

LEGO

Building innovation with the LEGO Group

The LEGO Group, headquartered in Billund, Denmark, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of play materials. The name 'LEGO' is an abbreviation of the two Danish words "leg godt", meaning "play well".

The LEGO Group, headquartered in Billund, Denmark, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of play materials. The name 'LEGO' is an abbreviation of the two Danish words "leg godt", meaning "play well".

The company was founded in 1932, the year when founder Ole Kirk Kristiansen began making wooden toys. Today, the LEGO Group is well-represented around the world through a vast number of local offices, with more than 17,000 employees working globally to bring LEGO® play to children everywhere and guided by their mission to inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow. The company is still owned by the Kirk Kristiansen family who see it as an obligation to make a positive difference to children all over the world via Learning-through-Play.



Singapore is home to one of the five main global hubs of the LEGO Group. The other easily accessible global hubs of the company are located in Billund, Denmark; Enfield, USA; London, UK, and Shanghai, China. LEGO Singapore started as a sales office in 1979, but it now goes well beyond its original functions. Currently, the Singapore hub has slightly more than 300 employees from various functions. LEGO



Singapore focuses on innovation and houses the Creative Play Lab team, the APAC regional marketing team, the LEGO Agency (an in-house creative agency), the Emerging Asia team looking into new markets in Asia-Pacific, the Moulding team as well as the Engineering and Quality team.

INNOVATION ROOTED IN A MISSION AND IN A WORK CULTURE

Announced as one of the most innovative companies in 2018 by Fast Company, the LEGO Group was praised because it boosts children's coding and creativity skills. Two significant innovations were particularly noted for their role in bridging the divide between physical and digital play: LEGO® BOOST and LEGO® Life.

LEGO BOOST is a super-charged LEGO set that allows children as young as seven years old to bring their LEGO creations to life through a simple, app-based coding language. Embracing a "fun-first" vision, LEGO BOOST empowers children in both the physical and digital creation of the outcome – first by building a model, followed by coding its behaviour and personality. The coding language was developed specifically to be fun and accessible to children, making it easy to experience instant success, master basic commands and move on to more complex coding and behaviours in a continuous cycle of build, code and play.

LEGO Life, a safe, app-based social network for kids, inspires builders to connect with a community of like-minded peers to express their cre-

activity, share their LEGO creations, interact with other LEGO characters, and inspire one another to build. LEGO Life bridges physical and digital play experiences, innovating on the best of today's social network features to add a social layer to the LEGO play experience. With millions of children sharing their pride of creation in the "Cool Creations" section of the LEGO Magazine, a dynamic social media experience was a natural next step in the evolution of digital engagement. Since the launch of the app, it has recruited nearly six million kids from 26 different countries who share the love of building.

Indeed, the LEGO Group sees the innovation it brings forward as rooted in two crucial features: their mission and their collaborative work culture. The LEGO Group's mission is to "inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow". Their fundamental belief is that 'children are our role models' because of their natural hands-on, minds-on approach to learning. Through generations, the LEGO Group has been working for the cause of children and their development and Learning-through-Play. The LEGO Group also recognizes the importance of having creativity, curiosity, critical thinking, collaboration and engagement to tackle future challenges. It is within their future brand vision to deliver the necessary 21st century skills to children to help them navigate and thrive in an uncertain world.

In addition, at the LEGO Group, a collaborative work culture among teams is crucial for innovation to happen. Different teams and functions are encouraged to cross collaborate with each other to resolve common challenges. It is vital that individuals spar with peers before making a decision and that is built through an environment of mutual trust and commitment to each other's success. Their physical workspaces across their key offices or hubs are also a

great example of a reflection of their innovative work culture – open work floor plan offices sans individual offices, with areas for collaboration and areas for focused work.

THE LEGO GROUP INNOVATES IN SINGAPORE

One of LEGO Creative Play Lab locations is in Singapore. The LEGO Creative Play Lab is a department within the LEGO Group, focusing on inventing the future of play. The main hub is situated in Billund, with smaller hubs in Singapore, London and Los Angeles. It is a strategic approach that fosters open innovation, test ideas and concept experiences through pilot projects. The department works together across these locations to develop new LEGO products and play experiences for children.

The LEGO Group considers Singapore a suitable test bed for new products within the region because of its strong concentration of business talents. Having a Creative Play Lab (CPL) based in Singapore will help to develop play concepts derived from insights from the Asian markets because of Singapore's development as the gateway to ASEAN.

Furthermore, they believe that the Singapore government is very supportive. In our interview, they mentioned a few reasons for this belief: "The tax system in Singapore has been investor friendly and there are many tax incentives in place. Singapore also has a strong regulatory framework and stable political environment. With Singapore as a cosmopolitan city, it is attractive to skilled and ambitious workers from all over the world. The relevant work visa schemes and immigration policies have also helped to facilitate the movement of labour with the necessary skill sets to support our business in Singapore. In addition, the local talent pool is highly skilled and multilingual."

The LEGO Group is supportive of the EU-Singapore free trade agreement and views it as a positive development: "It will further reinforce the existing predictable regulatory environment through the enhanced provisions of the new investment protection agreement under the EU-SFTA. Besides ensuring continued predictability in the regulatory environment to protect our investment in Singapore, the EUSFTA also includes provisions on the protection and enforcement of intellectual property. Specifically, the commitment for the protection of copyrights and trademarks, as well as the implementation of procedures for authorities to act upon their own initiative to suspend the release of intellectual property infringing products would potentially be beneficial to us."

