

A Little Voodoo MAGIC



Left to right: Sandor Fekete, Kevin Franco and Ryan Ferrier have creativity to spare when it comes to designing innovative and interactive media.

Picture the scene: A dark room and a couple of figures huddled around an ancient wooden crate. There's anticipation, the edge of the unknown. One of them takes a crowbar and pounds it with the base of his hand into the gap in the crate and starts to pry the top loose.

Without warning the sound of tribal drums is heard. Anticipation turns to nervousness, but the crate must be opened. With more lever action, the lid tilts open a crack and reveals a bit more — this time raffia packing around the delicate contents, and the faint smell of cinnamon, one of the oldest known spices on the planet.

The top is muscled back and one of the raiders reaches in to grab a box. Treasure? Perhaps to some. The box contains chocolate covered coffee beans, ancient food, eaten to the increasing volume of the drumming. Finally, waiting no longer, they reach into the middle of the raffia to pull out the treasured item.

But there's no antiquity here. Instead, a very modern, shiny, custom-made computer from Voodoo computers.

Fade to black.

Marketing these high-end, premium computers is a challenge, and the makers of these machines wanted something rewarding for those who took the plunge. Enter Kevin Franco of Francomedia.

"We came up with the idea to appeal to every human sense when the purchase is finally in the home and is being unpacked," says Franco. "Touch, sound, taste, smell — all of it."

The juxtaposition of very old against ultra-modern was the theme, and is fully realized by keeping true to every aspect of the original concept.

"Right from the box, we wanted something old looking, like it could have come right from Skull Island with King Kong — we were looking for that kind of authenticity, not a mediocre cardboard facsimile."

It's this kind of thinking that makes Francomedia a different player in the game. Sometimes you literally have to get inside the box to think outside the box, and it's become a niche that former SAIT student Kevin Franco feels comfortable in after a couple of decades of real world accomplishments.

When asked about which niche Francomedia fits into, the answer is straight ahead, just like their work. "Our niche is that we look after our clients — total integration with a client rather than superficial work with many clients in the same industry. This works better for both parties," Franco says.

To complete Franco's team of unique thinkers are at least a couple of SAIT alumni. Ryan Ferrier (New Media Production and Design '07) is the go-to guy when words fail Franco or when top shelf production skills are needed. And for those times when numbers and coding on a website or flash presentation really matter, Franco turns to Sandor Fekete (Computer Technology '98) to keep pace on the technical side.

Whether they're putting out print, radio or TV ads, point of purchase (POP) displays, award-winning websites, or packaging, Franco and his team come up with the truly original.

And, when all else fails, there's always a little Voodoo to keep the imagination churning out the good vibrations. ■

By Pierre Hamel