

# Better redemption counter prizes mean more money for rink operators

By Jim Chapman, Director of Sales,  
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I learned a long time ago that my game revenue was directly related to the quality of the prizes in my redemption counter and in my cranes and merchandisers. The more time and effort I put in finding great prizes the more my games get played by my customers. I have to have very good games, obviously, but the key to my great game revenue is my redemption counter!

Your prizes also set the tone for your customers. If you show them great prizes they will spend more money, come back more often and you will in turn build a thriving business. You will be surprised at how your customers will save their tickets for the higher end prizes... all you have to do is give them a reason. Kids and their parents still get excited when they see they can win quality merchandise. Please know you can't fool them. They know good quality prizes when they see them. Besides, you don't want a prize to break in the car on the way home. This is a sure fire way to upset your customers.

To maximize the earning potential of your redemption counter you need to be purchasing from a number of suppliers and you need to get into a habit of watching your counter with a keen eye. Currently, I have six "Go



Customers get excited when they see quality merchandise - and lots of it - at your redemption counter.

To" suppliers. These are the companies from which I buy the bulk of my merchandise. I have another 20 companies I use for the special items that set me apart from my competition. I know this sounds crazy, but it is true. To make a redemption counter stand out and grab your customers' attention you need items they normally do not see. These are the prizes to which even the parents stop and point.

This may sound like a daunting task, but it is not. It just takes a little bit of time to get your self into a routine. For me I like to do the following:

Every Monday morning the first thing I do is to look at my counter. I have a sheet with all my prizes listed and I take a quick inventory to see what I need. You do not have to count each item every week (do a complete inventory every month). This tells me what I need to order so I am not out for the coming weekend. I order that morning or the next morning without exception. What this does is that it ensures my counter looks full by the end of the week. By ordering this way I know my suppliers will ship in time for me to have my order by Thursday or Friday morning...I never have holes in my counter!!!

Every other week I spend a bit of time with my suppliers on the phone. Just five minutes with each company is all it takes. I ask them what is hot, what is new and if I have missed any interesting product. This allows me to bring in new items to keep my counter fresh. I have found that the good sales people know what is working for others in the field. Most times what they recommend works great. They want to see you successful so you order more from them-they have your best interest at heart.

For my big prizes I ask my customers what they want to play for. This really works, and when you bring in some of the prizes they ask for they realize you care about them and they will come back more often. This is a great way to build a solid relationship with your customers.

I also reach out to other owners to see what is working for them. You will be surprised what others will share with you if you do the same for them. So find a few owners like yourself and work together.

As for building a great counter, focus on prize values and have a variety at every ticket level. Remember to

have some prizes for girls and boys at each level. In my counters I have prizes at the following levels: 10, 20, 30, 50, 80, 100, 140, 380, 500, 740, 800 and on into 1,000, 1500, 2000, 3000 and higher. Pick from four to eight prizes per level. This will give you a great mix of prizes. Please know this is not a hard and fast rule, so use this as a measuring stick. Keep in mind you want to have a selection to choose from for your customers.

Remember to change out your prizes. Keep it fresh. I always look to add new items every month. There are so many to choose from it will not be difficult to find what you are looking for. If you need help please call me. I would be more than happy to share with you the prizes that work for me. If you would like a list of great suppliers and/or prizes email me at [jimmychaps@aol.com](mailto:jimmychaps@aol.com) or call me at 800.224.1717 Ext. 726.

## Jim's Favorites and Best Sellers

**Candy...**Nerd Ropes, Air Head Extremes, Mega Smarties, Mega Lollipops, peanut butter cups, Push Pops, Twizzlers, and Nestle bars and Laffy Taffy.

**Small prizes...**handcuffs, fruit erasers, 80mm slinkies, mini slinkies, army men, tattoos, hand grade squirt guns, slap bands, sports key chains.

**Mid-size prizes...**knobby balls in all sizes, pictures in frames (SpongeBob, I Love Mom and Dad, Dora, sports teams...), coloring books, puzzles, M&M cups and bowls, stuffed animals, maze bats-numchucks-ball and chain, slingshots, kites and cotton candy.

**Large prizes...**big licensed plush, framed Green Bay Packer pictures, sports plaques, bikes, 36" Knobby Ball with handle, super large candy from It's Sugar, toaster ovens and skateboards.

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