



Ziggle



RADIO FLYER PROVES AN OLD TOY CO. CAN LEARN NEW TRICKS

BY JANE ADLER

People of a certain age fondly remember the little red wagon by Radio Flyer. But people of a much younger age also love the company's latest product, the Ziggle—a ride-on toy that requires kids to wiggle their bodies to make it move.

"Our brand is associated with outdoor play" says Robert Pasin, CEO, aka chief wagon officer, at Chicago-based Radio Flyer Inc. "Kids love the Ziggle."

Radio Flyer launched the toy in 2013 and has already sold more than 100,000 at \$50 apiece. The product is available online and at stores nationwide.

The Ziggle's journey to market is a tale of innovation. Radio Flyer is a 97-year-old company started by Mr. Pasin's grandfather, who created the iconic red wagon that has sold some 100 million units to date.

Radio Flyer's in-house research and development team rolls out about 10 new toys a year. The company's West Side headquarters includes a play lab where kids test new products. "We do a ton of research of kids riding on things," Mr. Pasin says. "But some of the products

never see the light of day."

The Ziggle, on the other hand, was an instant hit. Mr. Pasin brought home a Ziggle prototype to test with his own four kids. He also took it to a neighborhood block party where kids lined up for rides, spinning out and doing 360-degree turns. "I emailed my team right away," Mr. Pasin says. "We have a winner."

The secret is in the wheels, high-quality casters that smoothly rotate as the child moves back and forth. The toy has no pedals, but provides a fun ride that's also great exercise.

The marketing campaign includes online videos of cute kids, and even a dog, riding a Ziggle. The toy got a big boost when it was featured on the television show "Ellen."

Radio Flyer's sales have tripled in the last 10 years, mostly due to the company's entry into the tricycle market, where it's the top brand, Mr. Pasin notes.

The Chicago Innovation Award is wonderful recognition for Radio Flyer, Mr. Pasin says. "Even though we're a classic brand, we have an innovative team that creates new products. It's an honor to be recognized."