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Party Rental Ltd. And The History Of Their Iconic Pink Hippo Logo

TETERBORO, NJ – Party Rental Ltd., a leading provider of event rental equipment, provides a unique perspective into the history of their lovable Pink Hippo logo and a Q & A with the President and Chief Operating Officer, Gary Halperin.

City streets, highways, loading docks, and local neighborhoods may seem like strange places to spot a hippopotamus, but on the East Coast from Boston to D.C. and beyond, a particular herd of fun-loving pink hippos likes to roam there. Over the last 49 years, our Pink Hippo logo has become instantly recognizable in the event industry and the communities we serve, traveling to and from events emblazoned on our delivery trucks, uniforms, business cards, and more. Our Hippo's bold pink hue, friendly smile, and knack for knowing where all the best parties are make it both memorable and beloved.

Fans of our Hippo love to see where they'll pop up next and share their latest #hipposighting snaps with us. We get messages of hippo love from all over the world as well as countless questions about the Hippo's mysterious background. Why a hippo? Why is it pink? Are you sure it's not an elephant? (Spoiler: It's definitely a hippo!)

To get the definitive history, we sat down with Gary Halperin, our President and Chief Operating Officer, and learned all about how the Hippo originated, how it evolved, and what the future might hold for our favorite pink pachyderm. Check it out!

Q: Hey Gary! Thanks for sitting down with us to talk about the history of our Hippo. To start, has the Hippo always been part of our logo or did we start using it over time?

A: Party Rental Ltd. was founded under a different name, Jersey Party Rental. At the time, we provided tenting services, so our earliest logo included a tent icon, which was fairly typical of rental companies at the time.

In the late 1970s, we decided we wanted to completely exit the tent business and primarily service the New York City market. To reflect the evolving business, we removed the tent from our logo and removed Jersey from our name, officially operating as Party Rental Ltd. That's when the Hippo came in.

Q: So why a hippo? And specifically, why a pink hippo?

A: As we rebranded in the late 70s, we created a fresh logo with a different animal as our logo — a camel! My sister Tracy, who was 12 at the time and a budding artist, had created the artwork of a camel carrying tables and chairs on its back. The idea behind the new camel logo is that we would travel anywhere to deliver your tables and chairs.

While placing an advertisement in the Yellow Pages (yes, before Google there were Yellow Pages!), we got a call saying that they had misplaced our camel artwork. They did happen to have artwork for a hippo on-hand, however, and asked if they could use that instead. From there, the rest is history!

How the hippo came to be pink is a bit of a legend now, but the most commonly accepted story is that we were given two color options to help our phone book ad stand out — red or pink — and we chose pink. The color pink stuck and has become as much a part of our identity as the hippo!

Q: How has the hippo evolved over time?

A: In the early 80s, we refined the hippo's appearance, removing its front teeth and making minor adjustments to its shape. We used that hippo until the late 90s. Around 1999, Tracy drew the standing hippo, which we used for a couple years.

In 2001, founder and then CEO Michael Halperin wanted to bring back the original hippo and accentuate the pink, so we enlisted an artist to help refine it, really define its pink shade, and help make it look more friendly and fun. The logo got a refresh, too, and that's how we got the vertical logo that we use today!

After refining the hippo and really embracing the pink as part of our identity in 2001, the hippo caught on and became a memorable mascot for the company.

Q: Let's talk hippo butts: when did we decide to put the hippo — ahem, derriere — on the back of the trucks? Why?

A: In the late 80s or early 90, we had discussions with our truck vendor about how the trucks should be recognizable from all sides. Since the hippos faced sideways on the long sides of the truck, we thought it would be fitting to include its face on the front and the butt on the back. It was a hit! You might be sitting in traffic but at least you'll get a laugh from driving behind a hippo behind.

Q: We've seen some really creative #hipposightings over the years — photos our clients, followers, and even celebrities share of our hippo trucks in various places. What do you think is so appealing about seeing the pink hippos out and about?

A: The hippo trucks are really what made our Hippo iconic. Even if someone is not in the event industry, they might be sitting at a coffee shop when a Pink Hippo passing by catches their eye. It's colorful, friendly, fun, and not something you'd normally see, which draws people's attention. It stands out in its surroundings, and definitely does not go unnoticed!

Q: Does the hippo have a name?

A: Nope! We just refer to it as our Pink Hippo.

Q: Do you think the hippo is as much part of our company culture as our brand identity?

A: Absolutely! Of course, the hippo is on all of our trucks, business cards, and the like, but it's also on our company uniforms, crates, linen bags, signage — you name it! The hippo visually ties everything together. It's also part of many of our internal initiatives like our Hippportunity program, where our employees can recognize each other for going above and beyond in our Core Values. After receiving a certain number of Hippoportunities, employees receive the prestigious Hippo Patch Award. The hippo really embodies everything we stand for and is a part of everything we do!

Q: What do you think the future holds for the hippo? How do you think it will evolve next?

A: I think like most good branding, the logo doesn't have to have too much meaning, it just needs to easily identify the brand and I think we've done that. I think the combination of "pink" and "hippo" will remain for the future as it's been successful. I think as we age – we may see some baby hippos!

Whether on a pen, a t-shirt, or on a tractor trailer, our Pink Hippo is always ready to offer a smile and lead the way to the next amazing event. To all those who've sent hippo love over the years, we're so glad it brings you joy, and thanks for being part of our Party Rental Ltd. family!

View the history of the logos throughout the years on our blog at www.partyrentaltdblog.com.

View the full line of products on the Party Rental Ltd. website at www.partyrentaltd.com.

About Party Rental Ltd.

Established in 1972, Party Rental Ltd. is one of the leading event rental companies in the nation, offering a wide selection of high-quality event furniture, linens, tableware, cookware and more, to elevate any occasion. Their 300,000-square-foot corporate headquarters and warehouse is located in Teterboro, NJ, along with locations in New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Boston, and the Hamptons.

As a family-owned and controlled company, Party Rental Ltd. cares about doing what is right for their customers and they strive to provide nothing but the best in terms of quality, delivery, and service - which is why there are hundreds of their iconic pink hippo trucks on the road every day.

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