

TIME FOR KIDS

3, 2, 1, BLAST OFF!

The behind-the-scenes story of Stink Blasters, a smelly new invention.

JOE MORRISON HOPES THAT KIDS will think his new toys really stink. Morrison, the president of the California-based toy company MEG, unveiled a new breed of superheroes at the Toy Fair in New York City last month.

They can't scale tall buildings or fly, but the 24 Stink Blaster characters have "the power to gross you out," Morrison says. Each soft-plastic doll gives off a superstench.

Why does Morrison think kids, especially boys, will want one? He's not just going on a hunch. Like most toy inventors, Morrison and his team have done their homework to create something that will appeal to young buyers.

SMELLS LIKE A GOOD IDEA

The team took a smelly old trick—the stink bomb—and created a world of little boys around it. Each little stinker has well developed personality traits and hobbies.



THE SKETCH
Skunk Punk came to life in a drawing based on a character study by writers.



CLAYMATION
Step two: a well-rounded Skunk, molded in clay by a sculptor



A TOY MOLD
The toys are molded from detailed plastic models like this one.

Morrison hired writers to create the characters' stories. They dreamed up a full history of bad hygiene.

Artists used these descriptions to come up with each boy's look. They sketched the characters, creating views from the front, side and back so that sculptors could then create three-dimensional models. The models were used to make molds. A factory can use molds to quickly make large numbers of the dolls.

MAKING SENSE

MEG worked with the laboratories to create safe but smelly formulas. Then, Morrison says, he and his team held "awful" sniffing sessions. "You're

smelling some really disgusting stuff in large quantities," he told TFK. They did a lot of this work outside.

The toy team spent hours discussing the stinky odors and asking themselves such questions as, "Does this really smell like dirty sweat socks?" They finally agreed on 17 formulas. Most of the ingredients that make up B.O. Brian, Porta Potty Paul, Dog Breath Danny and the others are big secrets.

At every step, Morrison turned to the experts: real kids. They got to see the characters and say what they did and didn't like. What were some of the kids' suggestions? "We heard a lot of, 'Oh, do the one about my brother—he stinks,'" says Morrison.

— By Kathryn Satterfield



SKUNK PUNK
The final doll, in all its smelly glory