



Leo Dashevskiy

Rocket Report

Model Rockets: Entertaining and Educational

With only a little guidance, it's easy to get your customers started in rocketry.

“Five,” a voice from the PA speakers shouted. “Four.” Kids turned around. “Three.” All eyes were locked on the rocket on the pad. “Two.” Could those necks extend even more? “One.” Are they breathing? “Fire!” The rocket soared high into the sky, leaving a white trail behind it. All heads followed. Only when the parachute deployed and the rocket started back to earth did the kids start talking to each other about how cool the rocket flew.

Is building and launching a model rocket really rocket science? Nah, there's an entire model rocket industry designed to keep things understandable. Companies such as Estes and Quest, for example, have been providing rockets, engines and accessories for 50 or more years, and every year more styles are released.

Model rocket kits are assigned one of five skill levels: ready to fly; quick-build; and Levels 1, 2 and 3. “Ready to fly” rockets are self-explanatory—load an engine and launch. Quick-build rockets are easy to build and come with parts such as tailfins and nose cones that are already colored so no painting is required. These can be assembled in less than 30 minutes. Level-1 rocket kits require some painting, gluing and sanding. Most of these have balsa fins and contain either a balsa or plastic nose cone. Some of these kits even include decals to “pretty-up” the rocket. Level-2 and -3 rocket kits are for customers with some modeling skill, and they are more complex in design. All rocket kits in this category also include some form of colorful decals, either self-



An entry level rocket such as this Quick Q by Quest is perfect for clubs. The kit requires three 15-minute sessions to complete. adhesive or water-slide.

All model rocket kits, regardless of level, contain step-by-step instructions with safety codes included in the instructions. Most rocket kits are packed in plastic bags, allowing the kits to be hung from pegboard, thereby using vertical space without the need for shelves. This gives dealers more freedom in their store layouts. Generally, there is some form of protective packaging that prevents parts from being damaged during transit. Even with the protective

packaging, dealers should try to keep the bags away from little hands, as young children are not always delicate. The labels are bright and colorful, creating a nice look for your store while grabbing customer attention.

Probably the most rockets flown in this country are launched by Boy Scouts earning the coveted Space Exploration merit badge. To earn the badge, scouts are required to build a rocket by themselves and launch it twice. Ready-to-fly kits are out of question, and Level-2 and -3 are generally too much to ask of most 8- to 10-year-old boys. That leaves quick-build and Level-1 rockets. All rocket manufacturers have a wide range of rockets in these categories. They are

inexpensive, easy to build and fun to fly. The main rocket bodies in these kits are made from heavy-duty wound paper. Wound bodies are strong enough to withstand some serious abuse; I have seen many rockets come tumbling down after



Bagged in plastic, rocket kits can be damaged. Try to keep your rocket display away from little children as younger hands aren't always delicate.

launch without having the parachute properly deployed. Often, these rockets are dusted off and flown again in 15 minutes, rarely requiring any repairs.

It usually takes two or three sessions of 15 minutes each to build most Level-1 rockets, with some time between sessions to let the glue dry. This makes a great choice for monthly Boy Scout troop meetings.

As for supplies, a builder needs a hobby knife with a selection of extra blades. Some form of adhesive is necessary—white glue works well without the potential for mishap that an inexperienced modeler may encounter with cyanoacrylate, although models with plastic parts do require plastic glue. To make the rocket pretty and colorful, an assortment of sandpaper and paint will finish the project nicely. Quick-build and Level-1 rockets are available in bulk packs of 12 or 24 kits, and this makes them a perfect selection for a Boy Scout troop.

Building, though, is only the first step. The next step is to fly it. To do that, you need five components. These are the previously built rocket, a launch pad and controller, engines and related supplies like wadding and igniters, a lot of open space and calm air.



Be sure your peg supply is diverse enough to accommodate multiple rocket styles and a wide range of kits.

The launch pad is the only fixed asset in model rocketry. It does not move, it is reusable, and with proper care, it will last indefinitely. A model rocket must only be launched from a launch pad, and an electrical controller with multiple safety devices should be used. All rocket companies produce a launch pad and launch controller and sell them either as separate items or bundle them in starter sets. In either case, the launch pad and controller are the same.

Engines offer a good revenue stream. If the rocket is going to fly, it's going to use an engine.

With a rocket's flying time of less than a minute, a lot of engines can be used during a launch session. Rocket motors have a designated range from 1/2A to E, the letter indicating the engine power. Most rocket motors are packed in groups of three, with the necessary ancillary supplies in the same package. For group launches, bulk engine packages work better. These usually contain 24 engines along with the required wadding and igniters.

What is required to build a rocket? One (or more) rocket kits, a corner of a table, and 30 minutes of time...“Five!” Sorry, I have to watch this rocket fly. “Four.” See you next time. “Three”.... **HM**

THE RIGHT PIECES FOR A BETTER HOBBY BUSINESS

Join NRHSA, the only industry association supporting the brick and mortar hobby retailer.



1 Unite with other hobby retailers to create a much needed collective voice and consistent message to the rest of the trade.

2



Use the benefits NRHSA members enjoy to save money on office products & shipping. Take advantage of the excellent credit card processing program and much more.

3



Join hundreds of hobby retailers nationwide. Share knowledge and experience that can help you build a better business.

NRHSA Convention & Table Top Expo
The Orleans Hotel & Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada
May 1 – 4, 2011
Register Online at www.nrhsa.org



TO JOIN, download the membership form at nrhsa.org/welcome/mem_app.cfm
For more information, visit www.nrhsa.org or email members@nrhsa.org

Growing Your Rocket Department Ed Rogala

A great way to increase your store's sales volume is to stock multiple product lines. As in any form of modeling, a wide range of kit selections is key. There are many producers of model rocket kits. Some offer unique designs while others offer more complex designs as well as different assembly techniques. Pay attention to packaging and be sure your peg-hook supply is diverse enough to accommodate multiple packages on one hook. Rocket motors are the consumables in model rocketry and are



Lots of open space, a rocket, a good supply of engines and a launch pad is all that is needed to fly model rockets.

classified as Haz-Mat items, which limits your distributor's shipping options. The most common method is US Mail Parcel Post. It often takes 10 days for a shipment of engines to reach your store. Keep this in mind when determining inventory levels. Besides rockets and engines, there are a number of books on the subject, and customers new to the hobby, both young and old, are always anxious to learn more about rocketry.

HM would like to welcome Leo Dashevskiy to its team of writers. Originally from Russia, but now a US citizen, Leo is passionate about model rockets and often works with local Boy Scout troops and 4-H clubs, introducing them to model rocketry whenever possible. Leo is also a member of IPMS and has published several scale plastic model articles in the IPMS Journal.

Starlight MODEL ROCKETS
AMERICANMADE
model rockets and parts

Distributed through: Stevens International, Hobby X, Ace Hobby Distributors, Pyrotex, Red Arrow Hobbies and Hobbytyme.

For more information and ordering contact:
Starlight Model Rockets
11960 E 500 North
Grovertown, IN 46531
1-574-936-4469
www.starlightrocketry.com

HORNBY®
HORNBY AMERICA
Importer and Distributor

- SCALEXTRIC SLOT CAR SYSTEM
- SLOT.IT CARS & ACCESSORIES
- AIRFIX MODEL KITS & GIFT SETS
- HUMBROL PAINTS & ACCESSORIES
- CORGI CLASSICS DIECAST
THE AVIATION ARCHIVE / VINTAGE BUS LINES
HEAVY HAULERS / POP CULTURE

www.hornbyamerica.com
Phone: 877-358-6405
Dealers Inquiries Welcome

www.hobbymerchandise.com

precisiontools
= pleasant profits

Profit from selling Xuron® brand hand tools
– the more you sell, the more you profit.

- Quick Inventory Turns
- Attractive Profit Margins
- Support of a Worldwide Distribution Network
- Factory Warranty
- Customer Satisfaction

Xuron Corporation manufactures high quality precision tools for all hobbies and crafts. Call or email for free catalog.

Made in U.S.A.

XURON CORP.

62 Industrial Park Road
Saco, ME 04072 207-283-1401
sales@xuron.com www.xuron.com

QUEST™
Flying Model Rocket Products

Quest helps you sell more Rocket Kits with NEW packaging

New! Color-coded Packaging
Allows you to easily group rockets by Skill Level.
• Better merchandising leads to more sales!

J-Hooks
Easier for your customers to take off pegs.
• No more damaged/torn headers!

Available from these Distributors:
Emery Distributors, Empire Distributors, Empire Hobby, Hobbies Unlimited, Hobbytyme Distributors, Horizon Hobby, Stevens International

Quest Aerospace, Inc.
PO Box 2409 Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
1-800-858-7302