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Reflection Paper

HR2002 course has broadened my knowledge on how an organization works. In the first few weeks when we talk about Structure of Organization in the class, we analyzed The Lego Group. We talked about how Lego succeed and survived their long journey. I would like to share my experience encountered with Lego, along with some points I have learnt in this course.

When I was five, my father bought me my first Lego unit. It was a very simple set consists of a small racing car. Since then, I noticed that I like to build things, from a small racing car to a big ship. At first, I started out by following the steps given in the instruction booklet. Sooner, when I have collected a few different sets of Lego, I got bored of having them in a fix shape; hence I started to disassemble all the Lego sets and try to form a different structure by combining a few sets of Lego. Lego is really easy to play, it doesn't require much effort to disassemble them and rebuild them.

Is Lego only for small kids?

No. At the age of 10 to 15, I was still a huge fan of Lego. I personally like the 'Technic' platform in Lego, where gears, motors and some mechanical related object are added to the Lego set. We can then build a racing car with wonderful features such as the ability to turn the wheels by turning the steering of the car; ability to make the car moving front and back by adding a motor to the rear wheels. One might think that playing any remote control car will do. But for me, it is the process of building the remote control car that satisfied me.

At current age, Lego is still attracting me, now by the platform of 'Architecture'. We can now find the model of Eiffel Tower in Lego; we can have a 1:44 scale model of Volkswagen car with such detail that the wipers of the car can be seen. Want to buy a scaled model of Ferrari? Why not build one yourself? You can easily find this model in many Lego retail shops.

It has been 77 years since The Lego Group was founded. What is it so powerful for a toy company to survive more than three quarters of a century? As I have mentioned above, sorely based on my personal experience, Lego came out with brilliant ideas to tackle people of all ages ranging from 2 years old (the huge Lego brick to avoid swallowing of parts) to perhaps 30 years old ('Architecture' platform) or even older. Recently, they have come out with a Mindstorms NXT set which allow us to build robots from scratch (Cheong, 2006). It is further completed with downloadable software which the beginners can make their robots do some predefined movements. Besides, it also allows

more advance users to program based on what they want. This strategy has widely broadened up the range of users of Lego, even to the academic field. Now in NUS Electrical and Computing Department, there are modules on programming the Mindstorms NXT sets such as CS1101 – Programming Methodology (School of Computing, 2004).

Besides this, Lego also uses a 'continuous' strategy to hold their customers. A few Lego set I bought, it was indicated in the instruction booklet that it can be combined with another specific Lego unit to build an even larger and pretty structure. I remember that, I only stop crying when my father promised me to buy a few other sets of Lego I want due to this. Come to think about it now, I think Lego quite success in this strategy.

Lego do follow the market trends. Few months ago when Batman Series was reintroduced and hot, Lego came out with their Batman series as well. Similarly, you may have seen hundreds of Lego set with the StarWar theme last year in many shopping department.

Lego have also come out with a program called Lego Digital Designer. This program enables the users to design their structures by choosing from a few Lego platforms (Lego, 2009). The program will then generate the instruction booklet on the number and types of bricks needed, and also the step-by-step guide to build the designed structured. This unique customization freedom has brought Lego into another new dimension whereby users can now create the Lego structure themselves.

Recently in this year, when I visited a Lego retail shop, I found Lego has expanded to sell many other products, such as key chain, thumb drive and clock. I particularly found that the clock was awesome as we can customize the clock by building anything on it using Lego bricks. Although it was expensive for a clock (~SGD30), but I have promised myself to buy one when I started to work.

Before taking this course, I would not care to know why Lego come out with so many different products. Now that I understand that, in order to survive in the market, they must have these business strategies. Personally, I think their ideal to come out with different platforms to tackle different age groups brought them success in toy industry.

References

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