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Collectibles Bring Customers Back

Collectible toys can be a boon to toy retailers. Once children – and/or parents – become attached to a certain ever-changing series of toys, they will be compelled to return to your store to check out the latest additions to the line. This was certainly true during the 1990s Beanie Babies craze. The popularity of those little plush animals propelled many specialty toy retailers into existence, and prosperity, a decade ago.

That particular fad may have faded, but there are still plenty of collectible toys that your customers may find endearing. We asked manufacturers of all sorts of collectible toys, including discs, dolls, die-cast vehicles, animal replicas, plush, and trading cards, what makes a line catch on and how retailers can maximize sales within the collectible toy category.

What makes a good collectible toy?

Laura Rangel, Karito Kids: To a child, a collectible is typically something that is spawned around an endless array of consumer items, whether they're based on fashion, movies or a tech game. Typically, if a consumer buys it with his heart in mind because he really likes it and can afford it, then it is a good collectible toy.

What strategies might a retailer or manufacturer use to get people to keep adding to their collections?

Laura Rangel, Karito Kids: Some manufacturers will market their products around the idea of completing a set or extending a theme. Chronology is another strategy; each year a product may be retired with a slightly different twist debuting the following year. A manufacturer may also market a product as “exclusive” or “first-to-market” and attach some type of certificate of authenticity. Numbering a product and limited licensing deals is another strategy used by manufacturers.

What role does storytelling have in regard to collectible toys? Is it important that the pieces tie in with an overarching story? Why or why not?

Laura Rangel, Karito Kids: When storytelling takes the lead, there is a huge opportunity to create a brand-loyal customer because children will want to collect all the elements the story supports to become more involved.

Is it helpful to have an activity that goes along with the collectible pieces? Why or why not?

Laura Rangel, Karito Kids: Any product that extends the play pattern and provides more opportunities to interact creates an emotional bond between the child and the toy.

What sort of add-on sales might go along with collectible toys?

Laura Rangel, Karito Kids: Anything that seems to relate to the product and the associated story behind it provides an opportunity for add-on sales. Toys today seem to cross sell in every imaginable category, including clothing, bedding and linens, and even food products. With dolls, of course, there are the more obvious add-ons, such as other dolls, outfits and accessories.



Karito Kids extends the collecting experience by combining doll play and reading with online interaction at KaritoKids.com.