



The wellness zone at Radio Flyer

## 7. Radio Flyer

**What it does:** Wagon and toy manufacturing

**Year founded:** 1917

**Total employees:** 92

**Special mention:** The firm scores high on corporate social responsibility, donating thousands of wagons to local and national charities among other philanthropic efforts.

**Highlights include:**



Here's why Radio Flyer scored so high

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Radio Flyer's model shop. "When we interview (product designers) and show them the model shop, they start salivating," CEO Robert Pasin says.

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**Local employees:** 56

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**Website:** <http://www.radioflyer.com/>

CEO Robert Pasin, whose grandfather founded Radio Flyer 98 years ago, says one of the best things about working at the iconic company is its mission. "So many companies try to connect what they do to a higher meaning, but it's really easy for us to do that," he says. "There are all these wonderful milestones, events and emotions around the brand."

Still, Pasin says, the company does not rest on its heritage, recently renovating its old factory space and investing in a "world-class" model shop complete with 3D printers and computer numerical control machines that get product designers excited. "When we interview someone and show them the model shop, they start salivating," Pasin says. "We have a simple product—it's stuff with wheels—but we're very innovative in our space and have won a lot of awards for that," including a 2014 Chicago Innovation Award for the Ziggle, a ride-on toy that moves when kids wiggle their bodies.

"Providing meaningful work is one of the most important ways you can keep people engaged. At the end of the day, when you're designing a product that makes people happy, it tends to make things easier."

- Tom Schlegel, 47, senior vice president of product development

And because of the nature of its product, the company is committed to providing family-oriented perks: flex time year-round, summer and holiday parties for employees and their families, kids visiting the West Side headquarters regularly to test products and a "Take Your Kids to Work Day" program. Other incentives include a wellness reimbursement program, bike mileage reimbursement, an exercise room, a vegetable garden and a walking path on the premises.

The firm scores high on corporate social responsibility as well, donating thousands of wagons to local and national charities and partnering yearly with Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit KaBoom to build a playground in a Chicago neighborhood that needs one. Pasin says these programs are all part of the company's "Little Red Rule," which every employee can recite: "Every time we touch people's lives, they will feel great about Radio Flyer."

- Esther Kang