

# SELLING Halloween

THE ULTIMATE RETAIL AND HAUNT RESOURCE

## Facing forward

The future  
of Halloween is  
customer-centric

plus  
Dozens of  
2018 new  
product photos  
with a special focus  
on children's



THE  
NIGHTMARE  
ZONE  
EXCLUSIVE CONTENT  
FOR HAUNTED ATTRACTIONS  
STARTS ON PAGE 27

JANUARY 2018

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PRODUCTS ON THIS PAGE: **A.** Rubie's (516/326-1500) [www.rubies.com](http://www.rubies.com) **B.** Chicago Costume, Chicago, Ill. **C.** InCharacter, A Division of Fun World (516) 873-9000 [www.incharacter.com](http://www.incharacter.com) **D.** Crawford School of Terror, Connellsville, Pa.

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# THE NEW FACE OF THE HALLOWEEN CUSTOMER

BY MARIE GRIFFIN, EDITOR



**T**here is a baby gracing the cover of this issue of *Selling Halloween & The Nightmare Zone* for two good reasons. One is that Amelia is the daughter of this magazine's publisher, Katherine Willekes—and we couldn't resist. The other is that Katherine and Amelia exemplify a demographic shift that will change the face of Halloween retailing and the haunted attraction industry in the years to come.

Katherine is a millennial, the generation born between 1981 and 1997, and millennials are moving into the parenting phase. The majority of women giving birth at present are millennials and that trend will only grow.

No surprise, millennial moms rely heavily on the internet, and specifically smartphones, for information, entertainment, and socialization. They spend an average of 1.7 hours per day connected to the Internet, and 17.4 hours per week on social networks. Seventy percent of millennial mothers research products online before making a purchase, regardless of where they buy, but a strong majority (69%) eventually completes the purchase in a physical store. Of course, the same consumer will likely buy online sometimes and in-store at other times.

That brings me to the theme of our cover story, "The Future of Halloween Retailing Is Customer-Centric." This means that consumers are determining how, when, and where they will shop, and retailers have to adapt.

In a recent survey of 500 North American retailers, predominantly soft goods and hard goods specialty retailers, 47% said "customer-centricity" is their top strategic initiative, the number-one answer by far. The ideal is to provide customers with a seamless omnichannel experience so that the customer is equally well served whether they encounter the retailer in-person in a store, online, through a mobile phone or app, or over the phone.

For retailers, this starts with anticipating consumers' needs and preferences by selecting the right products, in the right amounts, and continues all the way through to delivering those products to the store shelf or the customer's doorstep at the right time. It's a tall order, and it will take time to get there, whether you are a large chain or an independent specialty store.

The shift of millennials into parenting will also affect haunted attractions, although we don't know exactly how. Will the people who demanded full-touch, horrifying haunts five years ago want something less intense once they have children? Will there be greater demand for family-friendly Halloween experiences? Could more family-friendly escape games fill that need? Will millennials struggling with the costs of raising a family gravitate toward haunts with lower prices or bigger discounts? What will customer-centricity look like in the haunted attraction world?

In the midst of all these changes and questions, we know that our readers will continue to face forward, and we will eagerly go with you.

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