

## Schleich to transform POS into a playworld

**Playworlds rather than individual figurines: the new strategy for the trade.**

Schwäbisch Gmünd, 27.01.2015. Toy manufacturer Schleich is to continue its strategic realignment in 2015. Alongside its most comprehensive range of new products for years, Schleich will this year be offering its trade partners very special POS innovations and enhanced sales support. Having just celebrated the best sales year in its history, the long-established Schwäbisch Gmünd-based company is set to consolidate future sales growth by further developing its "Playworld strategy".

Since 2013, Schleich has been systematically developing complete playworlds out of the individual figures that make up its product range. Each playworld is distinguished by close attention to detail and a well-thought-out play concept, offering maximum playtime value with multiple functions and a wide range of different options, while creating an authentic environment for the various individual Schleich figures. New Schleich products to be unveiled at the 2015 Toy Fair include the Magic Elf Castle for the playworld of bayala, a Battle Arena for the World of Knights, a realistic Watering Hole for the wild beasts of the savannah and the Big Horse Show for the Farm Life theme world. As these products are enhanced by a wide range of new accessories, the theme worlds heighten not only playtime value, they also continually generate new buying incentives – with each new purchase the playworlds become even richer, even more exciting and even more varied.

This ongoing development of the "Playworld strategy" is flanked by innovative sales support measures agreed with the partners in the Schleich dealer advisory board in line with the wishes and requirements of the trade. CEO Dr Thomas van Kaldenkerken is certain that the success of the new strategy is set to continue in the year ahead: "Last year's results generated enormous momentum for this current development towards a 'playworld company'. But the crucial thing is that we continue to take the trade with us every step of the way into the future and remain very close to the market. That is the key to continued success."

Schleich has also made a number of strategic appointments to underpin this success. Udo Rother, formerly Senior Director Channel Development with a leading toy manufacturer, is a very experienced market expert who, since 1 January, has been heading up the newly created Sales Support department for the DACH region. With effect from 1 April 2015, Victoria Sutch will also be joining Schleich's senior management team as Vice President Marketing. Sutch, whose responsibilities included successfully looking after the "Boys Business" portfolio strategy for a well-known toy manufacturer, has 15 years of international kids marketing experience.

## **Showtime at the POS**

For 2015 the new product highlights from the theme worlds of bayala and Wild Life, the Magic Elf Castle and the Watering Hole in the savannah, will be showcased in the form of lively product videos at the point of sale. This will give customers an immediate chance to escape into these exciting new playworlds and discover the individual play possibilities they offer. There will also be a special presentation package for the heroes and villains from DC Comics available from 2015 on: a product holder suggestive of a big-city skyline will create an exciting backdrop for BATMAN™, SUPERMAN™ and Co.

## **Storyworlds to enjoy**

Following its success with bayala, Schleich is to launch a second magazine on the market entitled "Abenteuer auf dem Pferdehof". Aimed at girls between the ages of 6 and 11 with a passion for horses, two issues of the magazine will appear during the first quarter of 2015. In addition to containing a wealth of exciting equestrian stories, each magazine comes with an exclusively painted horse figurine.

## **Strategic marketing support**

Schleich's media strategy for 2015 places a particular focus on special interest magazines. Thanks to the outstanding quality and painstaking design of Schleich's figurines and products, they are highly sought after by child and adult collectors alike. Additional product flyers generate desire for the new products among young readers and in so doing support sales at the point of sale.

## **About Schleich**

Founded 80 years ago in Schwäbisch Gmünd by Friedrich Schleich, the company is one of Germany's biggest toy manufacturers and a leading international provider of original play concepts. The famous toy figurines produced by Schleich are sold in more than 50 countries and have conquered children's playrooms around the world. As a global player with Swabian roots, the company is today majority-owned by the European investment group Ardian. Further shareholders are CEO Dr Thomas van Kaldenkerken and CFO Erich Schefold. The design of the Schleich play worlds as well as quality and safety tests are carried out in Germany, while manufacturing itself takes place both at the company headquarters in Schwäbisch Gmünd and at further production facilities abroad.

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