

## Marketing to Kids Isn't (All) Child's Play

If there are children in your family or circle of friends, you know kids have a way of getting what they want. "Research shows that when a kid asks for something, 70% of the time parents will agree to it and will comply," says Angel Morales, managing director at kids' promotion specialist C3 International (C3i).

That why, he says, it's important to make sure promotions for children are specifically designed for them, not just smaller versions of products that adults use. "We need to concentrate on the kid and making sure they want it, as we'll have a pretty good chance the sale will be made if they ask for it," Morales says.

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Angel Morales, C3 International

One of C3i's specialties is creating toys for kids' meal promos at restaurant chains. In choosing what to give, Morales stresses that the toy should be simple and small enough to be used immediately, even in a limited space. "If you give them a toy or item that they can't immediately make use of, all the excitement built is simply lost," he says.

For restaurants and other businesses that sell small-ticket items, offering a series of toys to collect is the way to go. "You want your customers to come back to the location more than once," Morales says. "By offering several items to collect, this entices kids and families to want to return again." He suggests offering one new item each week during the promotion – but keep offering the previous weeks' toys until the promotion is over, in case customers miss a week but come in more than once during the next week.

There are also several simple ways to add perceived value to the products. "Small yet significant things such as an insert card, instruction sheet or logo on the poly bag, all add perceived value to the item and yield a better chance of the family taking the item home with them," Morales says.

While the optimum length of time to run

the promotion will differ among businesses and locations, the campaign shouldn't go too long. "Regardless of the volume of pieces a location can move, the offering must change frequently," Morales says. "If a promotion is in place for too long, clients will get tired of it." ■

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### *Kids' Meal Promo on Track to Be a Winner*

Recently, the El Salvador-based hamburger chain Biggest turned to C3i looking for some big ideas for a kids' meal promotion. "The client had been using your average toys, but with increased competition, they wanted to raise the bar with larger toys," says Angel Morales of C3 International.

Knowing that his client was a racing fan, Morales and his team designed a set of four modular toy-racing kits. Each includes a racer presented with four sections of track that fit together to make up a small oval. As kids collect additional kits, the track pieces can be combined to create a larger, road-course type circuit.

But C3i took the concept further: After focus groups showed that parents liked a wild-animal theme better than just race cars, the toys evolved into racing animals – with an educational twist. "We decided to include an educational card in Spanish to promote knowledge of these specific animals: elephant, rhino, crocodile and hippo," Morales says.

As we went to press, the promotion had just gotten underway, and early results looked huge. "Right now, it's doing well in the first week of sales – increases of over 50%," Morales says.

