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## wagon brand playing for scooter market

### By Gabriel Beltrone

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Advertising & Branding



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This month, Radio Flyer started airing TV commercials for the first time in more than 20 years. But that doesn't mean you'll be seeing more of its iconic red wagons on your tube. Instead, the brand is using its media buys to peddle products it's less known for: two-wheel scooters.

"Our market share in two-wheel scooters isn't that big and we're aggressively going after that category," said "chief wagon officer" Robert Pasin, whose grandfather Antonio Pasin founded the company in 1917. "We just really wanted to make a lot of noise and communicate to consumers that we're in this business."

Created by Atlanta-based agency Leader Enterprises, the spots launched in early October and promote the brand's red Shockwave scooter (aimed at boys) and pink Groove Glider scooter (aimed at girls). The ads are running some 230 times total on Nickelodeon and Disney XD, estimated Pasin.

That reflects the brand's goal to directly reach kids older than those who are normally using its products, he said.

In the past, Radio Flyer has run print advertising for its wagons in magazines like *Parenting* and *AARP*. "A lot of grandparents buy wagons for their grandkids; it's kind of a traditional gift," according to Pasin. "Most wagons are bought for kids before they're even one [year old]."

The new scooters, meanwhile, are aimed at kids ages 5, 6, 7 and 8, who will continue to use them as they grow up.

"[These] kids are very involved in the purchase decision," Pasin said.

Radio Flyer began working with Leader Enterprises, its primary agency, earlier this year, Pasin said. That role was previously played by McKinney, which **announced it would lead creative** on the account just last year.

"We want to be the No. 1 brand in anything with wheels for kids," Pasin said. "We're No. 1 in wagons, No. 1 in tricycles, No. 1 in pre-school scooters." In 2008, Radio Flyer reported its share of the wagon market at 80 percent. Today, its market share is "basically the same," he said.

Conquering the two-wheel scooter category is likely to be an uphill fight for Radio Flyer. Razor leads the market and says it has sold 25 million scooters since launching in the U.S. in 2000. Still, it's a reasonable extension for Radio Flyer, said Sean McGowan, a toy industry

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### About the Author

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analyst at Needham & Co., given the wagon vendor already has "a brand name and a color palette that stand for durable, relatively safe fun for kids and for wheeled goods."

Radio Flyer experienced 31 percent growth from 2007 to 2010, **according to Inc.**, reaching total annual revenue of \$103 million. "Our sales were down in 2011," said Pasin, noting that they are back up in 2012.

But the brand's decision to advertise two-wheel scooters wasn't a reaction to a single year of soft sales, according to Pasin. "We're very much about long-term growth," he said. "One off year is not ideal, but it doesn't drive us to do things that are for the short term at all."

Overall, the U.S. toy market shrank 2 percent from \$21.7 billion in 2010 to \$21.2 billion in 2011, according to research firm NPD, effectively reversing similar growth from 2009 to 2010.

"You don't come out with a line of scooters in 2012 because you had a tough 2011," said McGowan. "You come out with a line of scooters in 2012 because you've watched what's happened in the past 20 years."

"If you want growth in an industry that doesn't grow, you need to move into new categories," said McGowan.

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