

## Schleich “Chief Storytelling Officer” Campaign / Brilliant PR & Marketing for Schleich USA

### 8E. Integrated Communications - Consumer Products

#### 11B. Marketing - Consumer Products Non-Packaged Goods

**Insights & Analysis** - Approaching the 2021 holiday shopping season, Schleich, the world’s leading manufacturer of animal figurines, sought top of mind awareness with parents and demand from kids in the US. Lacking the budgets of competing toy brands, Schleich would rely on earned media coverage, and needed insightful, effective creative to drive the efficiency of limited paid media executions. The brand also wished to begin shaping brand understanding under a newly refreshed mission and vision, “*letting kids’ imaginations run wild*” and “*shaping storytellers for life.*”

A survey executed by Brilliant PR & Marketing indicated **there is a conflict between the holiday wishes of kids and parents.** Most kids ask for toys featuring their favorite entertainment properties or the latest toys and games they see advertised. But, 87% of moms think it is extremely or very important that the toys they buy have an educational or developmental component. Additional third-party research and media coverage indicated that what parents want for kids post-pandemic may be less about “education and development,” and more about preparing them to become change-makers in the world. A 2021 National Geographic article stated that parents were taking note that kids with activist mindsets often make more money later in life and reach higher levels of education in addition to being happier and having better social well-being. Pew Research also indicated that the thing parents most crave for their kids is responsibility. Brilliant PR deduced a key insight that parents would respond to a rallying cry inspiring them to give their kids holiday gifts that would help them develop skills (e.g. imaginative storytelling) to make the world a better place. Schleich saw a creative opportunity to do this while simultaneously showing kids how those same skills could help make their holiday wishes come true and also showcasing priority gift items.

**Planning** - From these insights the team developed the **CHIEF STORYTELLING OFFICER** campaign, a national search for a child to fill the role of Schleich’s very first CSO, followed by a holiday video campaign starring the selected child. Pivoting from the nostalgia of holiday ads starring iconic child talent and the viral success of kid-led motivational talks like *Kid President*, and *TED Talks*, the backbone of the program would be an irresistible child star who could remind parents of kids ages 4-12 that holiday gift choices could be the key to unlocking kids’ greatest potential to help change the world. With a “wink and a nod,” the CSO would simultaneously demonstrate a clever way for kids to get what they want for the holidays. By positioning the casting as a kids’ job search, earned media value, social media engagement and creative opportunities would increase exponentially.

Schleich USA established the overarching goal of exposing 15% of its target audience to its holiday messaging. Brilliant PR & Marketing set out to generate 100MM consumer media impressions, 500k YouTube video views, 1MM influencer impressions and 100k organic social media impressions leveraging campaign messaging and assets.

#### Execution

- **National Job Search:** Brilliant PR issued a national job search asking kids across the US to submit videos exhibiting their storytelling prowess to be considered for the role of Chief Storytelling Officer.
- **FAO Schwarz Live Interviews:** Kids in the greater New York City area also had the opportunity to appear live at the iconic Fifth Avenue toy retailer to apply for the job, creating compelling event B-Roll, content for YouTube videos and an opportunity for live influencer engagement.
- **Influencer Collaborations:** Brilliant PR leveraged paid and earned influencer collaborations to promote the job search, FAO Schwarz event, campaign content and priority holiday gift items.
- **Media Relations:** Beyond its always-on brand and product media and influencer relations for Schleich USA, Brilliant PR & Marketing leveraged campaign creative and interviews with the CSO to secure earned media placement.

- **YouTube / Video Content:** The winning CSO, Marcello, made his public debut in a series of nine commercial-quality videos. These included a campaign hero video, a “Merry Important Message for Parents,” a “Zoom workshop” teaching kids how to get what they want for the holidays, a series of “Stories that Will Change the World,” and more. All videos drove home the divergent messages of rallying parents to give kids gifts that help them become change-makers while giving kids an unexpected way to make their holiday wishes come true. Two additional videos recapped the FAO Schwarz job search event and showcased a montage of the best job applicants.
- **OTT Advertising:** A :15 cutdown of the campaign hero video became the creative for an OTT advertising flight targeting 12 of Schleich’s priority US markets.
- **Social Media:** All aspects of the program were brought to life on Schleich’s US Facebook and Instagram pages, including content related to the casting call and winner reveal. These channels also provided an additional platform for showcasing the 11 campaign videos.
- **Customer Engagement:** Schleich USA allowed customers and fans to write letters to the CSO, ensuring that each child who did so received a personalized letter in response.

## Evaluation

- A brand study in early 2022 revealed that **19% of Schleich USA’s target audience of moms with kids ages 4 to 12 had been exposed to brand advertising during the campaign period, exceeding goal by 4%.**
- **Schleich USA’s holiday season sales increased 77% YOY with average order value increasing 23%.**
- The CSO was featured in **a marquee interview on *The Kelly Clarkson Show* in addition to numerous feature broadcast segments**, including local affiliates in NYC and the brand’s priority home market of Charlotte.
- The Chief Storytelling Officer campaign **exceeded its media impressions goal by 12%, generating 112MM impressions** including two placements in *PRWeek* and coverage in The Charlotte Observer.
- **25 influencers posted about the campaign, exceeding goal by 20% and garnering 1.2 MM impressions.** This included five macro influencers with over 100k followers each.
- The **YouTube video series generated over 600k views, exceeding goal by 100k and generating 12% of the brand’s total YouTube views since 2010.** The YouTube advertising CPM of \$2 fell below the industry benchmark of \$3.53.
- **Campaign creative was viewed by 2.3MM OTT viewers** during the weeks leading up to the holidays, boasting a **video completion rate over 98%** (exceeding goal by 8%).
- A paid collaboration with **Buzzfeed generated 1.6MM impressions and 2.6k clicks** to Schleich’s campaign landing page, overdelivering by more than 200k views and outperforming CTR benchmarks by 1.5x.
- The campaign generated more than **196k organic social media impressions spawning more than 3,600 Facebook and Instagram engagements and exceeding goal by 96%. Engagement on campaign-related posts averaged 12% versus 9% across all other social content.** An additional 70k video viewers were garnered organically on social channels.
- Average time spent on the campaign landing page was three minutes, far exceeding any other page on the brand’s website.
- Campaign related emails to Schleich customers received higher than average open rates (56% and 34%) and CTRs (2%), and led directly to sales revenue.
- 175 children submitted entries in the national job search, including 32 kids who appeared live at the FAO Schwarz event.
- Campaign success was widely circulated among Schleich’s global executive leadership as a gold-standard for brand marketing under the newly refined mission and vision.