



Ed Rogala

Rocket Report

Launch Your Rocket Department

Rocket sets are a staple for every hobby store

Model rockets enjoy a very long selling season. They appeal to a very large cross-section of consumers, young and old, male and female; students as well as teachers all enjoy rocketry. And, much like the model railroad industry, model rocketry is graced by the availability of starter sets.

By taking a look at the contents of a typical model rocket set, you begin to realize why these products are important for your inventory. These sets essentially come in two varieties, starter sets and launch sets. The difference between these two categories is important. Starter sets typically come with rocket engines and igniters. As a



Most hobby stores keep their rocket selection on wall-mounted pegboard, such as this Estes display. Pegboard works well for rocket kits but not for boxed items such as starter sets.

general rule launch sets do not include engines or igniters, items obviously important for a rocket launch.

Because both starter sets and launch sets contain essential items like the launch pad, launch controller and model rockets in a single package, manufacturers are able to save on packaging costs and pass this savings on to your store and, therefore, to your customers.

Depending on the item and brand selected, customers can save 30 percent or more by purchasing sets instead of individual components. As an example, if a rocket customer is in the market for a new launch pad and controller it, may cost less if he purchases a complete set instead buying the launch pad separately. Sets provide great value.

Your customers will appreciate your knowledge of this money-saving potential, which will lead them to return to shop at your store for their other model rocketry needs.

By examining these offerings from a customer's point of view, there is an added advantage to starter sets. There is a growing tendency for consumers to prefer to purchase everything needed at one time and in one package. This trend has evolved to dominate most of today's radio control offerings, and it is also true for model rocketry.



Boxed sets are a convenient and economical way of introducing a customer to model rockets.

Another consideration is about who is purchasing the starter or launch set and why the set is being purchased. In many cases sets are bought as gifts and may be given to a non-modeler. Recipients may not know where their local hobby stores are or may not even live near a hobby store. The fact that starter sets contain engines and igniters should be pointed out to purchasers.

Customers often come into a hobby shop without an active interest in model rocketry but end up buying a set after they see one. Typically model rockets are merchandised on pegboard, where there is no room for boxed items like rocket sets. One way to promote these sets is to place them in a high-traffic area such as an end cap or window display.



Regardless of where you display your boxed sets, avoid stacking them in a pile. Place the boxes upright for proper presentation.

Whether selling launch sets or starter sets, study the packaging to see what other items will be needed to successfully launch the rocket. Typically, batteries for a launch controller are required. Adhesives should also be considered. Paints are normally not needed, however, as most sets use very simple rockets that are pre-colored and sometimes pre-built. Additional items, such as extra engines and igniters, should always be readily available.

Spend time shopping for these products. Distributors often offer programs that provide even greater savings. Rocket sets make good store staples. When you recognize their value and educate your employees to understand the sales potential, carrying these sets can really pay off. **HM**



Everything needed for a rocket launch except for glue and batteries for the launcher is contained in one box.



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