ALL THINGS

Parents & Kids Share Their Attitudes, Behaviors about Toy Shopping & Buying

BONUS SECTION THE BRAND MANAGER'S GUIDE

TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

It's Q4. Toy Fever is Spreading.

"Lovely, glorious, beautiful Christmas, around which the entire kid year revolved." - Ralph "Ralphie" Parker ("A Christmas Story")

With Q4 and the holidays rapidly approaching, I'm reminded of this quote from a beloved holiday classic. As a dad, and, admittedly, a big kid-at-heart, I know the months leading up to the holidays are full of toy fever—as kids make their lists, parents make their purchases, and companies, hopefully, make their forecasts.

Because toys drive so much of the overall holiday spending bonanza, we at Field Agent recently ran a series of studies to uncover parents' and kids' attitudes and behaviors toward toy shopping. Over the next pages we offer a variety of insights, including the top retailers for toy purchases, the favorite toy franchises among boys and girls, and the role of digital services in toy shopping.

Additionally, The Brand Manager's Guide to Q4 Retail Execution, a supplement to this report, was designed by our team of retail experts to help CPG companies succeed at-retail during the crucial months ahead.

Toys may be fun, but, in Q4, toys are serious business. And as toy fever sets in, I believe this report will prove a valuable resource to brands, retailers, and agencies.



Rick West CEO & co-founder, Field Agent





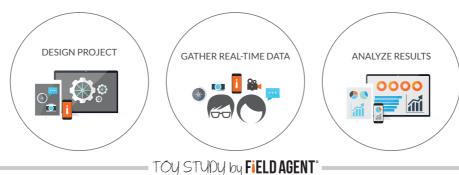
WHO IS FIELD AGENT?

Field Agent, a mobile research and auditing company, crowdsources hundreds of thousands of smartphones to collect fast, affordable consumer insights and in-store information for leading brands, retailers, and agencies.

Story of the Study:

For this report, Field Agent screened its extensive panel of approximately 800,000 U.S.-based agents, to identify, target, and ultimately survey parents of kids 5-12 years of age. The report encompasses the results of two surveys with parents (see the Methods & Demographics section). One of these surveys also assessed the toy-shopping attitudes and behaviors of children in their prime toy-playing years (5-12 years old), with a series of questions answered directly by the kids themselves.

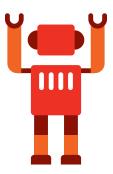
As the in-store images in this report suggest, Field Agent also sent several agents to retailers, where they captured photos of toys and associated displays, signage, prices, and out-of-stocks.





PARTI TOYS, Generally Speaking

TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT



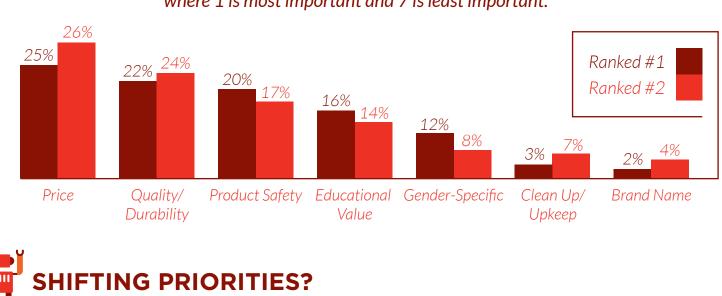
TOY PRIORITIES & FRUSTRATIONS AMONG PARENTS

- TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT" -

TOY PRIORITIES & FRUSTRATIONS AMONG PARENTS

When it comes to their kids, parents don't toy around on, well, toy purchases. **But what really matters to parents as they shop for and buy toys for the kiddos?**

In Field Agent's survey of 523 parents, four priorities most distinguished themselves: (a) price, (b) quality/durability/longevity, (c) product safety, and (d) educational/developmental value, amassing 51%, 45%, 37%, and 30% of #1 and #2 rankings, respectively.

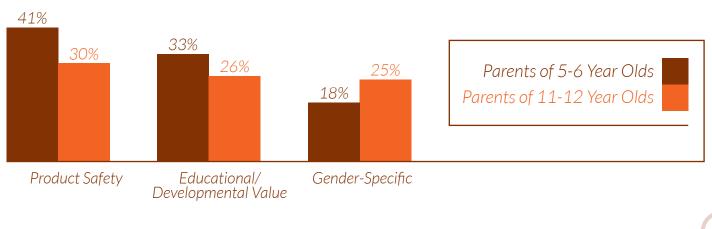


Rank what matters when buying toys for your child, where 1 is most important and 7 is least important.

As children grow, do parents' toy-shopping priorities change?

Product safety, educational/developmental value, and gender-specific (i.e., buying boys "boy toys" and girls "girl toys") fluctuated most widely when the ranking was controlled for kids' ages.

Percentages below represent the number of parents who ranked the priority #1 or #2.

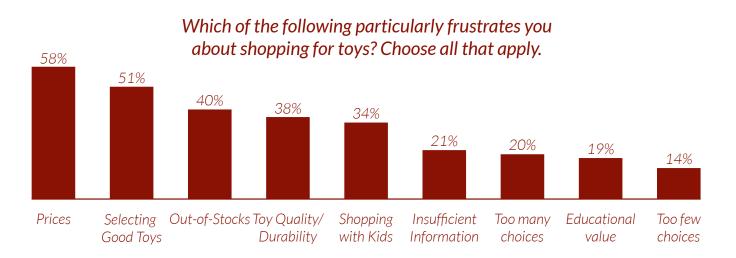


TOY PRIORITIES & FRUSTRATIONS AMONG PARENTS

Naturally, where there are parental priorities, there are bound to be parental frustrations, as one or more factors might impede mom and dad's toy-buying objectives. In the Field Agent survey, more than half of parents (N=523) said, when it comes to toy-shopping, they're especially frustrated with prices (58%) and selecting toys their children will actually play with/like (51%). Out-of-stocks (40%) are also a common source of irritation.



Agents captured in-store out-of-stocks, one of the top 3 frustrations parents face while shopping for toys.





Barbie or Mattel? Star Wars or Hasbro?

Do parents buy for toy franchise or toy brand?



67% of parents in Field Agent's survey said **franchise** matters more than **brand** when buying toys. (See how kids rank their preferred toy franchises on page 26)



BABES IN TOYLAND: HOW DO PARENTS FEEL ABOUT SHOPPING WITH THEIR KIDS?

BABES IN TOYLAND: HOW DO PARENTS FEEL ABOUT SHOPPING WITH THEIR KIDS?

Few things bring parents and children together like a store trip to shop for and buy a toy.

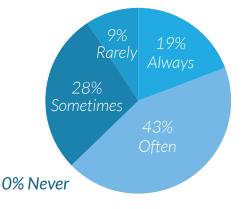
Am I right? Hello, anyone there?

Field Agent assessed 523 parents' attitudes to determine whether toy shopping with the kids is a blessed parent-child occasion or, conversely, a panic button moment.

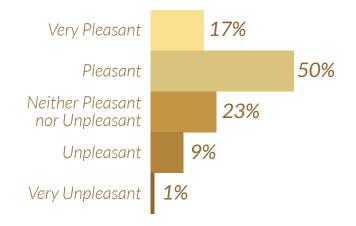
All in all, 62% of parents said they take one or more children with them always or often when shopping for toys in stores. And, indeed, most parents find it enjoyable enough. 67% said they find toy shopping with the kiddos a pleasant experience.

An even better question perhaps: How do parents shop for toys in stores when the kids tagalong? Who leads—parent or child?

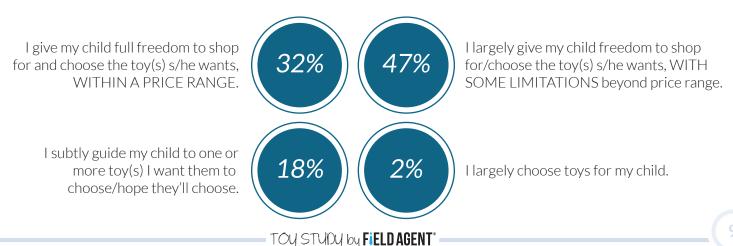
As shown below, parents give their children a lot of freedom when toy shopping. 32% indicated they let their child make the choice of toy, with natural price limitations. Another 47% said they largely let the child make the decision, with one or a few limitations beyond price considerations. When shopping for toys IN STORES, how often do you take at least one child along?



How pleasant is shopping for toys in stores WITH YOUR CHILD?



When deliberately shopping for toys IN-STORE WITH YOUR CHILD, which BEST describes your approach?





PREFERRED RETAIL DESTINATIONS FOR TOY PURCHASES

TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT

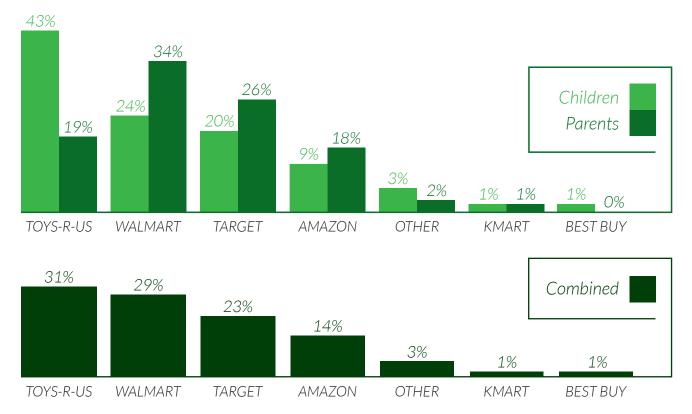
PREFERRED RETAIL DESTINATIONS

Which retailers have captured the affection of toy shoppers? And do parents and kids differ about the best places to shop for and buy toys?

Walmart (34%) took top place in Field Agent's survey of parents, followed by **Target** (26%), **Amazon** (19%), and **Toys-R-Us** (18%).

But would kids (ages 5-12) see eye-to-eye with their parents?

As it turns out, no. Children showed a comparatively strong preference for **Toys-R-Us** (43%).



From which ONE retailer do you most prefer to make toy purchases?

Children's Top Toy Retailers

- 1 Toys-R-Us
- 2 Walmart
- 3 Target
- 4 Amazon

Parents' Top Toy Retailers

- 1 Walmart
- 2 Target
- 3 Amazon
- 4 Toys-R-Us



TOY SHOPPING IN AN OMNICHANNEL WORLD

- TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT



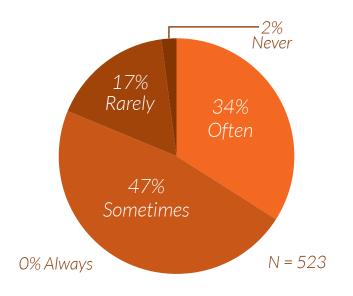
TOY SHOPPING IN AN OMNICHANNEL WORLD

News feeds are buzzing these days with omnichannel developments—everything from online spending to in-store pickup, app-based shopping to same day, in-town delivery.

Has the omnichannel craze come to toys yet?

According to survey results, among parents with kids 5-12, 34% say they often, and 47% sometimes, purchase toys online. There are fewer and fewer ecommerce holdouts. When asked how often they purchase toys for their kids online, only 2% responded never.

Other digital services, too, are becoming quite prevalent for toy purchases. Get this: A resounding 67% said they've used in-store pickup (i.e., buy online, pick up in store) for buying playthings, and 65% reported using a retailer-specific smartphone app to plan for and execute toy purchases. How often do you purchase toys for your child online?



Which of the following digital services have you used when making toy purchases? Choose all that apply.



TOYS, WELCOME TO THE OMNICHANNEL WORLD.

TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT



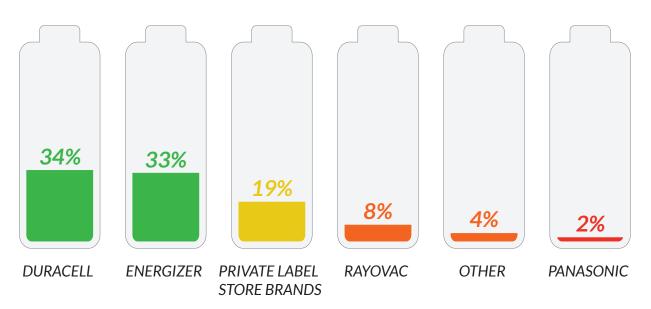
POWER UP: PARENTS SHARE THEIR BATTERY PREFERENCES

- TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT" -

POWER UP: PARENTS SHARE THEIR BATTERY PREFERENCES

Something has to make all those remote control cars, back-flipping puppy dogs, and handheld video games do their thing.

Field Agent queried 523 parents to determine which battery brands they most commonly purchase for powering up their kids' toys. Battery juggernauts Duracell (34%) and Energizer (33%) were neck-and-neck at the top of the ranking, with Rayovac (8%) a distant fourth behind private label, store brands (19%).



When you purchase batteries for your child's toys, which one brand do vou buv most often?

Batteries Included?

Parents were also asked to describe the ideal "batteries included" scenario when buying new toys.

Do they prefer to pay a little more for name brand batteries to be included, or would they prefer lower grade batteries (or no batteries at all) with a lower price tag?

Convincingly, a small majority (54%) said they'd prefer high grade, name brand batteries, even if it means paying a bit more.

Which of the following best describes your preference for battery-powered toys?

To pay a little more for high-grade batteries (i.e., name brand) to be included

55%

22%

To pay a little less for lower-grade batteries to be included



TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT*



WHAT DO BOYS AND GIRLS REALLY WANT IN THEIR KID'S MEALS?

= TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT" =

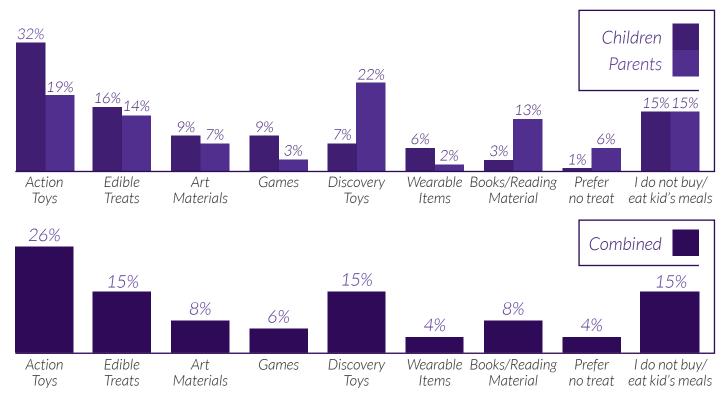
WHAT DO BOYS AND GIRLS REALLY WANT IN THEIR KID'S MEALS?

Many fast food establishments have a longstanding practice of including a toy or other "happy" in their kid's meals. What treats would be included in these meals, if children and parents had their way?

As you can see, among parents who purchase kid's meals for their children (ages 5-12), and who want fast food restaurants to include a treat, toys—both discovery (e.g., telescope, magnifying glass; 22%) and action toys (e.g., action figures, dolls; 19%)—are the preferred "happy." Free edible treats (e.g., ice cream cone; 14%) are also popular with the adults.

The apple doesn't fall too far from the tree in this case, as kids, too, said they prefer toy treats. Only, children have a much stronger preference for action toys (32%) than discovery toys (7%). Sorry, mom.

Fast Fact on Fast Food Kid's Meals: While 6% of parents say they'd prefer fast food restaurants not include treats in kid's meals, only 1% of children agree.



Which fast food kid's meal treat do you prefer?



Children's Winner

Action Toys

Parents' Winner

Discovery Toys



THE BRAND MANAGER'S GUIDE TO Q4 RETAIL EXECUTION









The stakes are simply higher in Q4.

That goes for companies across a wide expanse of industries—from toys to fan gear, candy to consumer electronics.

As a company founded by CPG veterans for CPG professionals, Field Agent specializes in helping brands identify problems in their retail execution, ultimately to improve sales with shoppers.

With Q4 upon us, this guide will share some of the more common causes of suboptimal—you might say, underachieving—retail execution among CPG companies.

Make the most of the all-important weeks ahead, by being mindful of the following in-store pitfalls.

Pitfall #1 Your products aren't on store shelves

You can't win if you don't first show up. And in the fiercely competitive contest for shoppers' dollars, some products are, well, no-shows.

Maybe your product never arrived in-store, or perhaps it's collecting dust in the backroom. Regardless, it's out-of-stock; it's unavailable to shoppers.

As reported by *RIS News*, retailers lose a staggering \$93 billion a year to out-of-stocks. What's more, shoppers despise stockouts.

In Q4 especially, brands should take necessary measures to ensure their products are actually on store shelves—where they belong.



Consider that, in Field Agent's survey of 523 parents, 40% cited out-of-stocks as a "particularly frustrating" factor in shopping for toys, the third most common frustration in the entire survey.

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Pitfall #2 Your products aren't where you think they are inside stores

Other times, your products are available, but they're misplaced in stores. That product that's supposed to be on the main aisle is actually languishing on Aisle 17, where, tragically, fewer shoppers will see it.

For brands, so much of retail success hinges on being in the *right place at the right time*.

At such times, when the sale depends entirely on the shopper's ability to see the merchandise, in-store placement is particularly critical. Brand managers should, therefore, regularly monitor the location of their products in stores, particularly before and during major retail events.

According to Field Agent's research into the toy shopping behavior of parents, 63% admitted they at least sometimes make toy purchases on impulse, when the purchase wasn't necessarily planned or expected.

Pitfall #3 Shoppers can't see your products

Maybe your products are in stock and in the "correct" place, yet shoppers don't notice them due to their placement on store shelves. They could be, for instance, situated too low or in a "blind spot." Or perhaps a rival (and, scary thought here, substitutable) brand enjoys superior shelf positioning and is easier for shoppers to see and reach.

The planogram (i.e., modular) is a rich source of competitive advantage and disadvantage. For CPG companies, it pays—quite literally—to be vigilantly aware of their products' on-shelf placement.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PLANOGRAM COMPLIANCE



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Pitfall #4 Your in-store marketing isn't being properly executed

From product displays to coupon dispensers, in-store signage to interactive demos, brands will spend billions of dollars promoting their products throughout the Q4 selling season.

And for good reason. In-store marketing can make all the difference with purchase-minded shoppers.

When Field Agent surveyed 523 parents about their toy-shopping behavior, fully 8-of-10 reported visually striking signage (i.e., featuring characters, movies, etc. associated with a toy) to be at least moderately influential over their purchase decisions.

The problem is, all-to-often point-of-purchase marketing is not properly executed inside stores. Consider product displays for example, which could be failing to convert shoppers for any one of a number of reasons:

- 1. The point-of-sale materials and product never arrived at the store
- 2. The display never made it to the store floor (it's in the backroom)
- 3. The display is a casualty of inaccurate information, perhaps owing to human error and/or the retailer's inventory management system
- 4. The display is on the floor but in the wrong place
- 5. The display is on the floor but stocked with the wrong product

Brand managers should take every stride to ensure their displays, signage, and other forms of in-store marketing are actually making money...not just spending it.

GET CONTROL OF PRODUCT DISPLAYS





Pitfall #5 Shoppers are seeing the wrong prices

Shoppers can be remarkably price sensitive, something brands well know. And a seemingly small pricing mistake can cost a brand sales both now (i.e., because the shopper thinks, "I didn't want to spend that much today") and in the future (i.e., because the shopper has the wrong idea about your product).

Your products could be incorrectly priced in stores due to:

- 1. Basic human error, like simple misprings or accidental oversights
- 2. Pressures and realities at the store level, which might cause local store managers to price products in unexpected ways
- 3. Inaccurate information, for instance, disagreement between the retailer's information system and pricing on the floor

GET VISIBILITY TO IN-STORE PRICING



Agent Photos by **FIELD AGENT**



In Field Agent's survey of over 500 parents, 81% said **price break signage**—i.e., clearly displaying a sale/discount on merchandise—was either extremely or very influential over their toy purchases.

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Pitfall #6 Rival brands have a better in-store strategy and execution

The retail landscape is full of limitations: shelf space is limited; floor space is limited; shoppers' attention is limited. And, most importantly, shopper spending is limited. Such limitations naturally create a hyper-competitive environment.

If rival brands have a better in-store strategy and/or execution, it stands to reason your brand may be undercutting its potential. Successful brand managers, consequently, take steps to understand the competitive landscape inside stores. This is particularly true before and during Q4.

If your products aren't selling, maybe it's because your competitors' products are?

Take Control of Your Q4 Retail Execution

Retail success may begin with a solid strategy, but it doesn't end there. Retail strategy, after all, is only as good as its execution.

As you prepare for make-or-break Q4 selling events, consider ways to optimize your retail execution. Ultimately, your success in the coming weeks will be determined not only by the sales you make *but also the sales you don't lose*—not only by the funds you spend (e.g., on in-store marketing) *but also the funds that aren't wasted*.

Strategy + Execution = Q4 Success

Field Agent crowdsources smartphones throughout the country to help brands avoid the pitfalls described over the last several pages. Fast, affordable Mobile Audits give brand managers control over their in-store operations, by bridging the "visibility gap" between headquarters and stores everywhere.

Download our infographic to learn more.

- Learn More about Mobile Audits – DOWNLOAD INFOGRAPHIC





PART II TOYS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Toys and the holidays. They go together like G.I. Joe and camouflage, Barbie and a pink convertible, Mr. Potato Head and a detachable mustache. It's hard to imagine the holidays without toys, especially if you're a kid.

With toys such an integral part of the overall holiday scene, Field Agent surveyed over 500 households—parents and kids—to explore some critical questions about holiday toy shopping.

We trust toy-manufacturers, toy-sellers, and, of course, plump, jovial, white-bearded toy-makers will find the insights timely and useful.

TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT



TOYS IN PERSPECTIVE: HOW DO TOYS STACK UP AGAINST OTHER GIFT CATEGORIES

A TOYS IN PERSPECTIVE: B HOW DO TOYS STACK UP AGAINST C OTHER GIFT CATEGORIES

"He's [Santa] loaded lots of toys and goodies on his sleigh." Toys and goodies; goodies and toys.

So the question is: How do toys stack up against other "goodies" under that Christmas tree?

Field Agent asked parents to approximate the proportion of toys to other gifts received by their children last holiday season. A small majority, 53%, said toys comprised at least half of the total number of presents given to their kids during the

2016 holiday season (from immediate household members).

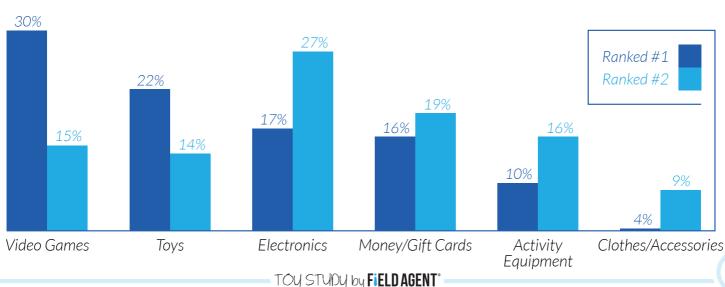


BOYS GO FOR TOYS

Boys were more likely than girls to rank toys (42%; girls = 31%) and video games/consoles (69%; 20%) as one of their top two gift categories (see below; i.e., #1 and #2 responses), while girls showed greater preference for clothes/accessories (22%; 5%), money/gift cards (40%; 30%), and consumer electronics in general (48%; 39%).

And where, exactly, do toys land on kid's holiday wish lists, relative to other presents? Field Agent asked children ages 5-12 to rank six different gift categories by their desirability.

Among kids on the whole, toys fared very well. Indeed, toys (22%) amassed the second highest number of #1 responses, behind only video games/consoles (30%).



Rank these HOLIDAY GIFTS by how much you want them this year, where 1 is the category you want most and 6 is the category you want least.



STAR WARS, LEGO, BARBIE: KIDS RANK THEIR PREFERRED TOY FRANCHISES

STAR WARS, LEGO, BARBIE: KIDS RANK THEIR PREFERRED TOY FRANCHISES

The toy industry is top heavy. Power brands and franchises—from Star Wars to Barbie, LEGO to Play Doh—enjoy the lion's share of shelf space inside stores, and possess remarkable sway over shoppers.

But what happens when you pair these power brands/franchises against one another and ask kids—*their ultimate consumers*—to rank them by desirability?

Field Agent did just that. Specifically, we asked kids 5-12 to rank toy franchises and brands by "how good [they] think they are as holiday gifts." We assembled a different collection of brands for boys and girls.

See visual presentations on next page.

Among boys, **Nerf toys** (51%) and **LEGO blocks** (45%) received the highest combined number of #1 and #2 rankings, followed by **Pokemon toys** (32%) and **Star Wars toys** (23%). Most brands/franchises were largely unaffected by age, but others, like **Star Wars**, were more highly prized among older boys 9-12 (30% ranked #1 or #2) than younger boys 5-8 (19%), or, in the case of **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** (TMNT), younger boys (17%) than older boys (6%). Girls, for their part, honored **American Girl Dolls** (47%) with the highest proportion of #1 and #2 rankings. **Disney toys** (e.g., "Frozen"; 31%) and **Barbie** (30%) also performed well in the ranking. Franchises/brands that showed the greatest differences between 5-8 year old girls and 9-12 year old girls: Barbie (18 percentage points), Disney toys (15 pp), Crayola (15 pp), and American Girl (14 pp).

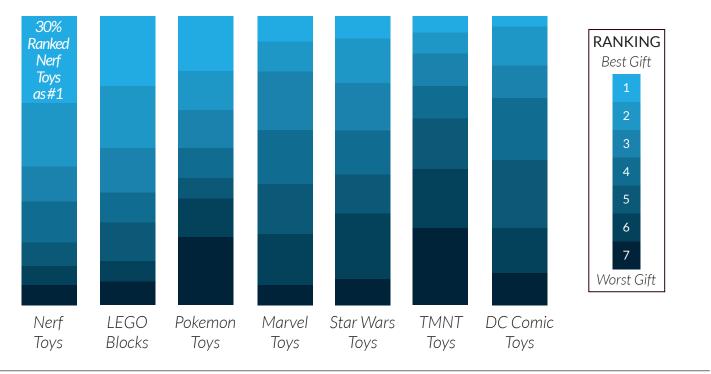
Agents capture signage photos of their kids' favorite toy franchises.



STAR WARS, LEGO, BARBIE: KIDS RANK THEIR PREFERRED TOY FRANCHISES

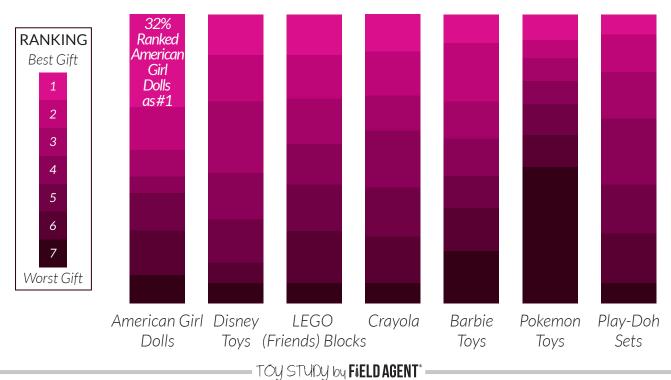
Boy's Choice

Rank the following toys by how good you think they are as HOLIDAY GIFTS, where 1 is the best and 7 is the worst.



Girl's Choice

Rank the following toys by how good you think they are as HOLIDAY GIFTS, where 1 is the best and 7 is the worst.





WHAT DO KIDS WANT FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

WHAT DO KIDS WANT FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

It's still early, but Field Agent set out to determine what toys, specifically, 5-12-year olds have their sights set on for the upcoming holiday season. The mobile research firm asked kids,

"What one toy do you want most for the holidays this year?"

The question was free form, so kids' responses were not confined to a set of predetermined options.

It was a big win for LEGO, which received the most mentions from kids. Pokémon and American Girl also cleaned up.

| • | 11 gift wishes among 5-12 year olds: (in no particular order) |
|-----------------------|---|
| LEGO Sets | Barbie Dolls |
| Nerf | American Girl Dolls |
| Xbox Console | Playstation Console |
| Pokémon | Shopkins |
| Star Wars Toys | Dolls (other than American Girl/Barbie) |
| Video Games (general) | |

See Also:





MAKING A WISH LIST: HOW CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT TOYS

TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT"

HOW CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT TOYS

For toy brands and toy-sellers, an important question remains: How do kids decide what toys they want in the first place? In other words, where do they learn about toys, and how, ultimately, does a toy get on a child's wish list?

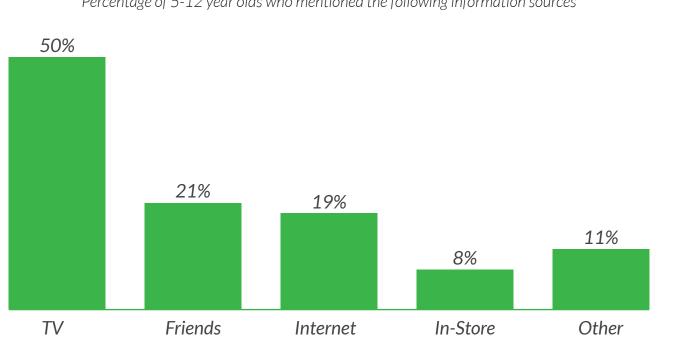
Field Agent asked over 500 children ages 5-12, "How do you most often learn about the toys you want?"

Here, too, the query was presented as a free form, open-ended question.

While television commercials may be losing influence to digital advertising and content marketing in general, advertising on TV is still an influential means for marketing toys. About half of children surveyed indicated they learn about the toys they want from TV.

As one said, "On TV. When I'm watching cartoons."

Other common means for learning about toys include friends, the Internet, and simply by being in-store, seeing the toys available.



How do you most often learn about the toys you want? Percentage of 5-12 year olds who mentioned the following information sources



SUGGESTION BOX: PARENTS OFFER TOY-SELLERS SOME TIMELY FEEDBACK

SUGGESTION BOX: PARENTS OFFER TOY-SELLERS SOME TIMELY FEEDBACK

From parents' perspective, what could toy manufacturers and retailers do better?

Field Agent gave over 500 parents an open forum to articulate their suggestions for toy companies. The quotes below are representative of the more prominent themes arising from parents' remarks.



Lower prices/more sales:

"Lower the prices! The markup on toys is ridiculous..."

"Costs of toys like action figures seem to have escalated...making it harder to find a reasonably priced toy when shopping for a young child."

Interactive displays/packaging (i.e., opportunities to try a toy):

"It would be nice if there were more [toy] displays that the kids could play with...that are on the more expensive side. Then you know if your child really likes it or not before spending a large amount of money on it."

"I really appreciate interactive displays such as the LEGO displays in Target. I know my children do stop at all the displays, more so the displays with lights flashing or levers that they can pull."

Keep toys in stock:

"Have toys in stock...I usually look online to make sure they have toys that I'm planning to get and by the time I get to the store they're out..."

Online product availability (often to keep from going in-store):

"I make many purchases online, no dragging the kids to the store and no meltdowns when we don't buy impulsively. So I love free or cheap shipping or in store pick up."

Online reviews to simplify decision-making:

"Have lots of reviews online. I always read what other parents have to say before I spend money."

Realistic advertising/packaging:

"It would be beneficial to know exactly what a toy does. The generic sayings like 'special effects,' 'amazing,' 'action' are overused on packaging when in reality all the toy might do is buzz or flash a light."

"[Don't] overload commercials with unrealistic ways the toys are made to look to kids with loud music and an overexcited announcer trying to persuade kids to like the toy."

Easier-to-open packaging:

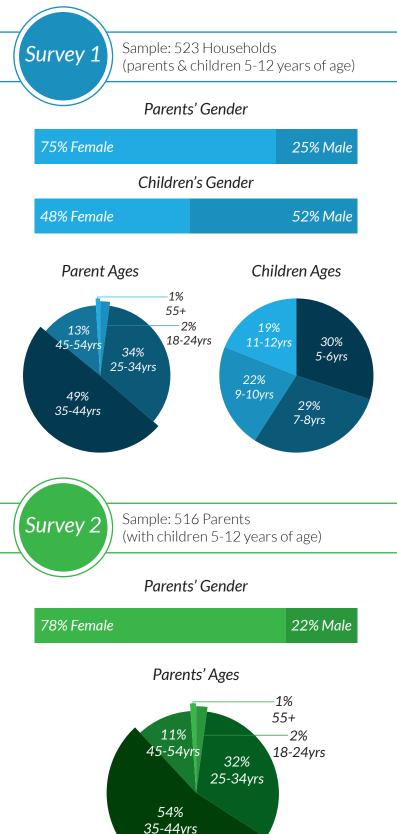
"Please don't make packaging so hard to open."

Higher quality toys:

"It would be nice if toys were made of better quality."

TOY STUDY by FIELD AGENT

METHODS AND DEMOGRAPHICS - TWO SURVEYS

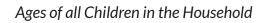


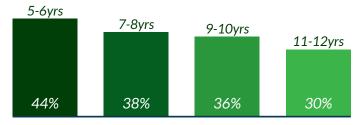
Note: Field Agent conducted a screener to identify parents of 5-12 year olds currently living at home.



Notes: This survey was administered to parents and one of their children ages 5-12. Parents answered the first set of questions, and kids answered the last several. Field Agent conducted a screener to identify parents of 5-12 year olds currently living at home.







GET MORE IN Q4

For many companies, the entire year rises and falls on this crucial three-month retail season. Field Agent crowdsources hundreds of thousands of smartphones to equip brands, retailers, and agencies with location-specific in-store information and insights—offering companies greater control over their retail execution.

The bottom line is the bottom line.

Mobile Audits and Research from Field Agent offer a fast, affordable way to increase retail sales in Q4 and beyond.

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