

Make Your Store a Destination Point for Kids

More and more hobby shop owners around the country are reporting the same good news – an increase in the number of kids visiting their stores. That's probably not a complete surprise when you consider the amount of money being spent this year to promote cards to kids. Upper Deck is among those who have invested in advertising campaigns and programs like Kids Rewards to get youngsters excited about collecting. It's great to see the positive response so far.

Now that kids are hearing the buzz about trading cards, the goal is to get them to visit your store.... again and again. Successful hobby store owners know that marketing their business to local youngsters isn't just a one-time promotion. There have to be a variety of programs in place over the course of a year to maximize their impact. Doing so makes those hobby stores more than just a place to buy cards – those stores become entertainment destinations for kids.

Want to make your store the place to be with the kids in your area? Make sure you're offering the following:

- **Show them what they're missing** – Use your store's website to post photos of kids having fun in your store. Whether it's a well-attended Pack Wars event, Yu-Gi-Oh! tournament or even just pictures of kids who have pulled some great cards from packs, your website will paint the picture of how much kids are enjoying your store. If you utilize local TV advertising or print ads, make sure to include photos of kids in those ads as well. Those images will send a powerful message about what kids can expect to find in your store.
- **Let kids know they're important** – Don't make kids feel like second-class citizens in your store. Be sure you and your staff are always greeting kids who come into your store. Offer special kids-only discounts and other benefits, such as report card incentive programs, free cards on their birthdays and more. Create a Kids Club program that offers special benefits like a free pack of cards every month. You can also offer special contests just for kids, ranging from draw your own trading card contests to set building challenges.
- **Echo the national ads** – Take advantage of the millions of dollars that have been spent on promoting the hobby this year by running cable TV ads on the same kids networks. You can create your own ads, or simply obtain copies of the TV ads created by Upper Deck and the Major League Baseball Players Association and tag your store name at the end of those spots. Please contact dealer_support@upperdecknv.com for more information on this.
- **Join the MLBPA's Baseball Card Clubhouse** – More than 250 stores are already part of this initiative, which brings Scout troops into stores. The hobby shop owners are given materials that help them create a presentation on the history of collecting and offer tips on how to build a collection. Visit their website at <http://mlbplayers.mlb.com/pa/programs/scouts.jsp> today for more information.
- **Get kids to spread the word** – Word-of-mouth advertising is a powerful tool among all consumers, and kids are no exception. Give kids a reward for bringing their friends with them into your store. For instance, create a special Kids Club of your own and give each kid a free pack of cards for every new member they recruit. Create t-shirts with your store's name on them and award them to kids at special events. Let them know if you see them in public wearing one of your store's shirts, they'll win a prize.
- **Get your message into schools** – Partnering with local schools is a great way to promote your business. Whether it be a special after-school card collecting club, presentations to classes on the history of collecting or simply offering cards to teachers for student incentives, schools are a valuable way to make kids aware of your store and the fun of collecting.

Kids of all ages love trading cards, but it's your responsibility to let the kids in your area know what your store has to offer. If you want your store to become a destination for kids, be sure you create a fun and entertaining atmosphere in your store.