

PLAYMOBIL
CORPORATE DESIGN



PROJECT-EXPOSÉ

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Following a strategic product extension of a known competitor aiming to promote customer loyalty at early age, playmobil was forced to expand its product range with a program designed specially for small children. This program focused on the development of a small toy system.

The team therefore commenced with the design of a concept, the characters and all the necessary accessories of the role-playing world. With regard to the design shape, it was clear from the beginning that the round and seemingly natural organic shapes would be the most significant difference to the competitor's products.

The team addressed this special design challenge, particularly for the solitary play elements such as figures and animals, in a kind of a competition. We first began with an average product which, by its very nature, had to include both architectural and figurative elements, since the intended range of toys should include both figures and animals as well as buildings and vehicles. We opted for the exemplary design of a truck.

The team formed two groups, each with two very different form proposals, whereby my approach and a further approach were similar in many respects. These two approaches were approved by management at the presentation of the concept.

It was now up to me to design the characters, animals and all vehicles. Based on the derived shape of the truck, I designed the first important figure in detail, and then a typical animal, and the complete truck. Once these forms had been adapted to each other and approved by the Executive Board, the direction for the further development of the product range was set.



In line with the concept for a restricted building game, the team developed a connector system which was easy to produce and extremely easy to handle with a form that did not appear to be too technical and systematic. In a few parts of the vehicle, this system was adapted to allow playful reconstruction of the trucks.



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All the vehicles and figures and animals now formed a creative unit and each element could immediately be assigned to the series due to its particular shape. With the plug-in system and a beautiful color scheme, the houses, a doll's house, a farmhouse and a station for the railroad could now also be included in this design line. This line now clearly displayed its relationship to the core range of the original playmobil.



In the next step, this relationship had to be shown and highlighted in communications, i.e. in the advertising and on retail cartons.

Together with an advertising agency, which was carefully selected by me and top management, I developed proposals for a refined figurative playful revision of the hitherto fairly sober appearance of playmobil.



This more playful aspect of the core brand better illustrated the topic of the toys and also created a bridge for the most figurative and friendly-looking toddlers range.



The name "playmobil 1.2.3", which indicated the affiliation with playmobil and the targeted age group, was selected as the program name. Unfortunately, this name was pretty systematic and sober. To mitigate this impression, the logo of the infant series was given a rounder design. To enhance the voluminous effect the colorful, round numbers were filled with dark blue.

This logo now had a dark appearance which in consequence demanded a light background.

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For the playmobil packaging, the white written logo on white to medium blue gradient was a typical element. A light background now had to be selected for playmobil 1.2.3 and the basic color of the carton needed to be chosen in relation to this light background and the whole assortment. Up to that time, playmobil had 2 primary colors: a mid blue for the masculine line and blue magenta for more feminine products.



As a third complementary color, we chose a particularly warm yellow, the brightness of which harmonized with the delicate white to light blue gradient of the background. The colorful pictures on the yellow pages and the delicate white to light blue gradient gave the packaging a fresh, warm and friendly appearance which clearly mirrored the previously known appearance of playmobil.

This clearly sympathetic appearance of the playmobil 1.2.3 range had its own special character which clearly stood out from the competition and at the same time demonstrated its relationship to the main range of playmobil.



In communications, the yellow was also used for the base under the logo, the color bar on the side edges and the base of the text and image clips.

This basic appearance has been successfully implemented ever since. playmobil 1.2.3 has remained virtually unchanged and is still competing well in the market place updated with a few new products.

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