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TOY CONFERENCE

# A Little Help from Our Friends

Manufacturers lend a hand to retailers to increase sales

*At ASTRA Marketplace in June, we saw a great variety of creative merchandising, special event and product promotion ideas presented by exhibitors. Here are two of them.*

## Extend Game Sales into Pajamuary

by Alyssa LaFaro

It's January 2, and except for returns, the holiday madness is over. Your shelves are empty, no one is shopping and your employees are bored. To create some excitement, why don't you all play board games in your store? In your pajamas? All month long? You could invite your customers and have a slumber party...

San Diego-based Wiggity Bang Games can help. In fact, for a January-long event they've dubbed "Pajamuary," company founders Jean and Matthew Rivaldi have developed an entire promotional package that provides participating retailers with customized T-shirts, buttons and more, along with templates for press releases, e-mails and social media messages.

The package is available free with a \$400 order of Wiggity Bang Games: Quao (pronounced "cow") and Furt for teens and up, and Magic Feather for ages 7 and up. The Rivaldis are calling for retailers to sign on to participate before the end of August when the materials are scheduled to be customized.

The pilot Pajamuary was launched in 2012 at the seven Game Daze stores near Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona. "The staff of a few of the stores *did* wear pajamas to work, and got really tricked out for the event with fuzzy slippers and stuffed animals," said Jean.

"One weekend, we even built a pillow fort," noted JennAfer Sankar, one of the store's managers.

"It brought in business, thanks to the free promotional items Wiggity Bang provided," said another store manager, Tarra Mumma. "They gave us actual pajamas to give to customers who made purchases, and magnetic refrigerator calendars and stickers we used as bag stuffers."

Stores are required to hold at least one Pajamuary event during the third weekend of

the month. "They can do anything they want," said Jean. "One store offered a 10-percent discount to any customer who walked in wearing pajamas. Others talked about hosting in-store game-playing events. It's whatever works best for the store's location. It can be really simple or really detailed."

The Rivaldis' participation in Pajamuary was impressive. A pajama-clad Matthew was spotted picking up his kids from school, grocery shopping and even enjoying movies at the Sundance Film Festival.

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*Game Daze employees last Pajamuary.*



*Matthew Rivaldi at the Wiggity Bang booth at ASTRA.*

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“I’m from Chicago,” said Jean, “and a few years ago I was trying to explain to Matthew – who has always lived in California – what a true January winter is like. ‘It’s cold and it’s lame,’ I said. ‘Everyone should call in sick and play games in their pajamas all day, every day. They should call it Pajamuary.’”

Last year, Matthew saw a way to apply it to his game business. “Our goal is to build partnerships with fantastic independent retailers to help them draw customers into their stores and to extend holiday sales into January,” he explained.

“You can’t imagine what it’s like to be married to a man who lives an entire month in his pajamas,” said Jean, “but we hope Pajamuary will become an annual tradition for retailers. We want it to grow. We hope it gets families hanging out and playing board games, and that independent retailers are busy all month selling them.”

For more information, visit [www.wiggitybang.com](http://www.wiggitybang.com).