

ETCH A SKETCH POLITICS INSPIRED AD CAMPAIGN



In the wake of Romney and Santorum turning the iconic "Etch A Sketch" into a political football the 140 year old Ohio Art (OART) company is up more than 140 percent today. Ohio Art's shares, spiked on Thursday to \$9.65, after trading between \$2 and \$4 since late 2008. They closed Friday at \$5.95. With the Republican presidential primary race being a non-stop fun for political junkies with candidates trading jabs and vowing to fix the economy, the battle between front-runners Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum is now spilling over into the market and moving at least one stock higher. Etch A Sketch, which has been around since 1960, is a toy in which you twiddle knobs back and forth to make drawings traced the inside of a screen. Just Flip the Etch A Sketch over, shake and you can start with a clean slate all over again. Now, there's even an iPhone app version. The toy made headlines when an aide for presidential hopeful Mitt Romney compared it with Romney's fall election strategy; rivals saying that Romney would do the same and flip-flop on issues once the general election campaign starts. Romney communications director Eric Fehrstrom, answering a question from a CNN reporter said, "Well, I think you hit a reset button for the fall campaign. Everything changes. It's almost like an Etch A Sketch. You can kind of shake it up and restart all over again". Santorum, using the remark as a perfect opening charged Romney with flip-flopping on conservative stances and even brandished one of the toys saying that that he was starting his "Etch A Sketch tour of America", the metaphor being that Romney would erase positions he espoused during the GOP primary. The toy has instantly become a buzzword. For example, GOP rival Rick Santorum said while campaigning in Wisconsin, "I have not written my public policy pronouncements on an Etch A Sketch, They are written on my heart." The Ohio Art Co. is planning on releasing "Shake it Up, America" ads on social media including Facebook and Twitter. Maintaining the toy is politically neutral, they poke fun at politics in general. One ad reads, "Etch A Sketch is a lot like politics, there's a lot of gray area." Another says, "We have a left knob and a right knob for each political party," " (But remember, when both work together, we can do loop de loops.)" Ohio Art President Larry Killgallon said, " We're just having a ball with it." "We're kind of the fun part of the campaign." Plans are afoot to make corresponding blue version of the toy in keeping with the traditional bright-red model; hopefully a move that will keep both political parties happy. In the meantime, investors have not missed out on all the attention. After closing yesterday at \$4 a share, Ohio Art stock opened Thursday at \$12.50, stabilizing at \$9.65 by noon; a 141 percent increase. Politics sure makes strange play fellows.

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