

## All aboard Games!

Board games can encourage quality together time

**S**ome traditions stick. Take board games for instance—a group of two or more people sit around a board and compete and play for the final prize—being the winner. These days, most families are separated by miles, exceedingly busy work schedules or video games, blackberry messages and Internet searches. But there's still time for board games.

The board game has managed to fuse families closer and will continue to sell more as long as retailers are aware of the new family structure. John Williams, executive director for the National Scrabble Association, Greenport, N.Y., says, 9/11 has left its mark on the family structure, and retailers need to be aware of growing social trends and respond according to what people really need.

"There's a post 9/11 dynamic where people want to reconnect and embrace simplicity and family," he says. "Retailers need to be aware of popular culture and what the reality of the demand is going to be."

Games that can be played by all age groups are another definite shoe-in, which is why Scrabble still sells steadily, Williams tells PLAYTHINGS. "A 10-year old, 20-year-old, a 40-year-old, a 60-year-old and an 80-year-old can all play at the same time," he says. "Whether you're playing the word cat or the word quixotic, it pays off for the person playing. If you can spell you can play—even if you can't spell you can play. The learning curve is very simple."



### Getting a life

Let's face it, the workplace isn't what it used to be—it's busier. The Families and Work Institute, New York, reports that 54 percent of Americans feel overworked in the past month by the amount of work, and one in three are chronically overworked. Now, more than ever families need more family time, even if it's just to play a game for an hour or two.

"One of the things that I think is a tragedy in today's world is the average family is having dinner together two or three nights a week," says Tait. "When I was a little boy growing up it was four, five six nights a week, seven nights a week. We want to bring a game to the market that would really celebrate and encourage those moments of dad and daughter, mom and son playing together—for that moment of uniting and celebrating the connections we have as a family."

While classics like Monopoly, which celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, and Trivial Pursuit are available in video game format, board games are still around for those who crave one-on-one interaction.

"While many classic board games are being adapted for electronic platforms, I believe the social aspects and tactile experience of board games will always be irresistible," says Stuart Montaldo, president and founder, Doublestar Games, St. Louis, creators of Cogno, The Alien Adventures and Deep World. "Children and families will always entertain themselves with both electronic and nonelectronic games. One does not replace the other, any more than a video game about basketball replaces playing real basketball with your family or friends."

