

For Agencies

Agency name: **Griffin Bacal**

Headquarters/Contact Number:

437 Madison Avenue

New York, New York 10022

Paul Kurnit

212 415-2992

Billings:

\$65 Million

Areas of expertise:

Kids and family, Leisure, Lifestyle and Entertainment

Number of employees: **80**

- What research topics will your firm tackle in the near future?

We will continue to do ground breaking work in youth segmentation and kid trends. Our recent original studies include teen segmentation and Kids Getting Older Younger. We do monthly online research -- through our proprietary online panel LiveWire Today's Families Online™ -- on a wide array of kid culture shaping topics including kid favorite activities, TV, movies, music, fashion, school, toys and play patterns, videogames, kid spending, family dynamics and more...

- What three issues do you think will explode in the kids marketplace in 2001?
Nothing will explode in 2001. We will see a continuing progression in several important areas...

1. **Technology -- Continued integration of technology into play, education, lifestyle, etc. At the same time as kids become more and more immersed in technology, kids and parents alike will need and seek compensating high touch experiences with family,**
2. **Computers and the internet -- For connections to friends and the outside world, for games, homework, shopping, everything on demand, all the time coming into kids rooms and the family room. The issue of privacy and kid protection will become an increasing concern and increasingly regulated.**
3. **Time famine -- Kids are getting more and more programmed, more and more busy, with less and less time for discretionary activity and hanging out time. It will lead to increased pressures on kids and attendant**

meltdowns in diet (obesity and eating disorders), nervous tension and stress and the need for quality people contact and support.

- What were the greatest successes in kids marketing in 2000? (Either for you personally or for the industry as a whole.)
- 1. **Music Acts – Kid stars with major kid impact -- Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, N'Sync and the Backstreet Boys leading the way into kid entertainment, fashion, lifestyle as young as age 4. They are a reflection of the Kids Getting Older Younger dynamic. They are fashion icons and are fueling tween culture.**
- 2. **Scooters – Led by Razor. From nowhere to over 5 million sold. Kids have been captivated by sleek silver styling and roller blade performance**
- 3. **Harry Potter – a kid and parent phenomenon in books and reading...and we haven't even begun to see the merchandising muscle flex yet**
- 4. **Kids and gaming – The video market continues to grow even as traditional toys suffer, topping out at age eight. Video game consoles keep getting better and better with a new war on the way following Sony Playstation 2 with Microsoft getting into the game with XBox and both Nintendo and Sega revving up their new issues. Title proliferation continues and Gameboy continues to offer smart, fun, hip colorful fun for kids. Internet gaming is growing and will continue to get better. New videogame consoles will over CD, DVD and internet access. The new competition will be with computer sales.**
- 5. **The Power Puff Girls – Girl empowerment that boys like too**
- 6. **The Grinch – has captured kids imagination and has been a box office blockbuster as we approach Christmas**
- What were the biggest flops?
- 1. **Movies – The drop dead drop off of Star Wars, Titan A.E., Rocky and Bullwinkle, Blair Witch 2 and others**
- 2. **Sports – The Olympics and the World Series. Summer Olympics happening in the Fall and all on prerecorded video tape had little interest and less traction for audiences. Boring and a ratings disaster. An all New York subway series interests only New Yorkers and actually alienates the**

rest of the country who hold a certain envy and alienation about the Big Apple

- Which properties are going to be hot in 2001? Which properties will not?

Hot Times for...

- 1. Harry Potter – The books’ popularity will give way to merchandise in every conceivable form. And, if the movie is even decent, it will be a blockbuster.**
- 2. Power Puff Girls still have power to spare. Rugrats get a shot in the arm by going to Paris (the video will launch in the Spring)**
- 3. The new videogame consoles and titles**
- 4. Kid websites –Bolt and Alloy. Kid community with attitude.**

Properties that will pull a fade are

- 1. Pokémon – cooling fast already**
- 2. Scooters – Been there done that! What’s next? Silver fold-up bikes?**
- 3. Furby will continue to fade as new tech interactive personality toys move in.**
- 4. Fingerboards and related novelties will run their course except as the occasional key chain.**

- How will the Internet influence kids marketing in the next year?

Not much. It’s still early days.

- 1. Without rich media and bandwidth, marketing to kids on the internet pales besides hot TV commercials and colorful print ads. Banners and sponsorships are OK. Branded websites provide brand relationship touchstones and product catalogs kids care about. But, we won’t see a quantum leap in internet creativity reaching kids in 2001.**
 - 2. Kids shopping online will increase, but no allowance mechanism has gotten any traction yet and several have already gone out of business this year. So, the online transaction will continue to be kids yelling, “Mom, can I buy this and what’s your Visa card number?”**
 - 3. Music will be the big game now that Napster and MP3 have settled lawsuits and will set up shop as real vehicles to capture and record music on the net**
- How will the political environment which has been taking shape this year affect kids marketers? Will politicians abandon their scrutiny of kids

marketers/Hollywood filmmakers/in-school marketers now that the elections are (sort of!) over, or does this issue have the potential to grow in the year to come?

The political environment relative to kids won't change much in 2001. The uproar over targeting under age kids with R rated material will quiet down. But, there will continue to be increased attention paid to responsible marketing to appropriate youth audiences. We'll see this in traditional advertising as well as greater scrutiny of privacy related issues online. A Gore administration will be more "morally" focused on kid issues. A Bush regime will be more laissez-faire.

- What are the most important marketing principles for a kids marketer to focus on in today's environment? What's your best advice for success in 2001?

Marketing principles for kid marketers are not worlds apart from adult marketing. New players in the kids market should be well disciplined in the fundamentals – good and meaningful products with relevant points of difference, unique product positioning and compelling strategy to drive inspired marketing communication. The best advice for 2001 is to be attentive and creative in driving the marketing basics, look to strategic partners to advance your brand proposition and deliver product or communications news to keep your brand proposition fresh and desirable.

- What's on your reading list this year? Also, what Web sites have you been visiting lately in the kids marketing line of duty?

Reading

Harry Potter series

Magazines...

Nickelodeon

Disney Adventures

SI for Kids

Teen People

Teen

Rolling Stone

Billboard

KidScreen

Ad Trades

Media Trades

Business magazines

Multiple newspapers

and a whole range of the girl magazines (Seventeen, YM, Twist, Jump, Cosmogirl, Teen Vogue and all the hearthrob books)

Web touchstones include

Nick.com

Bolt.com

Alloy.com

Mamamedia

CartoonNetwork.com

KidWB.com

PBS.org

Discovery.com

Sweetsixteen.com

Wizards.com

Nikolai.com

Bonus.com

Freezone.com

And various toy and gamer sites

- Any kids-marketing related New Year's resolutions?
None really. Continue to stay trend current, look for new ideas, paradigms and touchstones to kid culture...
- What's your personal favorite kids product and why?

Razor Scooter. Because it came out of nowhere and took American kid culture by storm...because it represents a new paradigm product based on classics...A shiny silver vehicle with performance achieved through Roller Blade wheels. It is testament to the shifting, creative and unpredictable nature of the youth market. It humbles marketers and inspires us to think twice before passing on the next elusive phenomenon that breaks the rules (i.e.Cabbage Patch Kids, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles or Mighty Morphin Power Rangers). Kids "vote" for what they like in ways that continually defy us experts.