

PROJECT PLAYMOBIL 1•2•3



PROJECT-EXPOSÉ

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THE BRIEF (1986):

As simple as possible: We (three design colleagues and myself) were given the task of extending the range of products suitable for consumers over the age of 18 months. The products should reflect the particular strengths of the company and, through superior performance, also highlight the disadvantages of all known competitor products.

THE CONCEPT (1987):

From several concepts shown on storyboards and some foam models the team and management opted for the following alternative: basic role game (similar to playmobil) with easy to handle parts (serving the users needs) and some interchangeable elements to ensure that the character of the toy could be easily changed (thus offering possibilities for creativity).

PRODUCT DESIGN (1987 – 88):

The design concept was based on a maximum of organic shapes, rounded edges, attractive, clear and full colours with some soft pastel and dark colours and – to the greatest extent possible – appealing components so as to give the line a charming character. (This appearance should be a contrast to the basic brick box shapes of a major competing product).



In line with the concept, I created the figures which served as the basic elements of the role game. The face is similar to the known playmobil figure, the body includes arms to express the easiness of the game and also to avoid a spontaneous need for small elements that should fit into the hands. The legs are foldable and allow the figure to take a seat. Special hats and printed graphics create different characters.



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As I designed the figures, I was also designated to design the animals. This was not easy due to the fact that the size and proportions of the animals are very different. The result is a line of animals that shows a clear similarity over the whole line while each animal retains its own friendly character.



The environment of the little dolls is covering buildings and furniture (developed in team work) and various animals and vehicles (for which I was responsible). The vehicles had to correspond with the dimensions of the different dolls and other accessories thus ensuring that the parts can be used in many different combinations.

The line of vehicles is completed with the train. An easy rail system and new couplings between the rails and the train vehicles forms the basis for an easy-to-handle toy. All vehicles form a system, the road vehicles can be run on the railroad and the railroad vehicles can, in turn, be combined with the cars and lorries. The train is rounded off with some special elements such as a bridge, a station, a sign etc.



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THE IMPLEMENTATION (1989-90):

To transform these designs into reality, foam models were built in the early phase. Later, I produced technical design drawings which helped the work shop set up the prototypes. I built special items such as the first figures, the first animals and the first hats on my own in a scale of 1:1. These models were copied to a scale of 5:1 to accommodate every detail. Later these 5:1 models were used to build the mould.

I now accompanied the project up to the production and market introduction phases and was also actively involved in the construction and moulding activities prior to production. Being a member of the newly formed project team of the technical departments I was consulted whenever there was a problem.



Together with top management I selected the advertising agency that would be responsible for setting up a special communication campaign. The agency was mainly briefed by me and together we created a campaign that covered all marketing elements extending from packaging, prospects, flyers, product displays and window decorations to the first radio and TV spot.

In this way, I was able to ensure the consistency of the product series and the product environment in every detail in all stages of product development.



The project playmobil 1•2•3 was presented to the public in 1990 at the International Toy Fair in Nuremberg.



The product series playmobil 1•2•3 has remained practically unchanged and is still in production today.

CONTACT / ADDRESS

SYNTHESIS DESIGNPARTNER
Pieter Kuschel e.K.

Pieter Kuschel
Dipl.-Designer (FH)

Marientalstraße 62
48149 Münster
Germany

Tel.: +49 (0) 251 37980837
Fax: +49 (0) 251 37980722
Mobil: +49 (0) 176 56281594
e-mail: info@synthesis-design.com

VATIdNo.: DE 193386913
TaxNo.: 33751553197
TaxIdNo.: 45286307515