



Get With the Times #3: Products

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Introduction

Our daily lives are brand- and product-filled to the point of overflowing. Consider my average day: Cheerios, Ford, Levi's, the lunchboxes and the products that make up the kids lunches, their backpacks, my Dell computer, my camera, my cell phone.... the list goes on.

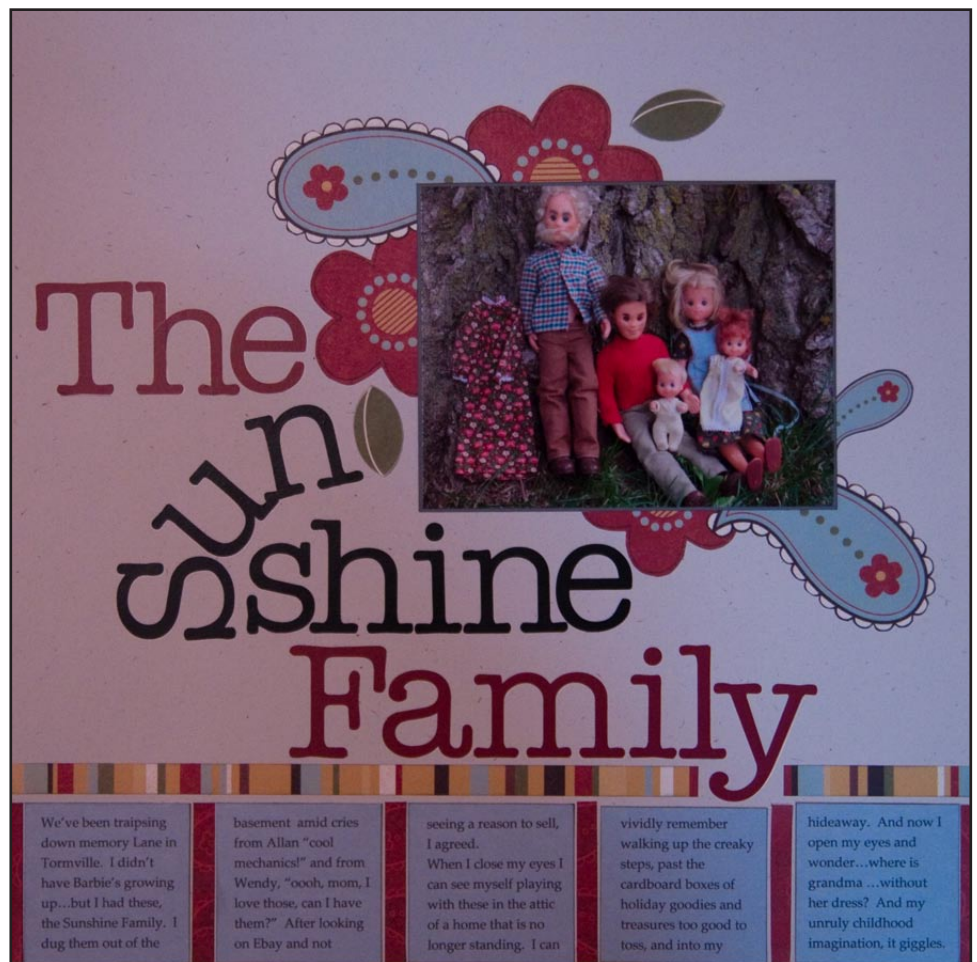
Many of the products that make up our day are such a part of our lives that we've begun to take many of them for granted, yet - when I sit down and reflect upon them, so many of them have their own story, and often it's a story worth sharing.

WAYS TO INCLUDE PRODUCTS ON YOUR SCRAPBOOK PAGES**1. Record the toys you played with and the memories they trigger.**

There are a few treasures in our toy box that have survived the years since my husband and I were children. The toys and options that the kids have nowadays are a far cry from the options that were available when I was a child—just as my toys were different from those of my parents. My father enjoys regaling me with, “when I was a kid.....there weren’t toy stores!”

Imagine.

JOURNALING for “The Sunshine Family:” We’ve been traipsing down memory lane in Tormville. I didn’t have Barbies growing up...but I had these, the Sunshine Family. I dug them out of the basement amid cries from Allan “cool mechanics” and from Wendy, “ooh, mom, I love those, can I have them?” After looking on Ebay and not seeing a reason to sell, I agreed. When I close my eyes I can see myself playing with these in the attic of a home that is no longer standing. I can vividly remember walking up the creaky steps, past the cardboard boxes of holiday goodies and treasures too good to toss, and into my hideaway. And now I open my eyes and I wonder...where is grandma...without her dress? And my unruly childhood imagination, it giggles.



Now our selection is so wide, we often go shopping with a specific name brand or product in mind so as to speed up the trip.

What toys will our kids remember compared to what toys we remember?

Me? I remember a lot of creative play, a lot of playing outdoors, and the Sunshine Family.....

How I scrapped a toy from my childhood in "The Sunshine Family:"

- ◇ Design. I began with the photo on this particular layout. Having only one photo and wanting that to be my focal point, I first worked on building it up with a base mat.
- ◇ Photos. Unfortunately, I don't have any pictures of myself in the attic, or with my dolls, so to tell this story I used the one that I took to appear on my blog the day that I found my old collection.
- ◇ Journaling. Within my journaling I mentioned a bit of memory, my children's reactions, and the fact that I did not have Barbies, but, rather, these: The Sunshine Family.
- ◇ Title. This title was tricky. I wanted a prominent title, but only having one photo, I had to be careful not to overburden the page or take away from the photo. By tilting the word "sun," I was able to keep my title within an acceptable size, and give it an appealing feel.

2. Scrapbook an everyday product

I don't buy many sugar cereals. Our pantry will reveal Cheerios, Rice Krispies, Kix, Total, and Honeycomb. Interesting, because those are exactly the cereals you would have found in my mother's pantry 38 years ago. I buy what my mom bought. It's what I know and trust; it's what I'm familiar with.

I enjoy seeing how similar these brands and logos have stayed through the years. Rice

JOURNALING for "They're Smiling:" Never has there been a happier breakfast time in this house. You see - it started like this. The oldest was up first and began eating. Honeycombs. And reading the box. You see where this is going, don't you.

And then the second one came to the table, poured her cereal and she thought in doing so, that gave her box rights. Alas, not so.

The oldest very vocally proclaimed his indignation and flailed his arms and yelled things about unfair, and she always does this, and I'm being mistreated, and just because she poured her cereal second doesn't mean that she gets the box now! I WAS READING IT! He shouted. Regardless of the fact that the box has been read so many times my kids know it by heart. That was clearly not the issue here.

But I was on it.

But wait! My darling children - It just so happens that I have another box! Oh yes, thanks to coupons and sales and stockpiling - I do - just sit tight, I'll go fetch it!

And I did. And with great flourish, I placed it on the table as if I was carrying a platter of pearls. So happy did I make these two (and slightly embarrassed) and myself.

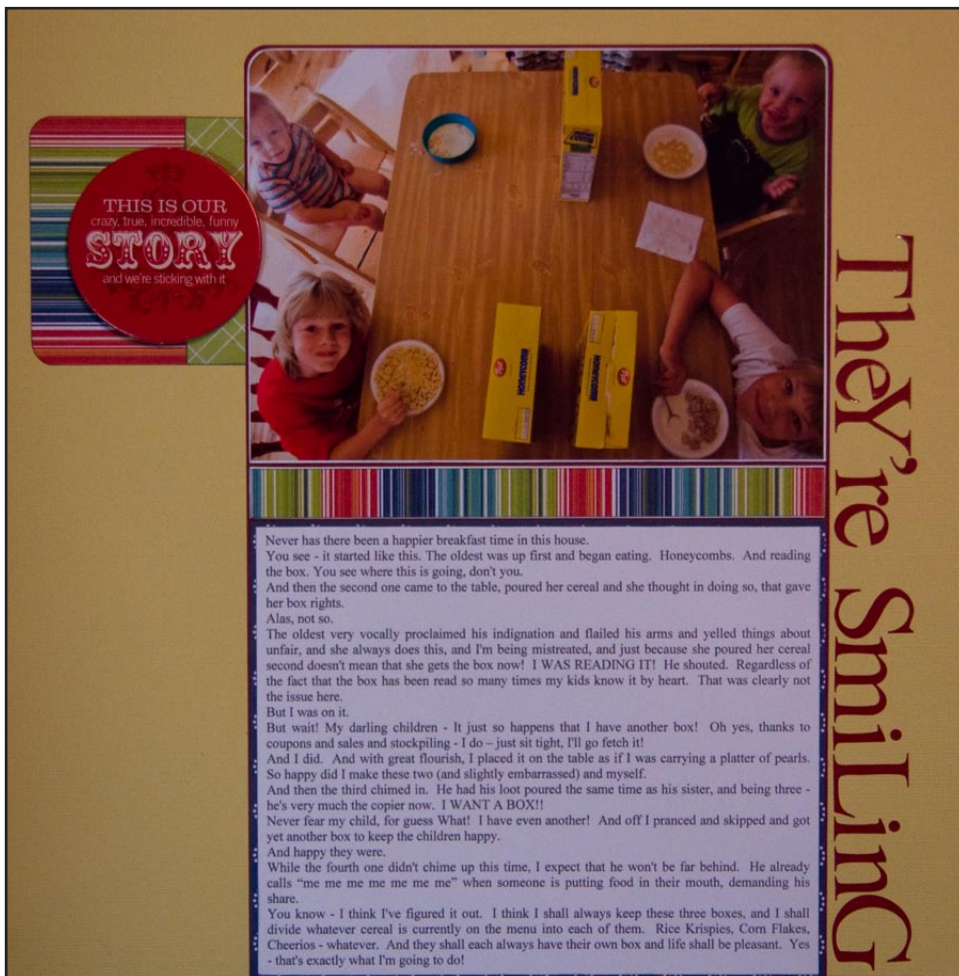
And then the third chimed in. He had his loot poured the same time as his sister, and being three - he's very much the copier now. I WANT A BOX!!

Never fear my child, for guess What! I have even another! And off I pranced and skipped and got yet another box to keep the children happy.

And happy they were.

While the fourth one didn't chime up this time, I expect that he won't be far behind. He already calls "me me me me me me me" when someone is putting food in their mouth, demanding his share.

You know - I think I've figured it out. I think I shall always keep these three boxes, and I shall divide whatever cereal is currently on the menu into each of them. Rice Krispies, Corn Flakes, Cheerios - whatever. And they shall each always have their own box and life shall be pleasant. Yes - that's exactly what I'm going to do!



Krispies, for instance, still comes in the same color blue box it did when I was a child. I enjoy the familiarity and the flashback to my own childhood when eating my breakfast of choice.

How I made everyday product in our home the subject of a layout in "They're Smiling:"

- ◇ Design. This is a quick and simple design. I began with my photo and journaling and supported with a title and design element for balance.
- ◇ Photos. I took this photo on a lark one day this past summer and ended up liking it so well, that it became the focus of my layout here. I enlarged it to 5" x 7" so it could better carry the page.
- ◇ Embellishment. While the circle chipboard on the left could qualify as a title of sorts, I actually used it here as an embellishment. I wanted a bit more red, and I felt that this piece also played off the logo on the Honeycomb box.
- ◇ Journaling. This particular journaling was taken directly from my blog post the day that this event occurred. It's a fun way to include the story, and a technique I've employed more than once. In fact – some of my favorite writing has been done this way. First I wrote to my blog readers and family, then I transferred the tale onto my layout.
- ◇ Title. They're Smiling. Again, a suggestion that there might be a story here, and I hope the title has perked some interest.

3. Document a much-loved childrens' toy.

I love a product that spans the years and does it well. Legos are a good example. They've been around since my parents were children. They are the type of product that can be passed down from generation to generation and entertain so many ages. What a fabulous product!

My mother-in-law has a box in her living room filled with the Legos that her boys grew up playing with, and while we have a ton of the little blocks here at home, it's the first toy my children gravitate to when we go there. While her collection is missing all the newer unique parts from current times, they still provide hours of entertainment.

JOURNALING for "Lego Love:" 2008. I love Legos. I'm not real creative with them myself – in fact – I get frustrated very quickly because I can't create anything even close as creative as my kids can – but that's why I love them. I love seeing the kid's imaginations at work. Now, it's mostly Allan who plays with them. For this particular creation he spent the better part of a snow day creating – followed by – hey mom, come look! There was a story for every character – but this man giving his girl some flowers in the midst of Lego turmoil captured me. I love that Allan included it – it reveals his humor, his thought process – his creative mind.



How I scrapbooked the role a loved toy plays in my son's life in "Lego Love:"

- ◇ Design. I wanted to bring color into my design without taking away from the photos. This was a very careful effort as the pictures are of a busier nature.
- ◇ Photos. We have a multitude of Lego photos in this house. What I'd really enjoy getting my hands on is a generational set: grandfather, father, son, all playing with their sets, but I don't think such photos exist.

What I decided on here were some pictures of my son's creation on a snowy day last January. While this doesn't show one of Allan's more extensive singular creations, it shows his creative mind and love for a story. I loved that the Legos gave him an outlet for what he normally does in pencil.

- ◇ Embellishment. I included a red heart on the bottom right to tie in the visual triangle.
- ◇ Journaling. I went for the interaction on this layout--sharing how much my son enjoys this toy, how I enjoy the creative play, how my son's personality shines through.
- ◇ Title. With the design I chose, I didn't have a lot of room left for a title with impact. I went with a title that repeats itself around the frame.

4. Record an upgrade in a product.

As we were going over the kids' wish lists this past Christmas I happened to ask out loud what the kids thought of ipods and mp3 players.

"What?" my oldest son answered sarcastically. "And be current in technology with the rest of the world???"

It takes us a while. The old still works, so why replace it? But when we do, there is often a story to tell. I can imagine, for instance, the excitement that will abound in our house when we finally upgrade the dishwasher, the old one having been broken for over a year already. Or when we upgrade the family vehicle, the kids' expressions are bound to be priceless. Our twelve-year-old family van doesn't have the bells and whistles that the newer vans do.

Often, our upgrades are on a smaller scale, like the childrens' toys. Read on:



JOURNALING for "The Upgrade:" It was Christmas of 2007 when Allan upgraded from that garage sale Game Boy and Wendy inherited it. She was content for, oh, say a month and then she began wishing for a dslite too. She received hers for Christmas 2008 and, as her brother did before her, she passed the Game Boy down to Brian. Brian, who, surprised me when he sat on Santa's lap in '08 and said, "I want a dslite!" If we wait long enough, the big guys will be upgrading again and those will be passed down. Brian is not amused – he wants his NOW.

How I scrapbooked the impact of a product upgrade in our home in "The Upgrade:"

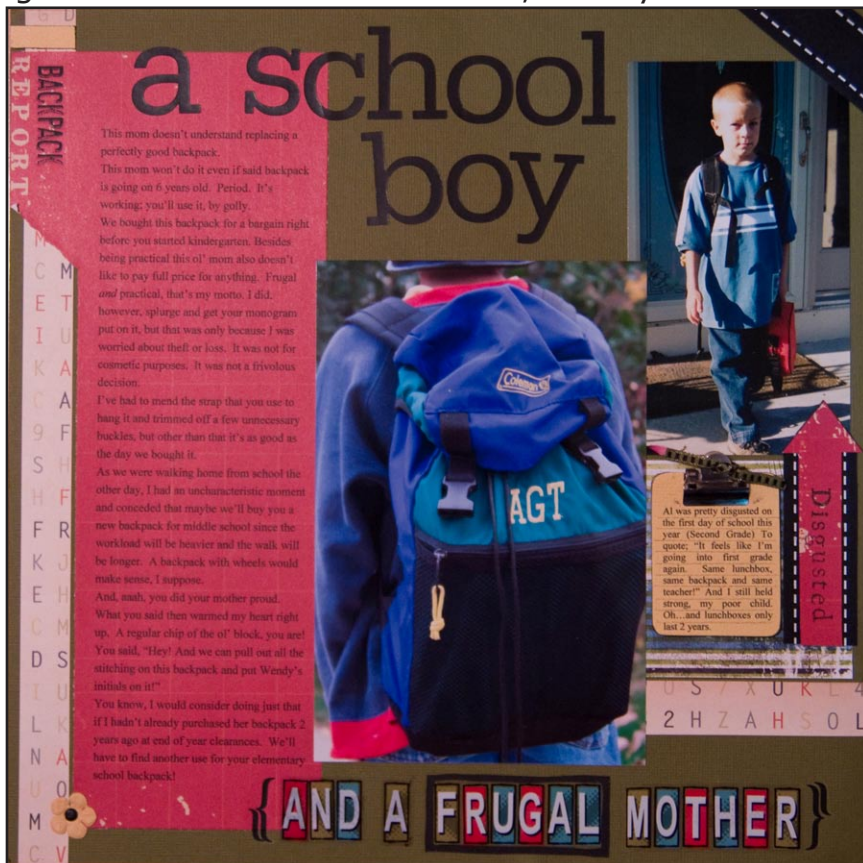
- ◇ Design. I felt that the photos I had for this layout were weaker than some of my others, so I worked on creating a more eye grabbing design to invite the reader to give more than a first glance. By using interesting lines and an eye-catching color combination, I think I did that.
- ◇ Photos. I knew I had these two photos of Wendy playing on both the old Game Boy and the newer Nintendo DS Lite. By bringing them both together on this page, I got a comparison of the old and the new and support for my story.
- ◇ Embellishment. I added three small pink brads to bring down the pink color a bit and add a little more visual punch
- ◇ Journaling. I brought three of our four children into the journaling on this one, sharing how old our oldest was when he got his DS Lite, talking about Wendy's inherited interest, and then moved on to how Brian snuck in an early request to Santa.
- ◇ Title. I decided on 'The Upgrade.' I felt it was to the point and catchy. I went with green for the contrast.

5. Scrapbook a long-lasting product.

Just this week, I replaced my eleven-year-old Avia walking shoes and only because the laces finally gave out. The laces giving out forced me to concede that the soles and tips of the toe were finally starting to give as well. I was just ignoring that since I really loved the shoes and wasn't ready to let them go.

What kind of shoe did I replace them with? The exact same pair. Why? Because if I can get one pair to last me over eleven years, in my opinion, that's quality worth repeating!

I'm also still wearing the Sorels that I've been wearing since 1980. I love putting those on my feet because they bring me right back to my childhood. That they've been with me for that many years is a good reason to document them, don't you think?



JOURNALING for "A School Boy:"

This mom doesn't understand replacing a perfectly good backpack. This mom won't do it even if said backpack is going on 6 years old. Period. It's working; you'll use it, by golly.

We bought this backpack for a bargain right before you started kindergarten. Besides being practical this ol' mom doesn't like to pay full price for anything. Frugal and practical, that's my motto. I did, however, splurge and get your monogram put on it, but that was only because I was worried about theft or loss. It was not for cosmetic purposes. It was not a frivolous decision.

I've had to mend the strap that you use to hang it and trimmed off a few unnecessary buckles, but other than that it's as good as the day we bought it.

As we were walking home from school the other day, I had an uncharacteristic moment and conceded that maybe we'll buy you a new backpack for middle school since the workload will be heavier and the walk will be longer. A backpack with wheels would make sense, I suppose. And, aaah, you did your mother proud. What you said warmed my heart right up. A regular chip off the ol' block you are! You said, "Hey, And we can pull out all the stitching on this backpack and put Wendy's initials on it!"

You know, I would consider doing just that if I hadn't already purchased her backpack two years ago at end of year clearances. We'll have to find another use for your elementary school backpack!

How I scrapbooked about an item that's been in our home for a while in "A School Boy:"

- ◇ Design. This one is a bit different from my normal style, in that it's not quite as linear. I began with the journaling, and, once I had that committed, I let everything else fall into place around it.
- ◇ Photos. I chose several photos, one from Allan's first day of second grade and another one taken about the time that this story evolved. It's a story that spans time and I wanted that in my photos.
- ◇ Embellishment. I added a few pieces for color and placement balance. The yellow flower on the lower left helped tie in the yellow. The black corner on the upper right, again, added a bit of balance. The little yellow clipboard added a bit to the school theme and tells another story.
- ◇ Journaling. I included a lot of memory triggers in this one. I mentioned my shopping habits, the mending needed, our similarities, my justification for monogramming, and on the little bit of journaling, a quote from Allan's first day of second grade; "It feels like I'm going into the first grade again. Same lunchbox, same backpack and same teacher" That will remind me what he was like at that age and that he was involved in the looping program at school. I don't have to include the details of everything I mention, but by mentioning those things beyond the backpack itself, I add that much more value to my page and to future generations looking through my albums. Incidentally, Allan is still using that backpack now, three years later. He's got 4-½ years left of school, and I'm beginning to think that back pack will be going to college with him!
- ◇ Title. I brought this title through the layout. I began with "A School Boy," and this could have stood alone. But the story is about so much more than that, and I enjoyed adding a hint at an interesting share with "and a frugal mother." I think it promises the reader that an interesting story is on this page!

TRIGGERS for scrapbooking products in your home and life

- Consider a product you've used since childhood. What memories does that trigger?
- Do you buy a product simply because of the name brand? If so, why? Is it a statement or is it a quality product you've come to depend on?
- What advancements have been made in a product that you've used over the years?
- What was the family reaction to a product purchase or upgrade?
- Record the change in a product over the years as you've noticed. Do you have something in your family that has been used through the generations?
- While there are products we are loyal to, there are also others that we avoid like the plague and often with good reason (or story).
- Document a collection of products. My daughter, for instance, was on a camouflage kick when we went school shopping. She bought a purple camouflage lunchbox and a pink camouflage backpack. These both represent current style and product and would make a great look into that time in her life
- Document a toy trend. My children have gotten on the Webkinz wagon, asking for them for their birthdays and Christmas. Those stories will trigger all kinds of memories from the gifts received, the time played on the computer, the fights over whose is whose...
- Do you collect a product? I collect cardinals for my Christmas tree. This would make a fun page in the story and the collection. Coincidentally, Santa brought me a Webkinz cardinal this past year – now there's a story!
- Is there a product that you can't resist purchasing the instant it comes out? Do you wait in lines to purchase a new product?