

Crayola: Using Color as a Language Intrinsic to Storytelling

licenseglobal.com/lifestyle/crayola-using-color-as-a-language-intrinsic-to-storytelling



Crayola Experience at Pigeon Forge, TN. Crayola

At a Glance

- Crayola promoting creativity
- Creating new IP-driven initiatives
- Looking forward: Two new collaborations

Innovation in any business is key to success. But how does a brand like Crayola, which prides itself on color and creativity and has existed for more than a century, continue evolving and maintaining consumer interaction and engagement?

For many, the first box of 64 Crayola crayons or opening a new box of 24-count Crayola crayons on their first day of school is a clear memory. In fact, a study by Yale University found the distinctive scent of wax crayons is the 18th most recognizable smell among Americans.

Crayola is currently experiencing substantial momentum across all categories – retail partnerships, collaborations, content development, experiences, interactive and, of course, product – fueled by activations across its content, experiences, licensing and interactive vectors that are enabling its 360-degree engagement model.

Promoting Creativity

The company's latest division, Crayola Studios, is dedicated to creating multiple-genre content for kids and families that explores the limitless possibilities of children's creativity and leverages color as an intrinsic element of the story.

“Crayola Studios is a logical next step for the company,” says Victoria Lozano, executive vice president, marketing, Crayola. “It seeks to inspire and nurture the next generation and help them develop lifelong creative mindsets.

Lozano explains Crayola Studios aims to work with best-in-class creators, studios and distribution partners who share the company's vision of creating inspiring and joyful multi-genre content.

“We are developing a robust but carefully planned pipeline of content for kids and families that will include a range of genres and incorporate multiple content touchpoints across digital, long-form, podcasts and film,” says Lozano. “Animation will play a large role, and we'll also look at live-action and unscripted projects.

While the lion's share of Crayola Studios' content will be original ideas, Crayola also has several existing IPs on its development slate, all of which will have a common goal: to inspire creative self-expression, showcase imagination in action and use color as language intrinsic to storytelling.

In October, Lozano took the stage at MIPJUNIOR to announce a new television partnership with 9 Story Media Group. At that time, she set out the vision and inspiration behind Crayola Studios' move into entertainment content and explained why the ambitious plans fit naturally with the company's wider ethos.

“We're excited to be collaborating with 9 Story Media Group,” says Lozano. “This strong alliance demonstrates Crayola's ambition for our move into kids' content.”

The two companies will work together on developing shows, with 9 Story handling production and distribution and Crayola managing the licensing and merchandising for the franchises.

“For our first title in the multi-project deal, we're teaming up with MIMO Studios on the active development of ‘The Alien Adventures of Finn Caspian’ – the animated adaptation of Gen-Z Media's award-winning kids' podcast,” adds Lozano.

A science-fiction adventure story, “The Alien Adventures of Finn Caspian” centers on Finn Caspian, an eight-year-old boy aboard The Famous Marlowe 280 Interplanetary Exploratory Space Station.



The exterior of Crayola Experience in Easton, PA.

Crayola Location-Based Entertainment

Two years ago, Crayola announced its intention to expand its location-based entertainment footprint both domestically and internationally. To position itself for this growth, the company looked to actively seek partners to license and develop new iterations of Crayola Experience, which was recognized as one of America’s top 10 children’s museums by the 2023 USA TODAY 10 Best Readers’ Choice Awards last year, as well as other location-based entertainment venues.

“By developing licensing partnerships that can bring new capital, expertise and local market access, we are able to accelerate our location-based entertainment expansion,” says Lozano. “In fact, a year later, we announced an exciting licensing agreement with BrightColors that will double the Crayola Experience brand’s presence in the U.S. in the next five years. BrightColors and its partner, Kingsmen Xperience, plan to open a minimum of five new Crayola Experience venues by 2028, beginning with the recently announced Pigeon Forge location, opening later this year.”

Crayola is also continuing to develop new creative concepts that will help scale its events and exhibitions location-based entertainment business. Crayola’s strong brand equity allows the company and its partners to create unique new experiences, not just different iterations

of Crayola Experience.

“For example, early in 2022, Crayola debuted IDEAworks at Philadelphia’s Franklin Institute, a traveling exhibition that encourages families to explore innovation, invention and design thinking,” continues Lozano. “In the past couple of years, we’ve also collaborated with the global ocean exploration nonprofit, OceanX, and Kubota Tractor Corporation on four- to six-week national takeovers at each Crayola Experience location.”



L.O.L. Surprise! Loves x Crayola tots from MGA Entertainment.

Looking Forward: Two New Collaborations

Crayola aims to continue to expand the brand strategically and in meaningful ways for the business and its consumers this year and beyond.

“Through innovation and collaboration, we’ll build additional momentum behind already successful products, experiences and programs,” says Lozano. “You’ll also see us target new extensions of those categories, as well as explore exciting new opportunities in the children’s entertainment content space across children, parent and educator audiences.”

In October, MGA Entertainment and Crayola announced a multiyear agreement for MGA to produce and distribute Crayola-inspired dolls and licensed merchandise globally under its L.O.L. Surprise! Loves brand.