



Making packaging design child's play



Studio Case Study

The Struggle

With multiple physical mockups and lengthy review processes, Spin Master struggled to get innovative toy packaging produced quickly.

Esko Solution

Spin Master wanted to envision the whole package without physical mockups and Esko's Studio enabled them to do that online.

The Outcome

Using Studio, Spin Master experienced up to 35% savings in both time and costs, making their review and approval process faster and easier.

Toy making is a serious business. The global toy industry was valued at **\$89 Billion in 2016**, spurring fierce competition, with every company vying to develop the next big "it" toy. Toronto-based company, Spin Master™, is a rapidly growing major player in the global toy market, with around 1,600 employees in offices around the world. Spin Master has an impressive range of products, from classics such as Meccano® and Etch A Sketch, to one of the most advanced dolls ever, the award winning Luvabella™, which provides hundreds of lifelike expressions and interactive responses.

Packaging plays a vital role in marketing and sales in the Toys and Gaming industry; possibly even more than in other industries. The packaging must appeal to both adults and children alike, quickly inform customers what the toy is and does, and 'sell' its value in just a short glance.

At Spin Master, that challenge falls to George Olarte, Visual Brand Design Manager, Spin Master and his team.



"We really focus on innovation at Spin Master, thinking beyond the boundaries of what's already out there for children," he said. "We also apply that creativity and innovation to our packaging design. Studio is helping us to take that to the next level."

Esko Studio is a unique set of tools for 3D packaging design made specifically for packaging artwork professionals. Studio is intuitive and powerful for designers, allowing them to work faster, more creatively and with technical accuracy, without the need for physical mockups. It also improves and simplifies the collaboration and communication for everyone involved in the design and development process.

Studio "blew me away"

"I was already familiar with Esko through ArtiosCAD (its' structural design software for packaging design), but when I saw Studio for the first time, it blew me away," said Olarte. "It was exactly what we needed. It allows us to design and render packaging in 3D exactly as it would look on the shelf. I couldn't believe I hadn't heard of this before!"



Because the renders are so realistic, Spin Master has been able to significantly reduce the number of physical mockups they develop, saving time and money.

“The packaging for children’s toys can be quite complex,” said Olarte. “There’s not only the box itself, but often trays and blister packs and other elements. Previously, there was simply no way to envision the whole picture without physically mocking it up. Now with Studio, we can simply render the entire packaging in realistic 3D. What particularly impressed me was adding textures, embossing and debossing, holograms and so on – it is so realistic.”

Reducing Approval Cycles, perfecting pack shots

“There are a lot of people involved in the review and approval cycle,” explained Olarte. “Our division sits in a larger Global Business Unit, and the review process often involves up to 10 different people. Moving from physical mockup reviews to online electronic reviews makes the whole process much easier. In addition, I’m often presenting packaging concepts to a large room of people – being able to create large, high-quality renders so that the whole room can review and provide feedback, is extremely useful.”

Studio shortens artwork review and approval cycles, making communication of packaging designs easy. Reviewers can “spin” and interact with the virtual packaging from every angle, looking at each and every

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detail enabling them to check for even the smallest mistakes before making expensive production tools such as printing plates, embossing dies or varnish blankets.

And the benefits of the highly realistic online renders do not stop at the review stage – they can also be used as pack shots for retail and marketing purposes. Traditionally, pack shots must wait until the packaging is entirely finished and produced, at which point it is booked into a photographer’s studio, and the resulting images are retouched. And these “analog” pack shots also need approval, making this a long and expensive process.



Studio also integrates with the real-time rendering application KeyShot. This combination produces incredibly realistic product shots, with ultra-realistic backgrounds, environments and lighting.

“Extremely valuable” benefits

The overall benefits of Studio for Spin Master have been significant.

“With fewer physical mockups being developed and a simpler review process, we have seen significant savings in both time and costs,” said Olarte. “Because we are able to visualize the packaging, identify what’s good early-on and scrap concepts, we have seen up to 35% in savings. What’s more, we have seen an uptick in creative capacities across our structural engineering teams. Instead of developing mockups, they can work on new initiatives and concepts and the value that this brings to the organization is incalculable, because innovation is our lifeblood.”

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