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Microeconomy

Mrs. Foley

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LEGO

“Children mean everything to us. Children and their development. And this must pervade everything we do.”- Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen.

This is a famous saying from Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, who is the current owner and descendant of Ole Kirk Christiansen, the founder of the LEGO company. For years LEGO has prospered as a toy company, and has had a very big impact on the economy and children because of its popularity as a household toy in many countries.

Ole Kirk Christiansen founded the LEGO company in 1932, the same year his wife died, leaving him to raise his four sons alone. The company originally started out as a carpentry company that produced and sold wooden stepladders, ironing boards, stools, and wooden toys to neighboring farms. The company was settled in the village of Billund, Denmark, with his wife and four sons. Ole, pronounced oh-lay, owned the carpentry shop and produced all manner of wooden products such as stools, chairs, houses, churches, ironing boards, and many other things. Business was going well and had about 6-7 employees. Then disaster struck; his four year old son and five-year-old son were playing in the limber building behind the shop trying to light a hot glue gun when the sparks accidentally caught fire to some wood shavings and burned Ole's

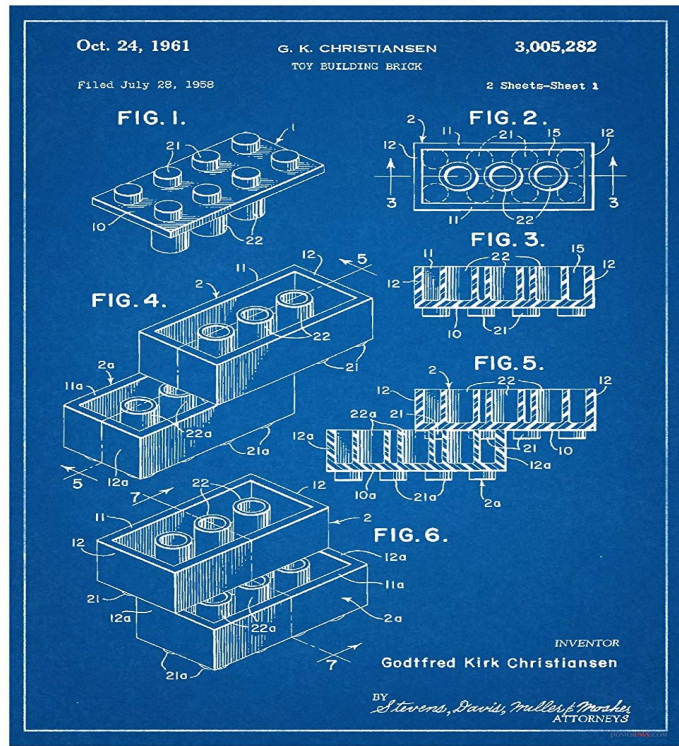
house down, along with the factory. Ole bought a new building and continued his work with a new determination.

Then, in 1930, the Great Depression had reached Denmark, causing Ole to layoff many of his workers due to being unable to pay them. In 1932, Ole's wife died and Ole was forced to raise his four sons alone and without being able to afford food. He decided to cut down on producing small things such as cutting boards, ironing boards, chairs, and a few other small items. One of his sons, Godtfred, at the age of twelve, decided to help his father as his apprentice and helped with sanding, carving, and sales. Unfortunately, sales were not going well so Ole had to try to sell his products door-to-door. But even that didn't work since very few (people had money, so they mostly traded for food, which was okay since they needed it. Ole was sad, and so was his children, so he decided that no one deserved to be sad, especially children. Using what little scrap wood he had left from the business, he fashioned a small pull along duck that quacked and moved its beak when pulled. His children loved it, so he thought that if they liked it, so would other children.

He didn't just make ducks, he also sold and produced wooden trucks, fire trucks, blocks, racecars, and animals. He was very resourceful and used unused yo-yo's, cut them in half, and used them as wheels. At one point, he asked Godtfred to put three layers of lacquer on the wooden ducks, but Godtfred only put two. He went to his father and proudly told his father he had saved the company a lot of money. When his father asked how, he explained the story to him. Ole got upset and told Godtfred to go retrieve the ducks from the train station and put the last layer of lacquer on them. Thus their slogan was created; Det-Bedste-Er-Ikke-For-Godt, "*Only the best is good enough*". To this day, LEGO still upholds that slogan.

Every company has a name, but not everyone knows how they got it. LEGO got its name when Ole was working in his office and he decided, *LEGO needed a name!* It needed to be catchy and needed to be true. The word LEGO is formed of the two Danish words LEg, and GOdt, meaning “play well”. What he didn’t realize is that in Latin, LEGO means, “I put together”. (It is not the exact translation).

After WWII, Ole went to Denmark to buy a plastic moulding machine. He saw the man giving out examples of little plastic bricks that could be made in the machines. Olde bought one that cost DKK 30,000, or \$44.4 in American money. When he brought it back, he modded the brick and made it his own. Then, he developed the first LEGO set that allowed you to build the set on the box, as well as whatever you wanted. Then on March 11th, 1958, Ole tragically passed away due to a heart attack, leaving Godtfred in charge of the LEGO company. First, he got a lot of complaints from the children who owned the sets that you could build a lot of things with the bricks, but they just didn’t hold together that well. Gotfred wanted to fix this, so after many attempts and fails, he invented a system called “*clutch power*”. Clutch power was a way for LEGO bricks to stick together better and not fall apart.



After this invention, children were delighted to build with the newly founded LEGO brick.

Godtfred patented the idea that would last for twenty years. He also wanted LEGO to have “rules” or expectations, they are as follows:

1. LEGO unlimited play possibilities.
2. LEGO for girls, for boys.
3. LEGO enthusiasm to all ages.
4. LEGO play all year round.
5. LEGO stimulated and harmonious play.
6. LEGO endless hours of play.

7. LEGO imagination, creativity, development.
8. LEGO more LEGO-multiplied play value
9. LEGO always topical
10. LEGO safety and quality

These are all ten of the expectations developed by Godtfred. Godtfred also invented the LEGO system of play, and the knights, pirates, and city theme.

The following pictures depict old LEGO models and toys:





LEGO has prospered for more than 40 years and is an amazing toy and very popular because of its ability to offer limitless play possibilities. They help strengthen the brain with creativity and problem solving. Over these 40 years, LEGO has come across many problems, but no matter what, they have always gotten through it. There is another saying by Ole Kirk Christiansen, it is as follows:

“Only the best is good enough”.

Works cited

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