

## Kids Advertising and Promotion: From 1995 – 2000

Kids advertising in the past five years has been a wild ride. It's been characterized by more change than we've ever seen in any five-year period preceding it. It's all a merry go round of activity that keeps turning faster than ever with more ponies to ride than we've ever seen before. What's going on?

There have been three key developments: **New players, new partners and new promotions.** In every case the stakes have gotten bigger.

Once upon a time kids advertising was the domain of breakfast cereals and toy companies. The dynamics of the youth market have changed that dramatically. With the increased spending power and influence of kids, more marketers have stepped up to the plate in recognizing youth as a powerful audience in their own right. An increasing number of marketers understand that beyond toys and food is major youth influence in new household categories, technology, cars, vacations and even the family home. Today's kids are third parents. They are seen and they are heard. They are powerful and influential. They shape behavior and purchases in the home (if not the home purchase itself). As kid business has become big business a number of marketers have begun to embrace kid lifestyle with partners who touch kids' lives in other venues. So, we now see big product and entertainment deals: Nickelodeon and Kraft, Disney with Mattel and Hasbro. This idea of sharing brand space enables marketers to have more kid presence and traction in kids' lives. Similarly, promotions and partners are more creative, more interactive and more kid involving.

## Five Years On

There are two major developments that will change kid lifestyle and marketing over the next five years: **The Internet and wireless technology.** Both provide a newfound freedom for kids. Both deliver connectedness to the world in effortless ways without the burden of travel. Both provide access to information and entertainment. Both enable access to a commercial world and commercial choices. Kids are already the early adopters of the Internet. They tell us they prefer the Internet to television. They like their cell phones and beepers. They will like their access to wireless Internet even more. Financial marketers (i.e. American Express, Visa, MasterCard) will empower them to spend. Interactive television will entertain them and -- with Replay or Tivo technology -- enable them to spend in the middle of their favorite programs without missing a beat in the dramas they care about. Entertainment and commerce will become seamless.

Regulators and moralists will be perplexed. Parents will need to become more responsible. And, kids will continue to influence and shape North American life more dynamically than ever before.