



Five minutes with...

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Five minutes with... Michelino Paolino.

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the legendary franchise and our new feature film, TRANSFORMERS ONE, we check in with [Michelino Paolino](#), Senior Director, Product Design - Action Brands.

Below, Michelino shares his insights on what it is like designing toys for such an iconic brand.

What's the best part about designing TRANSFORMERS toys?

"Honestly, the best part for me is reimagining those iconic G1 characters that fans and collectors know so well. Giving them a modern twist is such a rewarding challenge. Plus, introducing new characters and fresh play patterns for kids keeps it exciting every day."

Any TRANSFORMERS memories from childhood that inspire your day-to-day work?

"Oh, absolutely! I'm an 80s kid, so TRANSFORMERS were a huge part of my childhood. I still have some of my old figures—pieces of Optimus, Jetfire, and Megatron. Those toys were everything to me, and honestly, they still inspire a lot of what I do now."

If you could create a Transformer based on your dream car, what would it look like?

"That's an easy one. I still own my first ever car, my 1958 Buick Special and have spent a lot of time and money keeping it viable. I can picture it with a satin black finish, red headlights, and a pearl white roof. When it converts, it would have this cool 1950s vibe—kind of a throwback with a lot of character."

What's the most unique toy design you've worked on, and how did it turn out?

"Unicron HasLab, hands down. It's this massive sphere that transforms into a robot over two feet tall. When we were working on it, I kept thinking, *This is going to be magical*, and it really turned out that way. It's still one of my favorite projects."

Any wild design ideas that got everyone super excited or made everyone laugh?

"Oh yeah, [the BotBots line](#)! When we first pitched transforming everyday items like hamburgers into robots, the reaction was all over the place. But once it came together, it turned out to be this super fun and unique collectible line. People really warmed up to it."

Favorite Transformer feature or gadget?

"The [SMASH CHANGERS](#) feature from the "Rise of the Beasts" line comes to mind. We designed a Transformer that automatically converts when you slam it on the table. It's one of those features that adds an extra layer of fun to the toy."

If you could build a Transformer mashup toy with any other Hasbro brand, what would it be and why?

"I'd love to see a NERF blaster that transforms. Imagine it could combine with other figures to create a giant robot and then combine into a giant NERF blaster as well. Bringing together NERF and TRANSFORMERS would be a dream mashup—it combines two play styles in one epic product."

Have you ever had an 'Aha' moment when designing toys, where everything just clicked?

"Definitely. One of those moments came with the TRANSFORMERS collabs—taking vehicles from other brands and turning them into Transformers. It was this lightbulb moment that opened up a whole new way to expand the fandom."

What are some of the most fun or unique toys currently available?

"Right now, the [Power Flip Optimus](#) from the TRANSFORMERS ONE film is really something special. It shows the journey from Orion Pax to Optimus Prime, which is a great nod to the character's history. I'm also a big fan of the [TMNT Party Wagon](#) —it's a fantastic collectible."

If you could design a special edition Transformer for any celebrity or brand, who would it be and why?

"I'd love to design a Transformer based on the A-Team van or the Akira motorcycle. The A-Team van could transform into a robot that includes elements from each team member, and the Akira motorcycle would have all these cool details like goggles and a leather jacket, keeping that iconic anime style intact."