

# Interview with toys and games expert Lisa Orman

*Lisa Orman has worked in the toys and games industry for over two decades and has amassed much expertise about this niche field*

Toys and [games](#) are well-known as important components of children's lives, yet playthings also comprise a thriving business industry that employs millions of people all over the globe. There are countless career paths that a person may choose to follow and whilst some fields--like doctors and lawyers--are highly regaled and well-known, other perfectly viable careers tend to be overshadowed in mainstream media and public conscious. Communication-centered positions such as journalism, marketing, public relations and advertising are essential components to helping grow and promote businesses, products and/or individuals and the professionals behind these important roles are not often spotlighted despite holding jobs that many people consider to be somewhat unusual and interesting. In specialty industries--such as the field of [toys](#) and games--good PR is the lifeblood of success. However, in such a niche market the person working the controls must truly know the industry inside-out and Lisa Orman is one such individual. An experienced journalist and publicist, Lisa has been the CEO of her own company, KidStuff PR, for twenty-two years and is an expert regarding toys. Recently, Lisa discussed her experiences working with toys and games and offered advice for people who are aspiring to enter this special field.

## Background

*Blasting News (BN):* How did you get interested in PR, especially in the toy industry?

*Lisa Orman (LO):* I had been a reporter and retail management consultant before joining a friend's real estate PR firm in Chicago as a contractor. My husband and I were starting a family and my associate and I noticed that Zany Brainy, a specialty toy store chain, was advertising for a manager and staff for a new store in Chicago. We pitched them on Grand Opening PR and got the contract. As the chain grew in the Midwest, my interest in toys and educational tools for children grew too as I was pregnant with our daughter. When I moved to Wisconsin I started KidStuff PR and took over the Zany Brainy account because my friend was still focusing on real estate. I had the account for seven years and learned about all of the specialty toy manufacturers through my work with the toy retailer.

*BN:* As a child, what were your favorite playthings?

*LO:* Spirograph, slinky, jump rope, hopscotch, Operation.



## **Industry**

*BN:* Right now, how many clients do you represent? What do you look for in a client?

*LO:* I usually have approximately fifteen clients. I want to see something different, unique, better or best compared to other things in the market, I want to understand the product or service and want it for my own family, it needs to be fairly priced, be compelling and newsworthy, and I need to feel passionately about it.

*BN:* What have been the most interesting and/or rewarding parts of working in the toy industry?

*LO:* Every year it's always something different! Reporter friends move around or stay at their places but maybe have new beats or interests. It has been gratifying to see many, many startups I worked with from before their first trade show become successful businesses with award-winning products or services and stay in business for a long time.

*BN:* What are your career aspirations over the next ten years?

*LO:* I want to keep running my own business and learn about new trends and ways of building awareness for my clients and educate them about how and why we do this. In ten years I'll begin looking for a bigger agency to merge with or acquire my company so I can retire.

## **Advice**

*BN:* What advice would you give to someone who is aspiring to enter the toy or game design industry?

*LO:* Ask tons of questions and be passionate!

*BN:* Are you currently working on any projects that you would like to mention?

*LO:* Identity Games is about to introduce "Mouthguard Challenge," a game that was co-created with Alex Mandel who is the son of comedian and game show host Howie Mandel. COOP Sports also has some amazing Reactorz light-up balls which have been a lot of fun to promote. #Interview #Toys & Games

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