

**PRODUCTS**

## **Hey Kids! Have fun, learn a lot, make a mess, and leave the cleanup to Bounty!**

**A unique partnership between Procter & Gamble's Bounty household towel and a new children's Creative Studio called 'Make-A-Messterpiece' is combining messy creativity with stimulating learning.**

### Perini Journal

"From the moment we're born," says Ryan FitzSimons, "we are told over and over again 'don't make a mess!'. However, there is undeniable empirical evidence, based on experience, observation and experiments, which links creativity to critical thinking and, therefore, to higher academic achievement. Because creativity is often messy, and results in big clean ups that many homes don't want, we created Make-A-Messterpiece, a place where we say 'YES to the MESS' in the ultimate creative studio for kids."

"According to a Stanford University study, young people who participate in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement. That's a 400 percent better chance to excel just by participating in an artistic endeavor! However, in today's tough economic situation, art programs in schools are the first to be cut."

This, in a nutshell, is how FitzSimons, president of the Gigunda Group and founder of the Make-A-Messterpiece creative studio for kids, explains his motivation behind this concept.

The first Make-A-Messterpiece studio (abbreviated as MAM) in the world opened in September 2009 in Glenview near Chicago, Illinois, USA. There it has leased a 15,000 square foot, or about 1,500 square meter retail outlet in the Glen Town Center which is a village-like development that includes shopping, dining and services, as well as residential apartments.

**LONG "EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING" RELATION WITH P&G.** Gigunda has cooperated with Procter & Gamble on what it calls "experiential marketing" for over 15 years. They have worked together on such promotional activities as the highly-publicized, fresh, clean public 'Charmin Restrooms' in Times Square in New York City for the past few holiday shopping seasons during November and December.

The companies have also cooperated on the humanitarian 'Tide Loads of Hope' disaster relief support laundry service sponsored by P&G's Tide laundry detergent. The service features trucks loaded with clothes washing machines that drive to disaster areas such as hurricane and flood zones. The idea is to help people who may have lost their homes or had them heavily damaged, by doing their clothes washing for free to take that burden off them in a crisis.

Thus it was only natural for Gigunda to approach P&G and Bounty when it was considering its new Make-A-Messterpiece concept.

**GOOD FIT WITH BOUNTY BRAND VALUES.** Eric Higgs, Bounty's Brand Manager for North America at P&G, says the MAM concept fit in well with Bounty's brand values. "At Bounty, we saw the Make-A-Messterpiece studio as an opportunity to help children grow and learn by sponsoring fun, 'hands-on' activities that encourage curiosity and creativity outside the classroom. We felt it was an exciting, innovative idea since Bounty believes in encouraging children's creativity and curiosity without letting messes get in the way." Furthermore, says Higgs, according to a 2009 survey of US school administrators, 65 percent said art education supplies were considered a 'low priority' and nearly 20 percent expected art teaching positions would be cut in the 2009-2010 school year.

Bounty believes it can help by sponsoring fun, hands-on activities that spark creativity. In addition, continues Higgs, "This is an opportunity for Bounty to show its commitment. It is Bounty's way of saying to parents "Never let messes get in the way of your children learning and trying new things, as Bounty will handle the cleanup."

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**CREATIVITY AND LEARNING ARE THE BIG IDEAS.** The MAM idea took about two years to go from the initial conceptual stage to actually being launched and opened to visitors in Chicago last September. During that time, over 40 ideas and concepts that would encourage both creativity and learning were considered for theme areas, with eight eventually being chosen. Thus the MAM facility in Chicago has eight separate activity areas, each with a different learning theme, and two play rooms that can be used for birthday parties and similar activities.

MAM is not a day care center and it is not a kids' jumping room where they bounce around on trampolines and slides and, occasionally, each other. Instead, MAM is described as "the ultimate kids' creative studio" where they can let their ideas and energy go wild in a fun, hands-on, anything-goes setting.

Sarah Cole, the Site Manager of MAM, seems to have a pretty fun job. "Here," she says, "no one is worried about the mess that might be made as a result of the activities. We don't want to cramp the kids. Instead we want to let their ideas and imagination run free without the usual 'Don't Make a Mess!' orders that are dominant in most homes. We say 'Messses Don't Matter, Bounty Cleans Up' and everyone seems happy about that."

**GO AHEAD, MAKE A MESS.** The helpful and engaged staff often teach a hidden lesson in the activity such as learning about nutrition, food groups and basic chemistry when baking a pizza, or exploring scientific concepts like density, light refraction and reflection when making a kaleidoscope. The staff of 30 people includes mainly young women who generally have training in art education or teaching. They lead the kids and support them through the activity. Then of course, when there is a big mess from finger painting or cooking or from beating on drums which are filled with paint (that's a fun one to watch!), Bounty household towels come into the picture to help with the cleanup.

**PARENTS STAY NEARBY.** The child's caretaker, typically a parent, grandparent or nanny, stays in the facility when the children are there. They can either be part of the activity or hang around the café, which has free wireless internet if they want to use a PC. To enter the studio the visitor pays a basic \$10 fee plus a \$5 additional charge for what are called the signature, or main interactive activities.

Among the signature activities are: Kids' Creative Kitchen – Where science and maths are key ingredients. Little chefs get a hands-on experience making unique, fun, and edible treats while increasing their self-esteem and sense of accomplishment.

Bubble'ology – Allows kids to explore gravity and color theory through a crazy machine making bubbles with paint. They learn about cause and effect, while creating their own abstract art.

Little Sprouts – Nature, nurture, recycling and sustainability are key skills learned here as the kids grow seeds and herbs. They can take the pots home and watch plants grow, as a direct result of their care.

Drum Roll – Kids dressed in rain gear bang away on drums in a custom-designed wet-room sound studio. And the drumheads are filled with a small pool of paint! The session is recorded for analysis afterwards to learn about rhythm and sequence. A real mess and lots of fun!

Experimentation Station – Science, cause and effect, experimental method and creative problem solving are grasped here. Future scientists can test experiments, from volcanoes and magic potions to thermal lift, light reflection and densities.

**CROWD GROWS AS WEEK GOES ON.** The studio has been very popular according to Site Manager Cole, attracting around 50-100 children per day, and it is especially crowded on weekends. "It's a little bit like restaurants," Cole explains, "as the week goes on it becomes more and more crowded. The party rooms have also proved to be extremely popular as a more creative alternative to something like McDonald's for a birthday party. We are booked solid on weekends."

**WHAT BOUNTY SAW.** It sounds as though Gigunda and Bounty have a solid success. As a sponsor, P&G and Bounty deserve praise for recognizing the somewhat abstract value in supporting kids' creativity and the arts in this type of experiential marketing.

Bounty Brand Manager Higgs says that he saw this "as an opportunity to expand beyond the traditional boundaries of marketing and truly engage the consumer in a fresh and interactive way. Bounty's involvement is part of our ongoing pursuit of innovative ways to connect with consumers in meaningful and unique ways and provide them value. It is also a way to show our commitment to inspiring children's creativity and curiosity while having fun in a colorful, hands-on, anything-goes setting."

As far as how Bounty sees MAM developing, Higgs is quite positive about the possibilities it offers. "The Make-A-Messterpiece studio is an investment for Bounty and strengthens our commitment to nurturing children's curiosity and creativity by supporting fun, creative activities and learning. As time goes on we will evaluate future possibilities with the facility." •