

Forget the Rubik's Cube – This Puzzle Designer Has Taken Shapeways by Storm

BY EDDIE KRASSENSTEIN · JANUARY 29, 2014



Shapeways has become the go to marketplace for designers who wish to create a 3D design and have it brought to market. Over the past couple years, the site has really taken off, and has gotten a lot of media attention.

One man, by the name of M. Oskar van Deventer, has been a member of ShapeWays for close to 5 years.

In that time, he has built up an incredible [storefront](#) where he sells over 250 different puzzle games,

most of which are considered to be, by many 'Rubik's Cubes on steroids'.

These puzzles range in price from an affordable \$15.62 to a staggering \$1,625.80, and believe it or not many of the expensive puzzles actually sell quite often.

Oskar van Deventer has been making puzzles since 1978, and his puzzles have been commercially available since 1994. While he does make a little profit off of the hours on end that he puts into designing, and prototyping them, he informed us that it is mostly just a hobby.



"My sales are currently such that I am able to earn back my prototypes," he explained. "Each prototype costs a lot of money to make. I pay Shapeways for the parts. And if a prototype fails, I have to do another round of prototyping. I typically hover a bit above break-even, but not much."

What people don't realize is that many of these designs take several printouts (prototypes) before they become actual working puzzles. Each puzzle consists of many moving parts. Oskar has a regular day job, so he isn't exactly 'getting rich' off of his designs.



Oskar's most expensive puzzle, the 'Gear Head'

What is the most expensive puzzle that Oskar sells on Shapeways? That would be the "[Gear Head](#)" puzzle, which is priced at a whopping \$1,625.80.



"I had a customer requesting it, so I uploaded it. That prototype has been kindly sponsored by George Miller, so I am actually not charging too much of a markup on it, as I already have my prototype. Its price is purely determined by its massive volume."

The next most expensive? That would be the "Over The Top" puzzle, which is a huge 17x17x17 Rubik's Cube-like device. In fact, it is not only a large Rubik's cube, but it is the largest Rubik's Cube in the world, and is acknowledged in the Guinness Book of World Records as being so! Priced at \$1,599.73, it has already been purchased several times.

"I believe there are 6-8 assembled samples in the world. I haven't kept exact track," explained Oskar.

Of the 6-8 assembled samples out there, not a single one has even been fully scrambled, let alone solved. Although Oskar did tell us that one American customer has committed himself to fully scrambling and solving the puzzle. Whether or not he will, is yet to be seen.



GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Oskar's Guinness Book of World Records Winning Puzzle – The 17x17x17 'Over The Top' Puzzle

So how does Oskar determine the price of each one of his puzzles? If you browse through his shop, you will notice that all of his puzzles are very oddly priced. For example, the "Dumbbell Cube" – \$576.03, or the "Squashed Cube" – \$184.87.

“The price is determined by the 3D-printing cost of Shapeways plus my markup,” he explained. “I typically charge a 100% markup, so if I sell one sample I earn back a prototype. If I sell another one, then I have made a little profit.”

Oskar was turned onto Shapeways by someone named Bathsheba Grossman, another Shapeways shop owner. Grossman in fact had the very first shop on Shapeways. Oskar put his shop together soon thereafter, and was only the 4th shop to go live on the popular website. Now there are literally thousands of active shops.

When one of Oskars puzzles are purchased on Shapeways, they are shipped in multiple parts.

The buyer must then assemble the puzzle himself, using screws and by cutting and placing the stickers on in the right spots. Oskar does however offer the service of assembling the puzzles at an additional fee of €50 (€25 of which is for additional shipping).

Oskar has teamed with some companies for mass production of his puzzles. Some of these companies and puzzles can be found on his [website](#). If you are interested in giving one of Oskar's puzzles a try, the most affordable is the "[Sixth Sense](#)", and he is quite fond of it.

“*This one is my favorite. It was invented by Bram Cohen. I did the detailed cadding and prototyping. Many tens of these have been sold.*”

Priced at only \$15.62, it might just make a perfect little pass time for you or your friends. Besides you can become a part of history too, by owning a puzzle designed by the world-renowned Oskar van Deventer.

Oskar also maintains a [Youtube Channel](#) with close to 20,000 subscribers, and he claims that the majority of people that find his puzzles hear about them first on Youtube.

What do you think about these puzzles? Have you purchased any of them? Would you pay \$1500+ for a puzzle that could keep you busy for.... well.... the rest of your life? Discuss this article at: <http://3dprintboard.com/showthread.php?1576-Puzzle-Maker-Takes-Shapeways-by-Storm-to-Sell-1500-Rubik-s-Cubes>