

## Allspark Exclusive Interview with Brian Goldner

Contributed by Galenraff & Powered Convoy  
Thursday, 08 March 2012

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Then we dove into our questions.

**Allspark:** In the past few years, we've seen Hasbro take a much more active role in the promotions of its various toy divisions, with everything from The Hub, to video games, and even live action movies like Transformers and of course Battleship. As the incoming CEO in 2008, you said this was one of your main goals. When you look at those successes, how do you feel about where that strategic goal now stands, and what do you see as the next challenges ahead of you?

**Brian:** It really started in 2000, when for the first time Transformers was back on the air and marketed as Robots in Disguise, we began working closely with our partners in Takara, and we were really moving things forward. And we're still in the early innings of that plan. We're not done, we keep developing our properties in new ways, for example this Monday we'll be announcing a new movie based on a property and with a new studio partner which we're really excited about. Like Bill Gates said, always overestimate what your company can do in the next two years, but underestimate what it can do in the next ten. That's what we try and do. We're developing our properties and moving them forward in new and exciting ways in the short term, but it's all part of a long term progression.

**Allspark:** How do you address the challenges in keeping the Hasbro brands, many of which are now cultural staples, new and exciting for each generation?

**Brian:** By reinventing play. Like with the Game of Life Zapped which you play on the iPad, or Monopoly with the electronic credit cards, or even things like Transformers on the big screen. We have 1500 brands, and by constantly reimagining Hasbro brands for what consumers want to see while staying true to what made them popular in the first place, we keep them fresh and fun.

**Allspark:** Being a former board member of a prominent hospital in the Providence area, how do you find that experience helps you when partnering with the Hasbro Children's Hospital?

**Brian:** Hasbro Children's Hospital is in our DNA, and employees in our company at all levels are extremely committed to it. Every employee at Hasbro is encouraged to give their time to charity. They get 4 hours per month paid with which they can volunteer. It's one of the things that helps Hasbro rank as one of the best places to work year after year. So this partnership is extremely important to us. We just produced a video which began simply by asking employees why the Hasbro Children's Hospital mattered so much to them, and we were so blown away by the responses that we had to share them.

**Allspark:** Was that the 5 minute video which talked about how the Hospital impacted employees personally, and which included the one young woman who's now in a wheelchair, but was able to walk for a few more years because of the Hospital?

**Brian:** Yes, that's it, and she's great and her story was just incredible.

(This is the video, if you hadn't caught it in the charity drive thread, and it really is incredible to see the impact of this

partnership.)

Allspark: In recent years we've seen various toy companies come under fire regarding safety standards, factory working conditions, that sort of thing. You have responded decisively to any issues Hasbro has faced. For example, VP of Corporate Responsibility Kathrin Belliveau was recently named #46 on a 2011 list of "100 most influential people in business ethics." These are very strong commitments, so how do you feel about Hasbro's ability to keep these commitments to social responsibility in the face of ever-changing product safety laws, public scrutiny of worker conditions, as well as the financial need to keep costs low?

Brian: The CSR reports directly to me, so this is something we do take very seriously and recently produced a report on Hasbro's commitment to social responsibility. One thing we've done was eliminate all the wire ties in our packaging, which saves 40,000 miles of wire ties each year. We're also committed to eliminating PVC from our packaging in 2013. We're setting objective benchmarks for what we can accomplish. It's about progress, not perfection. And we were just named on a list of the most ethical companies. This really builds on the other questions, how we care about the company, the brands, and it all connects. This has been a challenging economic environment and last year we had to suspend all raises, but I promised that if we had a successful year and were able to give them back, we would. I'm proud to say last fall we honored that commitment and gave those raises and then some.

Allspark: One final question, thinking about building on previous questions and thinking a little more prescriptively. This marks our third year of fan fundraising to support this great event. One thing we've learned is that these communities love to come together to make a positive impact on the world. We've had contributions from all around the globe, from people with diverse backgrounds, and some weren't even Transformers fans. I'd like to ask what recommendations you may have for how you would like to see this community stay engaged and motivated? For example, what kinds of causes would you like to see fans of Hasbro brands support, what are some charities you see as consistent with Hasbro values, or are there ways in which we can continue to partner with Hasbro for fans to make a difference?

Brian: What your community has been able to do is incredible, and this is a great cause you've chosen to support, thank you. There are a lot of great philanthropic companies worth supporting, but one that I feel is doing particularly great work is GenerationOn. We've worked with GenerationOn because their goal is to teach the next generation of kids to be service-oriented, to value charity and helping others, and learning the importance of giving of themselves. It's an effort that's available nationwide and it would be great for more people to get involved.

(This is their website: [GenerationOn.org](http://GenerationOn.org).)

(Please note that it was too loud where we were for audio recording, so this conversation is based on my notes. I took thorough notes, but it may not be strictly verbatim.)

A very special thanks is owed to Mike 'skunkobot' Avagianos for his help and initiative in arranging this interview with Mr. Goldner.