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A Covert Marketing Tool For Parent Buyers - The Kiddie Ride

By Damon Carson

Choosy mothers choose Jif. But what do choosy kids choose? "Automobiles and electronics," says

Mark Snyder, senior vice president of brand management for Holiday Inn. "Children very much get to participate in making those purchasing decisions." Let's face it. Anyone who has ever stood in a checkout line in the supermarket knows that kids have always had a say in purchasing toys, food and other smallish items. What's new is how far that influence now stretches—and how advertisers are reacting.

Let's look at one tool the grocery industry uses to influence kids and ultimately to get parents to buy foodstuff at their location. This tool is beginning to be used by smart marketers in other industries as we'll detail. The tool - a kiddie ride.

Every grocer wants to create a carnival type atmosphere to attract kids and their grocery-buying parents. Kiddie rides provide a great way to attract kids and their money-spending parents. Most every parent can tell you which grocery stores have kiddie rides because their kids alert them to the fact, and of course, which grocery store is the kid going to want to shop at when tagging along with Mom or Dad. Of course, the one with the kiddie ride.

Let's look at some other industries that are taking a page from the grocers of America and utilizing kiddie rides in their marketing efforts.

Pulte Homes knows that part of selling houses is selling the kids. "We always make sure we are marketing to the children," says Deborah Blake, the company's vice president of marketing for Arizona and Nevada. "We want the kids to say, 'I have to live here,' as the parents are driving by the model homes." A fun and novel way to make a model home stand out to children is to have a kiddie ride in the living room. The stone fireplace may, or may not, stand out in the children's minds. A kiddie ride sure will, though.

A very different example of the kiddie ride as a marketing tool is in the lobby of a pediatric doctor. Whether the doctor is checking a child's teeth or their warts, it is really hard for a doctor to differentiate himself from another doctor in the mind of his layman clients. One way to differentiate a practice is to

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create a fun carnival environment in the lobby with a kiddie ride. The kids, and parents for that matter, probably won't remember the dull office visit, but they most certainly will remember and want to return to the fun lobby. This is to say nothing of a doctor offering a "magic" token to operate the ride as good behavior during an examination. Think of the time a doctor could save over the course of the year if just one minute was shaved off each exam because of good behavior.

"What a great motivational tool our kiddie ride has been in our doctors office," said Linda Day of Pediatric and Teenage Dentistry in West Virginia. "The kids look forward to their office visits because they know an exciting ride is waiting for them at the end."

Another great example of the kiddie ride as a marketing tool is at a car dealership. When a family with children walks onto the lot, instead of immediately taking them to the vehicles the salesperson takes the family to the kiddie ride. Out of his or her own pocket he pulls out a quarter to treat the young kids to a "free" ride. This harkens back to psychologist Robert Cialdini's seminal book "Influence", and his

examination of the "click" and "whirr" of reciprocation. The salesperson has given the kids a free ride, now the parents will reciprocate giving the salesperson their time and attention, and quite possibly, the opportunity to match any offer of a competing dealership. This is to say nothing of the fact that the dealership with the kiddie ride will stand out in the children's minds and probably get talked about at the supper table.

While they were created originally as vending machines, the real earning power today of a kiddie ride isn't in how many quarters are in the coin box each week, but in how effectively marketers can use this classic amusement ride to build goodwill with kids and their money-spending parents.

Mr. Carson lists more marketing ideas on the "Why Kiddie Rides" tab at

<http://www.kiddieridesusa.com>

Video Surveillance

By Ralph Winn

The dependability and prevalence of video surveillance cameras has increased dramatically in the past decade. Numerous home and business owners have integrated video surveillance cameras into their security systems to ensure safety, crack down on regulations, and catch criminals in the act. Video surveillance is considered covert when the cameras are hidden or aren't identifiable. Video surveillance is largely legal in the United States, as long as it doesn't directly infringe on a person's fourth amendment right to privacy.

Uses of Covert Video Surveillance

"A picture is worth a thousand words". This saying rings true in court. According to a recent study, when a jury is presented with video surveillance footage, it is twice as likely to convict as when not shown video surveillance evidence. The strategic placement of covert video surveillance cameras aid in the detection and prosecution of vandalism, theft, child abuse, elder neglect, stalking, and harassment.

Some of the more common places to use covert video surveillance are homes, casinos, police stations, nursing homes, construction sites, prisons, hospitals and retail stores.

Monitoring the activities of nannies and household help with covert video surveillance cameras is a growing trend. Due to recent advances in technology, cameras are now small enough to be hidden in many home items such as teddy bears, house plants, clocks, and wall paintings.

Video Surveillance Laws

Most video surveillance is legal in the United States. The majority of video surveillance laws concern the invasion of privacy with the use of covert video surveillance. The use of covert video surveillance is particularly controversial in areas in which a high level of personal privacy is expected, such as locker rooms, dressing rooms, bedrooms, and bathroom stalls. There are some general guidelines to follow to ensure the legality of your video surveillance system.

Covert video surveillance is illegal when audio surveillance is also taking place, and if the it is done without the consent of those being monitored and the person being monitored by the video surveillance has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Covert video surveillance may be illegal when the video surveillance encourages an illegal activity and the subject under video surveillance has a right to counsel, as when being questioned by law authorities and the person in charge of the premises have not given permission for video surveillance.

If you opt to incorporate a covert video surveillance system into your home or business, consult with a lawyer or your local law enforcement agency to ensure your compliance with local, state, and federal video surveillance laws.

Many independent studies in the United States and United Kingdom have suggested that video surveillance acts as a powerful deterrent, stopping crimes before they happen. Studies also show

strong evidence that video surveillance systems can be an extremely effective tool in detection and prosecution.

Ralph Winn has over 32 years of experience in the security industry. Throughout his career, he has developed cost effective security programs for numerous small, medium, large commercial and government properties and for many nationally known corporations.

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