an average-weight female.

Men were also penalized for violating stereotypes about ideal male appearance, but in a different way. Thin men earned $8,437 less than average-weight men. But they were consistently rewarded for getting heavier, a trend that tapered off only when their weight hit the obese level. In one study, the highest pay point, on average, was reached for guys who weighed 207 pounds.

I have seen discrimination based upon weight evenly split between men and women, with Sales and Marketing opportunities the most common position where an applicant's weight was an issue. It is also my experience that the higher one climbs the corporate ladder the more weight becomes an issue when determining promotions and when interviewing SVP, EVP or C-level employees.

IV. Cute or Cool Design Contest ~ an iPod for a Penguin!

iPod

Just in time for Christmas, the latest CuteOrCool.com design contest! For this winter contest we are looking for your interpretation of a cute AND cool penguin. Submit your interpretation of a cute AND cool penguin by December 1st, 2011 for the opportunity to win an **Apple iPod TOUCH**. Built in Wi-Fi, a Retina Display Screen and Hi Def video recording are standard on the iPod Touch along 8GB of memory to hold 1,750 songs and 10,000 pictures. You can submit as many entries as you like to David c/o Penguin Contest. All entries must be emailed prior to midnight EST on December 1st, 2011. Winning design will be announced on December 7th, 2011.

Penguin NOT a iPod

For contest rules or information please visit CuteOrCool Contest Rules

V. Management Theory – Blue Ocean Strategy by W. Chan Kim

[**EDITORS NOTE** - The book Blue Ocean Strategy by Kim has been in print for several years and is arguably the most important business book written. If you only read one book this year I recommend Blue Ocean Strategy] In business the market space is made up of two oceans, a red and a blue ocean. In the red oceans, industry boundaries are defined and accepted, and the competitive rules of the game are known. Here companies try to outperform their rivals to grab a greater share of existing demand. As the market space gets more and more crowded, prospects for profits and growth are reduced. Products become commodities, and cutthroat competition turns the red ocean bloody.

Blue oceans, in contrast, are defined by untapped market space, demand creation, and the opportunity for highly profitable growth. While blue oceans are occasionally created well beyond existing industry boundaries, most are created by expanding existing industry boundaries. In blue oceans, competition is irrelevant as the rules of the game are waiting to be set.

It will always be important to swim successfully in the red ocean by out-competing rivals. Red oceans will always matter and be a fact of business life. But, with, supply exceeding demand in more and more industries, competing for a share of contracting markets, while necessary, will not be sufficient to sustain high performance. Companies need to go beyond this. To seize new profit and growth opportunities, they also need to create blue oceans.

A onetime accordion player, stilt-walker and fire-eater, Guy Laliberte is now CEO of one of Canada's largest cultural exports, Cirque du Soleil. Created in 1984 by a group of street performers, Cirque's productions have been seen by almost 40 million people in 90 cities around the world. In less than 20 years Cirque du Soleil has achieved a revenue level that took Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's Circus - the global champion of the circus industry - more than one hundred years to attain.

What makes this all the more remarkable is that this rapid growth was not achieved in an attractive industry. It was in a declining industry in which traditional strategic analysis pointed to limited potential for growth. Supplier power on the part of star performers was strong. So was buyer power. Alternative forms of entertainment - ranging from various kinds of urban live entertainment to sporting events to home entertainment - cast an increasingly long shadow. The industry was suffering from steadily decreasing audiences and, in turn, revenue and profits. There was also increasing sentiment against the use of animals in circuses by animal rights groups. Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's Circus set the standard and competing smaller circuses essentially followed with scaled down versions. From the perspective of competition-based strategy, then, the circus industry appeared unattractive.

A compelling aspect of Cirque du Soleil's success is that it did not win by taking customers from the already shrinking demand for the circus industry, which historically catered to children. Cirque du Soleil did not compete with Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's Circus to make this happen. Instead it created uncontested new market space that made the competition irrelevant. It appealed to a whole new group of customers - adults and corporate clients prepared to pay a price that is several times as expensive as traditional circuses for their unprecedented entertainment experience. Significantly, one of the first Cirque productions was titled "We Reinvent the Circus".

Cirque du Soleil succeeded because it realized that to win in the future, companies must stop competing with each other. The only way to beat the competition is to stop trying to beat the competition.

VI. Giggles 'n Hugs & Hot Mamma – Leveraging Kids in the Sales Process

Two recent start-ups have shown that putting children first may be the secret to success. "Giggles 'n Hugs" is a children's restaurant and play space recently started in the California market. Entrepreneurs Dorsa and Joey Parsi have invented an upscale version of **Chuck E. Cheese**. In lieu of cardboard-tasting pizza, Giggles 'n Hugs offers fish sticks made from fresh tilapia and chicken fingers cooked in trans fat-free canola oil. Giggles n Hugs restaurants average 3,500 patrons per month and are found in upscale malls. Half the revenue comes from birthday parties. Giggles also offers children's entertainment and babysitting services while you shop ($60 for two-hours). I told you it was upscale. Joey Parsi is taking the company public (NASDAQ: GIGL) and envisions 150 restaurants nation-wide by 2020.

Hot Mamma is a boutique clothing store for moms who don't want to look matronly. With 17 stores in seven states Hot Mamma's professed goal is to give every mother 15 minutes of shopping peace. Most moms stay over an hour. Hot Mamma's store offers kids movies, video games and a myriad of toys and crafts all centrally located in the store and supervised by Hot Mamma staffers. Revenue will exceed $20MM this year with same store sales up 30% for the year. Nikoleta Panteva, a retail analyst for **IBISWorld** says, "*Moms want to be catered to, but they are underserved, and the demographic Hot Mamma is after has high disposable income. It's created a valuable concept*".

VII. Parting Shots – Houston we Have a Problem…

On a recent flight into Dallas to see GEMMY, I met a sort of "rock star" from Houston. He was undercover, and since I promised not to use his real name I will call him "John". John isn't a traditional rock star. Rather, John works for NASA as an undercover agent for the recovery of stolen moon rocks.

During the 1970's, NASA presented Goodwill Moon Rocks to the 50 states and around 130 countries to commemorate NASA's last manned mission to the lunar surface. Now, many of the rocks are missing. Several US states can't find them (ahem... New Jersey) and other countries have had them stolen (Malta – just for starters). Moon rocks are classified as National Treasures and owning them is illegal. These tiny shards, sometimes only a few grams, are worth up to $5,000,000. This is where John comes in. NASA agents like John conduct sting operations running ads in newspapers, posing as buyers, and trolling eBay (they recovered a NASA rocket from there recently) and Craigslist. They have purchased stolen moon rocks from Honduran Military Generals and even a Florida housewife who attempted the sale at her local Denny's restaurant last May.

One NASA employee, Thad Roberts, promised his girlfriend Tiffany he would "…give her the moon". Under intense pressure to fulfill his promise Thad outwitted cipher locks, NSA level security and armed roving security patrols and stole a 600-pound safe containing moon rocks and a meteorite with examples of Martin life. In additional to giving Tiffany the moon, the young couple placed the rocks under their mattress and had sex on them; literally sex on the moon. Both were arrested in a NASA sting operation.

After meeting John it is hard to believe that he could pose undercover as a "regular civilian" considering his ramrod straight posture, Green Beret build and buzz cut hair. (He spent 20 years in the military.) I knew the minute I saw him he wasn't a "civilian" and I feel sorry for the moon rock thief that meets John and his Glock pistol at their local Denny's restaurant any time soon.