

## Life in flight: An inside look at iconic brand Radio Flyer

It's a world rich in "FUNomenal" culture - where innovation meets imagination and ideas take flight.

*By Christina Orlovsky*

Welcome to a world of wonder and whimsy, where adventure awaits, and opportunity abounds. A world of smiles that span more than a century and joy that knows no bounds—all centered around a core of creativity, woven into the fabric of youthful fun and playful positivity. It's a world rich in FUNomenal culture—where innovation meets imagination and ideas take flight. It's a world created, and a mission accomplished, by Radio Flyer, the iconic American toy company that has prided itself on inspiring joy in people of all ages since its inception in 1917.

Born in a one-room woodwork shop in Chicago, rented by entrepreneurial Italian immigrant and furniture maker Antonio Pasin, Radio Flyer has evolved into an emblematic heritage brand that has evoked a spirit of nostalgia for more than a century. That spirit has stood the test of time, and today, the first little red wooden wagon crafted by Pasin—first dubbed the Liberty Coaster and now known as The Original Little Red Wagon®—is a symbol that has connected generations and created warm memories that last a lifetime.

**“My grandfather came to America and found his calling, creating a legacy of toys that continues to spark imagination and inspiration,” says Radio Flyer’s Chief Wagon Officer Robert Pasin.**



“In our 100-plus year history, we’ve sold over a billion wheels. That means we have been part of millions of moments for families—birthdays, holidays, first steps, trick-or-treating, and more,” he continues. “We’ve quite literally pulled and carried kids on millions of adventures. And even when we’ve been ‘retired,’ we are in people’s gardens, garages, and homes for generations. As the custodian of a brand with that type of role in people’s lives, it’s very personal. I feel that, and our employees here at Radio Flyer recognize that we are more than just a brand.”

## **A FUNomenal Company Culture**

In fact, Radio Flyer works hard to ensure that the corporate culture reflects the brand, just as shiny and bright as its signature red products. That means maintaining a workplace that draws employees committed to the mission of creating lifelong memories and an environment where talented people can learn, innovate, and work toward common goals.

“Radio Flyer’s culture is FUNomenal—our word for the perfect combination of excellence and joy, and it is purpose-driven,” explains Radio Flyer’s Chief People Officer Amy Bastuga.

“To us, a FUNomenal culture is one of high accountability, where every Flyer feels responsible for harnessing a collaborative culture that creates a great place to work for all. Flyers would describe Radio Flyer as a fun, collaborative culture that allows people to be creative and solve problems in innovative ways, and where everyone’s voice is heard,” she continues.

**“We live by our Little Red Rule, our version of the Golden Rule: Every time we touch people’s lives, they will feel FUNomenal! This sets the bar high for how we treat people.”**

As such, Radio Flyer prides itself on supporting its Flyers in numerous ways, including Wag-on U courses for professional development; engaging company events; enriching diversity initiatives; and reward and recognition programs like passing a Gold Wagon to a peer, receiving a shiny, red Captain FUNomenal cape, or being honored with the coveted Little Red Rule award for living the company’s values.

These benefits for Flyers do not go unnoticed by the company’s external colleagues, including those at Marsh McLennan Agency.

“In working with Radio Flyer, I’ve seen firsthand that the leadership team strives to ensure employees have a comprehensive, competitive, and cutting-edge benefits package that meets the needs of all employees at all stages of their careers and lives,” says Nellie Mulrooney, Account Executive, Employee Health & Benefits, MMA’s Chicago office. “At the foundation of all decisions made, the Radio Flyer leadership team unwaveringly puts employees first.”



## **FUNatical Customer Service**

Radio Flyer's strong internal culture also helps the company shine in the eyes of their target consumer: families with young children, building on the legacy of generations who grew up with their favorite red wagon taking them on every adventure. Treating these families with only the best service has been at the core of the company's mission.

"Our brand was built on love and our mission is to bring smiles to kids of all ages and to create warm memories that last a lifetime," Pasin says. "There are not many brands that have been a delightful part of people's childhood for generations. This is inspiring and also comes with a sense of responsibility."

That responsibility is demonstrated by Radio Flyer's award-winning FUNatical customer service, which provides hands-on training, expert product knowledge, and fast, friendly help to keep Radio Flyers rolling.

"Radio Flyer cares equally for their customers," says Blake Croson, VP, Business Insurance, MMA's Schaumburg office. "I have been able to learn a lot about their quality control and product stewardship programs that oversee product development and ensure they are delivering the best, safest quality products to the marketplace."

## **Soaring to New Heights**

As Radio Flyer continues its trajectory to impact generations to come, it does so by staying true to the company's origins while also evolving to meet the needs of today's active families.

**"We continue to expand on my grandfather's legacy, building one of the best workplaces in the nation, providing world-class customer service, and implementing sustainability initiatives that improve the world for future generations," Pasin says.**

They're reimagining concepts and transforming product lines to encompass new aspects of adventure. Today's Radio Flyer is far more than a little red wagon: It's also a convertible trike, a zippy scooter, an exhilarating go-kart, and an ultra-modern e-bike. The Radio Flyer of the 21st century truly is fun for the entire family.



“We have been creatively adapting to the changing needs of our society and consumers for decades, while also actively inserting progressive and revolutionary ideas into the industry through our products,” explains Eric Selner, Radio Flyer’s EVP of Product Development, Sales & Operations. “We are really excited about our two newest lines: VOYA™ Stroller Wagons and Flyer™ Electric Bikes. The VOYA Stroller Wagon is our newest premium wagon innovation for families, and Flyer eBikes are the best electric bikes for families on the go—all created with the same beautiful design, quality, and durability of the other products our fans love us for.”

While Radio Flyer continues forward, it does so with high standards of sustainability in mind, recognizing that improving the world for tomorrow means focusing on critical global initiatives today. These sustainability efforts span product design, manufacturing, and operations. In 2022, Radio Flyer became the first global toy and e-bike manufacturer to receive B Corporation certification, cementing its status as a leader in the global movement for an inclusive, equitable, and regenerative economy. Radio Flyer was also the first toy company to join Science Based Targets by publicly committing to emission reduction goals and was recognized as a Real Leader’s Top Impact Company for its commitment to wide-ranging sustainability efforts.

“We are a company that is working to be good citizens of the world,” Pasin says. “We are committed to doing our part to preserve the environment for generations to come so that kids and families can continue to exercise their imaginations and enjoy outdoor play.”

Recognizing that it is equally critical to be socially conscious, Radio Flyer demonstrates this commitment through a variety of diversity and inclusion initiatives that align with the company’s goals to create a better future.



In the past year, Radio Flyer has awarded \$15,000 in scholarships to students in the National Society for Black Engineers; onboarded and mentored students from an economically disadvantaged area of Chicago; and partnered with the Illinois Institute of Technology's virtual mentorship program to mentor students from underserved communities throughout the state.

"Today, our company is consistently ranked a great place to work by places like Fortune, Crain's Chicago Business, and Fast Company," Pasin concludes.

"We've built a community of creative, passionate, and committed Flyers who make this possible and are creating all our amazing, innovative products that fuel smiles and warm memories for families around the globe."

If that's where Radio Flyer is today, what does tomorrow have in store for the next generation of smiling families and Flyers? Pasin is optimistic.

"Radio Flyer will continue to innovate new ways to bring joy to families through our products," he concludes. "We will also continue to evolve as a company to further our sustainability efforts and build on our award-winning culture of passionate and talented Flyers who help bring this joy to families every day."

Learn more about how your organization can build a strong employee benefits program that mirrors your corporate values and culture.

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