

# When Consumers Report

## Mommy blogging your way to success

By Stephanie Azzarone

If anyone out there still doubts the power of the mommy blogger, consider this quote from *The New York Times*, which called this demographic "one of the most vocal, quickest-to-blog, strongest-to-band-together-and-form-one-opinion-like-the-Borg collectives out there."

The publication was referencing the gale force storm that broke last fall when McNeil Consumer Healthcare, maker of pain reliever Motrin (and a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson), posted an ad on the Motrin website about "baby wearing"—carrying a child in a baby carrier, such as a sling or a wrap. A number of moms were deeply offended by the ad's implication that they wear their babies to be "fashionable" and by the voice-over saying that "in theory" carrying your baby around in this way is a good idea and that "supposedly" it's a real bonding experience.

The moms blogged and Twittered their thoughts, which of course were read by other moms, many of

whom also reacted negatively to the ad. Next thing anyone knew, bloggers were demanding that the ad be cancelled and calling for boycotts of the product. Within 48 hours the ad had been pulled and an online apology issued by the brand's marketing executive.

The lesson here for toy manufacturers, toy retailers and every other company targeting the mom market: Mommy bloggers have tremendous influence and impact not only online, but far beyond.

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### Friend or 'frenemy'?

Blogging is increasingly how this generation of moms communicates. Studies repeatedly show that moms trust what mom bloggers have to say. Bottom line: These bloggers can promote your products or services more credibly than you can

on your own. Moms blog about what they know and what they are passionate about—and they know toys, which means they can talk about your product or your store knowledgeably and passionately. When you contact a mom blogger, you're not just reaching one mom with your message, you're simultaneously connecting with the hundreds, thousands or even millions of other moms that rely on her advice.

Our advice? Understand the importance of communicating with mommy bloggers, and how to do it properly, to assure that they are your best friend and not as in J&J's case—your worst enemy.

At Child's Play, we have worked intensively and successfully with mom bloggers for the past several years, through proprietary programs such as Web Mom Directory, a compendium of mom-focused blogs, websites, podcasts, e-zines and newsletters; Team Mom, our own network of mommy bloggers who regularly review our clients' products; and the Bloggers Brunch, a special co-op event featuring exhibitors of products

for kids and moms. This year, we are launching an additional level of services, in which we'll track and respond to product mentions on behalf of clients, not on review pages, but within mom-to-mom communications in social media. As a result of our experience, we can share a number of points that can help your company communicate most effectively with this highly desirable audience.

• **Selection.** Identify your target mom bloggers carefully. Some moms blog only about personal experiences; such blogs are inappropriate for a business pitch, and if you do pitch them a product or service, they're not going to like it (and may well let you and their readers know publicly). If a product review is what you're looking for, identify bloggers who review products.

• **Motivation.** Trash the old perception that these women have nothing better to do, and therefore blog. In many if not all cases, the moms behind the most successful blogs are former marketing professionals who see blogging as a means not only to create and participate in parenting communities while they raise their children, but to develop additional business opportunities for themselves. Keep that in mind when you ask them to give your product or store visibility; ask yourself, what's in it for them?

• **Approach.** Do not communicate with mommy bloggers as if they are traditional press. Opt for "short and sweet": Maintain a friendly tone and send only the most important facts (versus reams of unessential press releases). Providing a link to a webpage that contains additional information and images of your product or store is always appreciated.

• **Expectations.** Mom bloggers are an incredibly enthusiastic group. If they like you and your product, they'll do a wonderful job spreading the word. We have seen not just mentions of our clients but, regularly, lengthy reviews including features and benefits, photos and even videos of their children playing with our clients' toys, links back to clients' websites, and more. You can get far more visibility in a blog than in a typical traditional-media story.

• **Evaluation.** Unlike, say, traditional advertising, evaluation of blog results involves more than just numbers. While it's generally better to be covered by a blog that reaches 2 million moms than one that reaches 2,000, there are few out there the size of the former and far more of the latter. It's essential to recognize that even the smaller blogs are to be valued for their specific focus and very loyal audiences. How your product is positioned in a blog post, the scope of the coverage, the degree of comments from visitors to the blog, and where that blog lands on the search engines—all of these factors are key in evaluating impact and value.

Stephanie Azzarone is founder and president of Child's Play Communications, New York, an agency specializing exclusively in publicity and marketing communications for products and services targeted to moms. For more information, please visit [www.childsplaypr.com](http://www.childsplaypr.com) or call (212) 488-2060.



Mother knows best

### Influential mommy blogs



**Celebrity Baby Blog**  
[www.celebrity-babies.com](http://www.celebrity-babies.com)



**Cool Mom Picks**  
[www.coolmompicks.com](http://www.coolmompicks.com)



**Mamanista**  
[www.mamanista.com](http://www.mamanista.com)



**Babble**  
[www.babble.com](http://www.babble.com)



**Parents GoodyBlog**  
[www.goodyblog.com](http://www.goodyblog.com)



**This Full House**  
[www.thisfullhouse.com](http://www.thisfullhouse.com)