

## Capitalizing On Youth Marketing Programs

Getting more kids involved in card collecting has been a constant goal of everyone in the trading card industry. For years, hobby retailers have asked for help in getting the message out to kids about the fun of trading cards, and this year retailers are getting exactly what they've asked for.

Millions of dollars are being spent by Upper Deck and other entities on television commercials, print advertising, online promotions, stadium giveaways and more – all in an effort to educate kids about card collecting. Are you doing everything you can to take advantage of these promotions?

- **Make your presence known** – The national advertising and marketing efforts will make kids more aware of trading cards, but those same kids may not be aware of what stores are in their area. Remember, kids don't generally pick up the Yellow Pages or scan different store fronts while they're out and about. If you want a kid to come to your store, get the message out to kids in your town. Let them know you're there and give them a reason to visit your store.
- **Customize the message** – You can't send the same advertising message to kids as you do to adults. In order to get kids excited about coming to your store, you have to focus on what's important to them. Concepts such as hot new products, in-store events, fun, giveaways, and the social aspect of being around other kids are among those that will attract kids.
- **Get out and about** – Don't be content to wait for kids to come to your store. Get out into your community and show kids directly how much fun trading cards can be, and make sure they know your business is the source for that fun. Local festivals, Little League events, summer school programs or even just a display at your local shopping mall are all great ways to get out in front of potential customers.
- **Bring the message into your store** – Reinforce the advertising message being delivered to kids by displaying those same messages in your store. For instance, educate kids about Upper Deck's Kids Rewards program by showing them the codes on the back of various Upper Deck baseball cards and how those codes can be entered online to earn points toward various prizes. Having a computer in your store and logging onto the UD Kids Rewards website and posting the point totals of some of your customers is a great way to get kids interested in the program. Obtain copies of the TV ads created by Upper Deck and the Major League Baseball Players Association and play them in your store. Post copies of print ads you see in national magazines. This will help amplify the message of the national ad campaigns.
- **Talk to your local media** – National media outlets have run stories about the efforts being undertaken this season to get more kids interested in card collecting. Follow up those efforts by alerting your local media to those campaigns and how your store is joining the efforts to attract more kids. Make sure to show plenty of examples of today's newest cards to help get your message across.
- **Make sure kids are comfortable in your store** – This might sound like a no-brainer, because virtually every hobby retailer wants kids to shop in their stores. But that doesn't mean every store is kid-friendly. Look around your store and ask yourself: Is there an area in your store with products that will catch the eyes of kids? Do you have a section of low-priced cards that kids can look through? Are you offering special programs aimed at attracting youth buyers? Do you offer kids the chance to win or earn free cards on a regular basis? Take a look at your store from a kid's point of view and see what you might be missing.

Attracting more kids to the card hobby is vital for the future success of everyone in the industry and it's a goal shared by thousands of industry professionals. Take advantage of the millions of dollars being spent this year by helping bring the message of the fun of card collecting to kids in your community.