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*Organisation Change Assessment*

*Of the launch of BIONICLE, an original product line, by the LEGO Group, in 2001*

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# 1 Describing the Change

## What is changing?

The LEGO Group launched BIONICLE, a story-driven product line based on original source material and multi-channel marketing, which contrasts with licensed brands and products typical of the time (late 90s).

## Who is affected, when will the change occur?

The product, design, manufacture, research, and marketing teams all rallied around this 2-year initiative beginning formally in 1999 with the storytelling and design, to launch in 2001, claiming accolades in its physical presence “Most Innovative Toy of the Year”, and creative impact “Advance the Advertising Award”.

## How will they be affected?

Teams had to change the way they worked, their project methodology, to a collaborative approach, where individuals are empowered to conceive, test, and execute original ideas. (Lumb, 2022) This is a true culture, practice, and mindset shift, preeminent in the experience-driven product methodology of today.

## Where will the change occur?

Advance, the advertising agency the LEGO Group partners with, conceived and initiated the change, but LEGO Group peers participated from execution to completion and sustaining it, from executives to engineers, product transport and marketing channels, so from the boardroom to factories, from logistics transport and storage, to web, games, and print media.

# 2 Nature of Change Factors

| Nature of Change Factor | Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Evidence                                                               | Change Influence                                                       |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Platform for Change     | <u>Business rationale and drivers</u><br>LEGO Group faced potential financial difficulty with slowing sales from its most prominent licensed product lines, such as Star Wars, and significant investments in LEGOLAND theme parks.<br><br><u>Dangers of not changing</u><br>If LEGO Group did not develop an effective revenue stream, the impending financial difficulty would materialise from a risk to a present issue. | Leadership concerns about business survival that compelled the change  | Positive, the drive and urgency are advantageous in creating alignment |
| Future State Vision     | <u>Change vision</u><br>Christian Faber, then art director at Advance, pitched a narrative-driven product line, BIONICLE.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Reception to the change, by change targets, including LEGO executives, | Positive, the positive reception is advantageous in                    |

| Nature of Change Factor | Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Evidence                                                                          | Change Influence                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | <p>Faber conceived of a cultural island setting, characters with distinct abilities and traits, and buildable toys with technical pieces. These three core elements led to a product line with a physical, and emotional, presence. Faber and Advance would leverage this clear, passion-driven vision, to drive the following changes.</p> <p><u>Target operations</u><br/>Product design and manufacture had to shift their usual three-year project methodology to a quicker workstyle, to develop and launch within two years.</p> <p><u>New capabilities to leverage</u><br/>In terms of practical change, Faber and Advance produced prototypes in the form of narrated short films, toy mock-ups, and a rich story bible, and cooperated with executives, engineers and marketers to develop the product line.</p> <p>In terms of culture change, Faber's and Advance's efforts cultivated an energising atmosphere, with cross-team and -seniority collaboration, and the ability to own and practise original ideas, pushing boundaries in the firm.</p> | product design, manufacture, marketing, and release teams                         | aligning and executing change                                                                                                              |
| Leadership Needs        | <p><u>Goals and measures</u><br/>Regain market share; market performance figures such as sales growth and profit margin</p> <p>Grow brand outreach; engagement figures such as brand awareness and reception</p> <p>Hasten product development; performance figures such as time to market and team output</p> <p><u>Accountabilities</u></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Assumed from anecdotes of executive reception to change and motivation for change | Overall positive, there is sufficient clarity in value realisation to understand the benefit of change, and hence to motivate stakeholders |

| Nature of Change Factor | Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Evidence                                                  | Change Influence                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | <p>Product leadership; owning BIONICLE design and engineering for customer satisfaction and product quality</p> <p>Executive sponsorship; championing collaboration and acceptance for BIONICLE's development and launch success</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                           |                                                                                                                            |
| Individual Impact       | <p><u>Length</u><br/>Short to intermediate, within 2 years to manufacture and launch the product from formal design commencing, but the required culture shift needs to take place before the product is launched</p> <p><u>Stakeholder groups and impact</u><br/>Design; lead product vision and collaborate with following groups to launch the product</p> <p>Executives; approve and support product development</p> <p>Engineers; architect moulds and manufacture</p> <p>Logistics; procure and distribute the finished product</p> <p>Marketers; write copy and execute on web, print, and games</p> <p><u>Individual perception and justification</u><br/>Design; positive as the originator of change vision, justify against their passion and commitment to the change</p> <p>Executives; apprehensive at the uniqueness of the change, supportive at the chance to create success for LEGO, justify against their experiences with existing product performance</p> | Assumed from anecdotes of stakeholder reception to change | Overall positive, there is sufficient interest in change success and contributions to LEGO success to motivate individuals |

| Nature of Change Factor | Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Evidence                                | Change Influence                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | <p>Engineers; apprehensive at the quicker pace required of the change, supportive at the re-energised collaborative culture to have greater impact on new product development, justify against their experiences with existing product development</p> <p>Logistics; apprehensive at the quicker pace required of the change, supportive at the re-energised collaborative culture with a chance to have greater impact on new product development, consider their experiences with existing product development</p> <p>Marketers; apprehensive at the greater storytelling effort required of the change, supportive at the re-energised collaborative culture with a chance to have greater impact on new product development, consider their experiences with existing product development</p> |                                         |                                                                                                                                            |
| Organizational Impact   | <p><u>Org. strategy and KPI change</u><br/>LEGO's strategy should reflect the above leadership needs and the motivation behind this change, the launch of a new product line, to renew interest in LEGO, develop a new revenue stream, and output performant original products. KPIs should be defined based on the contribution of BIONICLE to LEGO's performance, to evaluate its success and decide its continuity in medium to long terms.</p> <p><u>External environmental factors</u><br/>Subsequent consumer and market research during development may indicate a lack of interest in the unique attributes of the new</p>                                                                                                                                                                | Assumed from the known impact of change | Overall positive, there is sufficient clarity in value realisation to understand the benefit of change, and hence to motivate stakeholders |

| Nature of Change Factor | Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Evidence | Change Influence |
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|                         | <p>product line, or a competitor may launch a similar product ahead of LEGO.</p> <p><u>Layers impacted</u><br/>Decision-making to product-executing levels. This is a complex change to take an original product from design to release, within a quicker two-year window, with additional efforts in marketing and distribution.</p> <p><u>Internal impact</u><br/>Stakeholders have to change and cooperate for the product to complete development and release as discussed above</p> <p><u>External impact</u><br/>BIONICLE marketing and launch will attract LEGO consumers, and engage audiences for a unique experience across toy, print, web, and game formats, which is a basis of measurement of BIONICLE success</p> |          |                  |

### 3 Nature of Organisation Factors

| Nature of Organisation Factor                                                                                                                                                          | Assessment                                                                                                                   | Evidence                                                            | Change Influence                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Culture</p> <p>What values, beliefs, or attitudes of the organization will help or inhibit adoption of the change?</p>                                                              | <p>LEGO Group values align well with the change initiative, from championing imagination, creativity, learning, and more</p> | <p>LEGO Group company values, from website</p>                      | <p>Positive; the firm is well-poised to implement the change</p>                                                                            |
| <p>Change Capability</p> <p>What is the organization's capacity and readiness for change (adequate time resources, knowledge, and confidence to prepare for and implement change)?</p> | <p>Likely adequate in terms of number and capacity, but skills and knowledge may need to be developed</p>                    | <p>Assumption from description of LEGO Group at point of change</p> | <p>Negative; people might face difficulty without adequate support, but values and culture facilitate the right environment for success</p> |

| Nature of Organisation Factor                                                                                                                                                | Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Evidence                                                     | Change Influence                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Change Support</b><br>What are the existing mechanisms to transition (training, mentors, performance management, reward, celebration) or will these need to be developed? | Existing product capabilities can be further developed to support the new product initiative<br><br>Mentors and leadership can support change<br><br>Performance management and incentives may need to be developed | Assumption from description of LEGO Group at point of change | Negative; people might face difficulty without adequate support, but values and culture facilitate the right environment for success |
| <b>Change Risk</b><br>What uncertainties may cause disruption to the change effort, what impact would they have, and what is the likelihood of them occurring?               | Willingness and ability to adopt the new culture and carry on the change, moderate likelihood, as the new culture may be too different                                                                              | Assumption from stakeholder reception                        | Negative; people might face difficulty without adequate support, but values and culture facilitate the right environment for success |

## 4 Impact Analysis

| Impact Analysis                                                           | Change Factor Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Organisation Factor Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Speed to adopt the change</b><br>Time required to act in the “new way” | Positive overall impact<br>Increases speed to adopt change<br>Reduces time required to act in the new way<br><br>Compelling business case communicates the value and necessity of change, aiding alignment<br><br>Strong vision motivates and clarifies the expected behaviour of people, aiding implementation<br><br>Objective leadership needs ensure adequate resources and support for change<br><br>Positive individual perception and contributions to change ensure sustainability and | Possibly negative impact<br>Possibly lower speed to adopt change and greater time required to act in the new way<br><br>With limited information on company resources available to support the change, we may only make assumptions<br><br>However, as the launch of BIONICLE is a historical event, we know that it was successful, at least in the first few years<br><br>For increased certainty in change success, LEGO Group should grow its human capital |

| Impact Analysis                                                                              | Change Factor Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Organisation Factor Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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|                                                                                              | <p>success, arguably the most important factor as the willingness to initiate and follow through change is present</p> <p>Clear organisational direction shift ensures change can take hold and its benefit is clear, aiding in strategizing through completion</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>development capability and methods to support this change, and carry the momentum afforded by positive stakeholder reception and complementary company values</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>Acceptance of the change<br/>Degree to which key stakeholders support the “new way”</p>   | <p>Positive overall impact<br/>Increases speed to adopt change<br/>Reduces time required to act in the new way</p> <p>The new capabilities to manage, positive reception to new operations and culture, contribute to a high degree of support for the new way and acceptance of change</p> <p>Stakeholders practise the new way of work, mindset, and priorities well, as it enables greater independence, originality, and contribution to the firm, hence we can see the change has a high degree of acceptance by stakeholders</p> | <p>Likely positive overall impact<br/>Likely increases speed to adopt change<br/>Likely reduces time required to act in the new way</p> <p>We know that BIONICLE design and launch was possible within two years, hence we may assume that organisational factors were supportive and adequate to motivate and execute this change</p> <p>For greater certainty, LEGO Group should grow its incentive programs, capitalising on the personal satisfaction theme to commend contributions and encourage more</p> |
| <p>Level of expected benefits achieved<br/>Degree to which desired benefits are realized</p> | <p>Positive overall impact<br/>Increases speed to adopt change<br/>Reduces time required to act in the new way</p> <p>While we now know that BIONICLE contributed to LEGO’s 25 percent of its revenue and 100 percent of its profits. It was effectively the single revenue source that assured its survival in 2003 and onwards</p> <p>At the time, the significance of this new product line was its</p>                                                                                                                             | <p>Overall moderate negative impact<br/>May reduce speed to adopt change, may increase time required to act in the new way</p> <p>We may assume LEGO had clear measures of financial success, however we are not clear on how it could support product development practices in general</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| Impact Analysis | Change Factor Impact                                                                                                                                                                                               | Organisation Factor Impact                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 | unique presentation by way of story-driven marketing, and its potential for financial gains was clear, with enthusiasm and hope for the outcome, we can see the drive to realise a high degree of desired benefits | For greater certainty, LEGO should enact knowledge and skill transfer between BIONICLE teams and other product line teams, so that the positive changes could be perpetuated with higher benefit realisation |

## 5 Recommendations

| Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| <p>BIONICLE was part of the LEGO Group product portfolio from 2001 to 2010, selling 190 million sets over its 10-year tenure. However, it peaked between 2003 and 2005, with sales declining thereafter through to 2009, when the decision was made to conclude the line in 2010.</p> <p>With the benefit of hindsight, let us look at recommendations.</p> <p>The early launch and success of BIONICLE did not seem to be replicable in later years, and by other product lines in the LEGO catalogue. We may assume that this is due to a lack of knowledge and skill transfer from the BIONICLE team to other teams. To rectify this for future LEGO product development, we should have knowledge transfer sessions for osmosis of the experience-driven product concept, the energised work culture, and the mindset for original, daring ideas that allowed collaboration between teams. This should be spread and replicated, by hands-on workshops, mentorship in teams, and co-decision-making.</p> <p>I see the greatest inadequacy as the inability to empower other product lines to do the same as BIONICLE. Perhaps the BIONICLE team was too insulated from other teams, which warrants resolution. Perhaps we could have cross-product team pollination, retreats, and co-design workshops, where designers, engineers, marketers, and executives learn from one-another.</p> <p>This culture-focused change would enable the more practical aspects such as project methodologies to adapt and transition into a consumer experience-driven flavour, much like what Faber and Advance achieved for culture and practice.</p> <p>This change to launch a new product line is well-defined, and involves collaboration with stakeholders to enact it. While this by definition has qualities of being fast and slow on the continuum, we know from results that it was executed quickly, BIONICLE launching within two years.</p> <p>This may be an unusual case of a strong change vision, with articulate impetus and potential for individual growth and greater contributions, that motivated change in a quick amount of time, with little to no resistance, and in face strong reception and support. It may also have been non-technical enough that existing resources could be adapted rather than fully created.</p> |

## 6 References

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*End. Thank you.*

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