



Meteoric rise

Young designer builds hot and growing global brand with Adobe® Creative Suite® 4 Design Premium software



When Karl Lagerfeld calls and wants to collaborate on a high-profile design project, it's a sure sign that you've made it as an artist. That is precisely what has happened to Simone Legno, a young designer from Rome and the creative mastermind behind tokidoki, one of the hottest up-and-coming global brands. Working closely with Lagerfeld, Legno created the "Mini Karl Lagerfeld," a limited-edition, ten-inch collectible figure of Lagerfeld, available for purchase worldwide through selected K Karl Lagerfeld retailers as well as in tokidoki stores. For Legno, each design begins and ends in Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium software.



“Integration among components of Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium lets us create beautiful artwork and then leverage it for a variety of media.”

Simone Legno, co-founder, tokidoki

Today at tokidoki, Legno uses soccer balls, apparel, skateboards, and other accessories as his canvas. While the genesis of the brand drew inspiration from Japanese pop culture and art as well as Legno’s native Italy, it is now fully infused with a global sensibility. The brand offers apparel, accessories, footwear, toys, and stationery. With three of its own branded retail stores, tokidoki enjoys a cult-like following. Legno now makes appearances worldwide for product signings and promotions and has also made a guest appearance on the TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

“I’ve been drawing by hand all my life,” says Legno. “But when I first saw vector-based drawings in Adobe Illustrator®—with their confident lines and their beautiful, strong colors—that’s when I knew that working in Illustrator as my primary artistic tool was what I wanted to do in life.”

tokidoki’s creative mastermind and co-founder, Simone Legno, uses a variety of items, including apparel and accessories, as his artistic canvas. While the brand originally drew inspiration from Japanese pop culture and art, as well as Legno’s native Italy, it is now fully infused with a global sensibility. Whatever the final form, for Legno, each design begins and ends in Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium software.

A design destiny

Legno, whose mother is a painter, drew incessantly as a child. In his teens, he played bass guitar in a punk rock band and created all of the posters for gigs, as well as the band logo and CD covers. Eager to start a professional career in design and graphics, he attended design school at Rome’s Institute of Design + Culture. Upon graduation, Legno launched a portfolio website at tokidoki.it to showcase his design and animation talent.

“At that time in my life, I was fresh from design school and I thought, ‘Maybe something magical will happen sometime through serendipity; maybe someone will give me work or new business opportunities. But I just have to wait for the right time,’” says Legno. “Hence the name tokidoki.”

It didn’t take long for Legno’s work to get noticed. In April 2003, the co-founder of popular American cosmetics company Hard Candy, Pooneh Mohajer, and her husband, Ivan Arnold, discovered Legno’s personal portfolio website, which had gained popularity after being listed as one of *The Independent’s* top 10 Websites of the Week. They arranged to meet him, and Legno soon joined the couple in Los Angeles to cement tokidoki’s future.



While tokidoki started small with t-shirts at trade shows, the global lifestyle brand has quickly become known for innovative, eye-popping design and partnerships with established brands such as LeSportsac, Hello Kitty, Smashbox, Asics, and many others. For virtually everything design-related at tokidoki, Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Flash, and InDesign are used. tokidoki not only creates breakthrough designs with Adobe software, but also its website, packaging, signage, and catalogs.



From Los Angeles to worldwide stage

Legno and his partners started out small. At first, they created t-shirts using Adobe Illustrator software and presented them at trade shows. The success of tokidoki's apparel soon blossomed into new opportunities for the company.

The tokidoki lifestyle brand has since quickly become known for innovative, eye-popping design and megawatt partnerships with the likes of established brands such as LeSportsac, Hello Kitty, Smashbox, Asics, and many others. For LeSportsac, tokidoki designed a line of handbags that became the company's best-selling line ever, ringing in close to \$30 million in sales. For Smashbox, tokidoki created a limited-edition mini line for the cosmetic company. For 2010, tokidoki is also launching a design collaboration with Marvel Entertainment. The collection includes Legno's interpretations of iconic Marvel characters—Spider Man, Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, and more—depicted on t-shirts, hats, sweatshirts, and skateboards.

From print to online publishing

Today, virtually everything design-related in the tokidoki business is created using Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium. Legno and other artists at tokidoki use Adobe Illustrator CS4 and Adobe Photoshop® CS4 Extended for creating product packaging, as well as signage, point-of-purchase materials, and postcards for the company's burgeoning line of retail stores. Retail company catalogs are produced using Adobe InDesign® CS4 software.

"Integration among components of Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium lets us create beautiful artwork and then leverage it for a variety of media," says Legno. "Great integration is just one of the things we love about Adobe software."

A lifelong passion, ignited by Illustrator

While the full suite of Adobe creative applications is in use day in and day out at tokidoki, the creative genius—Legno—spends the bulk of his day working in Adobe Illustrator CS4. Legno says that because he is accustomed to drawing by hand, he typically taps the most basic drawing functionality of Illustrator CS4. However, he does find more advanced features like Live Trace valuable for transforming his sketches into vectors.

Another tool Legno uses is Envelope Warp. "I love Envelope Warp, because I can, for instance, give a sense of fabric moving around a model I've drawn, as if she was twirling around or standing in the wind," says Legno. "Illustrator CS4 offers the most wonderful basic features, as well as advanced tools that let me explore new looks and new designs. Really, I hardly ever know what features I'm using when I work with Adobe software. It thinks just like I do, so it feels like an extension of my creative brain."

tokidoki LLC

Los Angeles, California
www.tokidoki.it

Challenge

- Build successful new global brand
- Produce dynamite designs
- Maximize creative flair with strong lines and bold colors

Solution

Adopt Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium for creating everything from apparel designs to screensavers and POP materials

Benefits

- Built global brand that works with Karl Lagerfeld, Marvel, and others
- Delivered breakthrough designs, website, packaging, signage, and more
- Maximized creative impact across media

Toolkit

- Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium. Components used include:
 - Adobe Illustrator CS4
 - Adobe Photoshop CS4 Extended
 - Adobe Dreamweaver CS4
 - Adobe Flash CS4 Professional
 - Adobe InDesign CS4



Today, tokidoki enjoys a cult-like following with its own branded retail stores and worldwide promotional and signing appearances by creative genius and cofounder, Simone Legno. Legno spends the bulk of his time working in Adobe Illustrator, which he says feels like an extension of his creative brain. Legno taps not only the basic drawing functionality of Illustrator, but also more advanced features such as Live Trace and Envelope Warp, for transforming his hand-drawn sketches into vectors and giving them a sense of movement.

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Simone Legno, co-founder, tokidoki

Designs online

Web Developer Eric Spector uses Adobe Dreamweaver® CS4 and Flash® CS4 Professional software—as well as code created Adobe ActionScript® 3 for sophisticated animations—to create the company's fun, interactive, and engaging website. Spector also used Flash CS4 Professional to create the company's hugely popular viral screensavers, downloadable from the company's website.

A new version of the animated screensaver—available cross-platform—is available each week. The screensavers keep customers coming back for more dynamic content. And, because they are based on the ubiquitous Adobe Flash Player, available on 98% of Internet-connected desktops worldwide, fans who download the screensavers can rest assured that the software will run smoothly, without cumbersome downloads or technical hurdles.

"We're unabashedly excited about our screensavers, and we've found that they are extremely popular," says Spector. "Adobe Flash technology is the only technology we use in publishing the screensavers, due to its high-quality video delivery and the fact that its use is so widespread around the world."

For Legno and the tokidoki team, Adobe software makes the company tick and stay in tune with the quirky, wonderful rhythms that keep creativity top of mind for the tokidoki team. "We can honestly say that we wouldn't be in business—at least not in the same form we are today—without Adobe software," says Arnold. "When it comes to Adobe software, there are no other options even worth considering."



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