



the **toy**
association™
Inspiring Generations of Play

toy inventor & designer guide

fifth edition 2018

"Imagination is the beginning of creation.

You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will."

George Bernard Shaw

Irish dramatist (1856-1950)



Inspiring Generations of Play

Toy Inventor and Designer Guide | Fifth Edition

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Comments on this Guide may be submitted to: info@toyassociation.org

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Contents | 3 |
| Getting Started | 4 |
| Coming Up with a Good Idea | 5 |
| Is It a Unique and Marketable Idea? | 5 |
| Will It Sell? | 6 |
| Is It Cost-Effective? | 7 |
| Should You Make a Prototype? | 7 |
| Is It Safe? | 7 |
| Are You Legally Protected? | 9 |
| Entering the Marketplace | 10 |
| Selling Your Idea/Invention to a Toy Manufacturer | 10 |
| Manufacture and Distribute the Item Yourself | 11 |
| Promoting Your Idea | 13 |
| Bringing Your Product to Market | 13 |
| Promoting Your Product | 13 |
| Joining The Toy Association | 14 |
| Resources | 15 |
| Toy Trade Shows and Inventor Events | 15 |
| Toy Fair New York (New York City - February) | 15 |
| Toy Fair Dallas (Dallas - October) | 15 |
| Associations | 15 |
| Educational Institutions | 16 |
| Publications - Books | 17 |
| Publications - Consumer Magazines | 17 |
| Publications - Trade Magazines | 17 |
| U.S. Government - Offices/Publications | 18 |
| State Government - Offices/Publications | 20 |

Getting Started

New ideas are the backbone of the toy industry. The need for innovative product is constant.

Independent inventors and designers are an important source for new product ideas, but it can be a challenge for them to break into the industry. An original idea — one that is fully developed to a point where it is presentable in either complete drawings or prototype format — can be seen and it can be sold. To get started as an inventor or designer of toys or games, it's wise to make an honest evaluation of your personal circumstances, as well as your invention. Ask yourself:

Are you extremely self-motivated?

Can you face business-related obstacles such as strong competition, criticism, and rejection?

Do you have the necessary time, resources, and commitment to launch a new toy product?

Are both you and your invention legally protected?

Some inventors devote themselves full-time to their venture, others pursue their design as a hobby or side business. Once an idea is on the path for production, it's important to recognize that the "turnaround time" to get a new item on toy retail shelves sometimes exceeds two years. Research, legal fees, and production can be expensive. As for your invention, there are industry-related questions to consider:

Is it a unique and marketable idea?

Will it sell?

Is it cost-effective?

Is it safe? Will it meet the requirements of the relevant laws and safety standards, such as the U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act \(CPSIA\)](#)?

Are you legally protected (by a patent, trademark, copyright, etc.)?

DID YOU KNOW?

Eight inventors have been inducted into the [Toy Industry Hall of Fame](#):

Arthur "Spud" Melin & Richard Knerr (2014)

Hula Hoop

Reuben Klamer (2005)

The Game of Life

Eddy Goldfarb (2003)

Kerplunk

Jeffrey Breslow,

Howard Morrison

& Rouben Terzian (1998)

Ants in the Pants

Marvin Glass (1985)

Rock 'Em, Sock 'Em Robots

In addition to covering some of the procedures that may help you sell or license your invention or design or manufacture and market it yourself, this Guide also introduces you to some of the [rules and standards](#) that must be followed to meet U.S. safety requirements and to a variety of [resources](#) that can provide further information and assistance.

Coming Up with a Good Idea

Is It a Unique and Marketable Idea?

Of the thousands of new toys and games that make their debut at The Toy Association-sponsored [North American International Toy Fair](#) (Toy Fair), held in New York City each February, most are created by salaried professional designers and research and development specialists. New products also originate from toy design firms that sell their ideas to toy companies and from independent professional inventors who use their personal contacts to sell new ideas.

To gain a better idea of what is currently on the market (and whether the item you have invented – or something very similar to it – already exists), research the toy industry at the retail level.

Start by exploring the websites of both toy manufacturers and toy retail outlets. For a more in-depth, hands-on experience, visit as many toy retail outlets as possible (large toy chains and small, local toy stores; discount, variety, gift/novelty, card/stationery, and department stores; as well other outlets including bookstores, museum gift shops, drug stores, supermarkets, juvenile furniture stores, sporting goods stores, and home supply centers). In-store research may be most productive in the early fall when new products have arrived at retail stores for the holiday shopping season.

While you're in the store, remember to observe how the various toys are being sold: pay attention to categories, pricing, packaging, product displays, the amount of retail shelf space devoted to each category, etc. This information will be especially important if you should later decide to manufacture your invention yourself.

Read the industry trade magazines, such as [Toy Book](#), especially after the new items have been previewed by toy buyers at Toy Fair and other major tradeshows. Check your library's [Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature](#) (see "toys, games" for feature stories about new toy industry products) to follow the consumer press; consider both seasonal updates (e.g., outdoor and ride-on toys will be covered more heavily in the spring) as well as news during the holiday shopping season. You may also want to obtain copies of annual reports of publicly-owned toy manufacturers and toy retail chains.

Explore online networking groups through social media outlets such as LinkedIn, Facebook pages for groups and organizations such as [The Toy Association](#), blogs, and other online channels. Inventors' groups, consultants, and manufacturers' representatives (who are also known as sales or advertising representatives) may also be available and willing to provide (free or fee-based) advice and guidance

DID YOU KNOW?

The Toy Association's team of trend experts meets with hundreds of toy companies throughout the year to preview what's new and next in the world of toys and games. The work culminates at New York Toy Fair, when the team hosts a presentation for media and play professionals unveiling the year's [top trends](#) with product examples from the show floor.

to help a new contact get started in the industry.

To be certain that the toy you invented is not already protected by the U.S. government, conduct a patent search. Patent searches are available online through the [U.S. Patent & Trademark Office](#). Because they can be time-consuming, patent agents, attorneys who practice patent law, or patent searchers can conduct the searches for you for a fee. Remember, too, that toy companies often work two or more years in advance, so there is always a possibility that something similar to your invention may already be in a planning stage.

Will It Sell?

The toy industry is often compared to the fashion industry ... styles and trends are seasonal and shift frequently. Today's attention grabbing "hot toy" can become tomorrow's "toy box filler." Occasionally, though, a toy or game will catch and gain widespread appeal as a classic that entertains and engages many generations of kids. When moving forward with your invention, you should ask yourself:

- Does it have long-lasting play value?
- Will the consumer get his/her money's worth?
- Is it fun?
- Is it safe?
- Is there growth potential (e.g., through brand extensions)?

Toy companies are more willing to purchase an idea that has demonstrated long-lasting consumer appeal. Most of the larger toy companies conduct extensive market research to determine what types of toys children like and play with the longest and the types of toys parents want to purchase for their children. Anticipating trends, however, is difficult at best ... even for the experts.

Many independent inventors conduct their own informal market research by having friends or relatives play-test a product with the age group for which the toy is intended. Keep in mind, while it's smart to test out your concept and work out play patterns with friends and family, quoting this information at a sales pitch is often not credible, as those close to you may have biased opinions.

DID YOU KNOW?

The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) provides free market research and competitive analysis resources.

Is It Cost-Effective?

The product must be able to be manufactured at a reasonable cost to allow a competitive retail price within its category and to ensure a profit. Your initial research at toy outlets should provide a good idea of price range within the product's category.

In addition, regardless of product type, other items to consider include: legal matters, safety requirements and testing, marketing and sales, warehousing and distribution, etc., that will all influence the cost to produce the toy.

Toys and games can be low-cost, low-margin items on retail shelves. Since most toys must be relatively inexpensive to sell, the markup from production cost to retail is usually much lower than the normal 3x to 5x cost. Cost-effectiveness is top-of-mind for toy manufacturers who strive to keep production costs low.

Should You Make a Prototype?

While a rough prototype or working model of your invention will help you determine its cost-effectiveness, these days if you are trying to sell your item to a toy manufacturer, prototypes may not be necessary. In fact, a good idea that is accurately explained on paper or in a digital file could go as far as or even further than a fancy prototype.

That said, some prototypes are easier to make than others. For instance, most prototypes for board games can be made at home, but prototypes for other toys, such as virtual reality and augmented reality products, require highly-specialized computer programming skills. In addition, most plastic toys these days are first created using specialized 3D computer-aided design (CAD) software. Creating a toy prototype will likely require professional input.

Is It Safe?

Safety is fundamental to the development and manufacture of toy products. **All toys sold in the United States must comply with federal government regulations.** Many of these criteria have been in place for years within the ASTM F963 standard for toy safety; this standard was mandated in 2008 when the [Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act](#) (CPSIA) was signed into law. Aspects of the law continue to unfold as various implementing regulations are rolled out by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). In certain cases, additional federal regulations apply, as do specific additive regulations in several states.

The Toy Association and members of the toy industry are dedicated to ensuring the highest standards

DID YOU KNOW?

Many companies specialize in making prototypes for toys. [ThomasNet.com](#) offers a directory of vendors.

In addition to comparing prices, ask for references and reach out to get feedback on sample quality.

for safe toys. Because new issues emerge over time, toy safety standards are continuously reviewed and enhanced. These standards are shaped by a variety of considerations, including research on child development, dynamic safety testing, and risk analysis.

Toy designers and inventors often work with others that sit on toy safety standard-setting committees to synthesize information from parents, psychologists, educators, and child development specialists to understand how kids learn through play and at what age they are physically and cognitively ready for certain types of toys. They may observe children in controlled test settings to assess how they play with toys and to determine the durability and age-appropriateness of various products.

In 2008, the CPSIA became the most sweeping piece of federal legislation for the toy industry since the Consumer Product Safety Act (CPSA) was passed. This comprehensive law has numerous implications for product invention and design – especially as it relates to the materials to be used in and on toys. These limits are something that inventors and designers must consider when designing children’s products.

As examples, the total lead content in surface coatings (such as paints) cannot exceed 90 parts per million (ppm), and the total lead content of substrate materials of a toy must be less than 100 ppm; in addition, there are limits on migratable content of seven other metallic elements. The law also restricts, to 0.1 percent or 1000 ppm, the content of eight phthalate esters, which were used as plasticizers in some plastic materials to make them more flexible. Toy requirements are essentially complete, but the ASTM F963 standard is updated regularly to address emerging issues and new, innovative toy types. In addition, The Toy Association continues to work with the CPSC to find ways to reduce unnecessary testing without compromising toy safety.

DID YOU KNOW?

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission [website](#) contains the latest federal safety information.

The Toy Association continually addresses evolving safety, legislative, and trade issues affecting toy companies. Members can access exclusive services, tools, and content regarding ongoing issues on its [website](#).

Are You Legally Protected?

You should obtain patent and trademark protection, especially if you are planning to sell your product to a toy manufacturer. Most companies (although not all) will not look at outside ideas unless this protection has been obtained.

Local colleges, business schools, or adult education organizations may have courses on how to obtain patents and trademarks. You can also hire a patent or trademark attorney/agent who, for a fee, will provide this service for you. Along with a vast amount of information for inventors regarding patents and trademarks, the [U.S. Patent and Trademark Office](#) maintains an [online roster of agents and attorneys](#) that are registered to practice before the agency.

In some cases, a toy manufacturer will take care of obtaining the patent for you and hold it until such time when your agreement is dissolved. It is then that you would either buy the patent back at the end of the run or get the patent back after the contract is over. It is an important aspect and could save you some money.

If you do not have a patent on your product, you should have your own non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to protect yourself. [\[View Sample\]](#)

Whether known as a confidentiality agreement, confidential disclosure agreement, proprietary information agreement, or secrecy agreement, this is a contract through which the parties agree not to disclose information covered by the agreement. Consider having a lawyer write your NDA. NOTE: NDAs are controlled by state law and some states find them invalid.

The manufacturers will seek protection, too. Before a manufacturer asks to see your invention, you will probably be asked to sign what is referred to as a “*Disclosure*,” “*Idea Submission Form*,” or “*Agreement*.” These forms will vary in content, but their primary purpose is to protect both you and the manufacturer as it establishes exactly what you have revealed to them and at the same time releases them from certain liabilities regarding what has been disclosed.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Toy Association offers online access to several white papers on the issue of patent and trademark protection, including [What’s in a Name?](#) [Trademarks and the Toy and Game Industry](#) (members only) and [Protecting Ideas: Perspectives for Individuals and Companies](#)

Entering the Marketplace

As an inventor or designer, you can typically introduce a new toy into the marketplace in one of two ways:

Sell your idea/invention to a toy manufacturer (or have someone sell the idea for you) or manufacture and distribute the item yourself.

Selling Your Idea/Invention to a Toy Manufacturer

How do you find someone interested in purchasing your idea? Some of the toy manufacturers seeking new product inventions from the outside will purchase ideas from toy design firms that range in size from one to 30 or more in staff. Others will utilize independent professional designers and toy agents with whom they have ongoing business relationships and who are knowledgeable about their companies' needs. Many toy companies are often so busy in the development phase of their current product lines that they rely very heavily on the outside inventing community for innovative ideas. Also, as companies look for cost savings, more and more are turning to the inventor community. On the other hand, some manufacturers will purchase an outside idea only after the item is actually on the market and has demonstrated consumer appeal and sales.

A larger company may receive thousands of ideas from external sources each year. An independent inventor's best chances may lie with contacting small- and medium-sized manufacturers directly. These companies are more likely to have smaller budgets for product research and development, thus increasing the chances of their interest in purchasing outside ideas. Be certain the manufacturer you contact and your product are compatible (e.g., don't build up your hopes if you approach a doll manufacturer with a board game idea). Narrow your targeted list by eliminating those companies who do not accept outside ideas. Do your research online (don't forget to check out Facebook and LinkedIn pages) or contact them directly to ask where (and to whom) you may address correspondence related to new product submissions.

The toy industry trade magazines, LinkedIn groups, and other online sites will frequently carry classified ads placed by manufacturers or design firms who are looking for new product ideas. You might also consider placing a classified ad offering your invention for sale. [See example below]

"For Sale – unique strategy board game combining elements of backgammon, checkers, and chess. For ages 12 and up. Patents and trademarks applied for. Professionally test-marketed. Reply to"

Agreements and Royalties

If a manufacturer wants to buy your invention, a confidential royalty payment agreement is usually made between both parties. Royalty payments usually range from 2 to 10 percent of the item's gross sales, with 5 percent being the average. Be prepared to receive a lower royalty on a licensed product. The toy company or licensee is obligated to pay the licensor for the rights to develop toys for their property, therefore an inventor's royalty may be reduced to around 3 percent to account for this.

Brokers

You may choose to obtain the services of a third party that will "broker," or negotiate, the sale of your idea to toy companies. Manufacturers sometimes turn to these middlemen for outside ideas. They may be referred to as toy brokers or toy agents; some are former toy industry executives and many are independent toy inventors or former toy company staff designers. They work on commission, and their fees may range from 15 to 60 percent of the royalties paid to the inventor by the manufacturer.

You should deal with these third parties as you would other professional service people: if they haven't been recommended to you, ask for references and check them thoroughly. Exercise caution when any individual or organization requires payment in advance.

Invention or invention promotion firms are also brokers, with the exception that they usually handle all types of consumer products. Their services and fees also vary: some may require a fee of 10 percent of the royalty paid; others may ask for as much as 50 percent and still others may work on a flat fee basis. Check the invention firm with a local Better Business Bureau or Chamber of Commerce, your state's Attorney General's office (many states have laws protecting inventors from invention promotion firm "scams"), or have an attorney do this for you, prior to paying or signing contractual agreements. Ask the firm for examples of ideas that they have placed with toy companies and confirm this with the references they give you.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Federal Trade Commission's web page on [invention promotion firms](#) shares tips on how to use the firms, inventor protections, and resources for more information.

Manufacture and Distribute the Item Yourself

Many thriving toy manufacturing enterprises began as small, entrepreneurial businesses. Though more time consuming and costly than selling your idea – and certainly requiring more general business skills – doing it all yourself may lead to success in a couple of ways: (1) the personal satisfaction of establishing a business of your own, or (2) having another toy company recognize your success and purchase the rights to the product post-introduction to the market.

Many successful entrepreneurs cite the importance of studying how others have made their way into a new field. You may wish to ask those familiar with the toy industry about the best way to proceed with starting up a toy business of your own, your realistic chances of success, and pitfalls to avoid.

Don't be shy about asking tough questions ... there's a lot to learn.

For example, if you decide to form your own business to manufacture and distribute your invention yourself, you must be able to:

Raise capital;

Contract for production services at an affordable cost;

Obtain orders from toy retailers and ensure timely delivery; and

Continue promotional activities to increase consumer interest and sales.

And remember to consider aspects such as:

Legal matters (patent and/or trademark protection);

Safety (there are federal government regulations covering more than 100 areas, including small parts, sharp points and edges, lead and phthalates, flammability, toxicity, electrical hazards, proper labeling, etc.);

Product life cycle and stability of demand;

New competition;

Purchasing a bar code to put on the packaging of your product;

Marketing (getting toy retailers nationwide to carry your product); and

Distribution

Starting and maintaining a successful business requires many skills, and proper planning is crucial.

Create a business plan prior to introducing your product; determine cost-effective manufacturing, distribution, and marketing strategies; and project sales growth.

Your business plan may call for purchasing all the raw materials (components) and assembling your product yourself or hiring various suppliers and contractors to perform these services for you.

Suppliers of materials and services (molds; dyes; fabric; stuffing material and machinery; game parts; sound devices; boxes; art service designers of illustrations, logos, cover art, etc.; die-cutting for customized game boards; packaging services; photography; wood fabricating; and toy and game assembly) can be found online.

Promoting Your Idea

Bringing Your Product to Market

How does a toy get into the hands of a consumer? You can sell directly to stores and/or toy wholesalers in your area. You can also send direct mail pieces to retailers/wholesalers by purchasing mailing labels of these outlets from mailing list brokers. Reaching mass-market toy buyers is a difficult task. Since retailer relationships are so important to your product line's success, you may want to consider hiring a sales rep firm that specializes in the toy industry. These firms already have solid pre-established relationships with toy buyers. You can also advertise in one or more toy trade magazines.

Exhibiting at a trade show is the most cost-effective way to reach a large number of toy buyers at one time. The largest U.S. toy trade show is The Toy Association's [North American International Toy Fair](#). Each year, this trade show is visited by more than 10,000 toy wholesale and retail buyers from all over the world who attend to see – and place orders for – the latest toy offerings from over 1,000 exhibitors. Very few other industries provide such a relatively inexpensive method of entry into the marketplace.

At one time, industry insiders recommended against exhibiting at a trade show unless sufficient inventory existed to be able to fill an order. Today's manufacturing techniques are now fast enough that it could be acceptable to hold on production until the initial order(s) have been received. In either case, it's a wise business decision to have a plan in place regarding how an order will be fulfilled once that first order has been received.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Toy Association maintains an [online directory](#), where inventors can search for manufacturers sales reps who can help sell your product to wholesale and retail customers.

DID YOU KNOW?

Toy Association members have access to rich [educational webinars](#) tackling a range of key topics such as toy safety, brand protection, toy shopping trends, entering new markets, media and promotion, and much more.

Promoting Your Product

The media landscape has radically changed. In the past few years, TV usage among consumers has declined drastically, while kids incorporate digital media into their daily viewing habits. The proliferation of social media has led to the rise of online kid influencers who are changing the way children respond to advertising. Unsurprisingly, these influencers affect the buying habits of kids and their parents. Leveraging influencers to promote a toy or game successfully requires a solid strategy and partnership. The Toy Association hosted a webinar on how companies can get the most out of influencer marketing. Members can access the [webinar recording online](#).

Joining The Toy Association

Professional toy inventors and designers and design firms are eligible to join The Toy Association as regular members. As a member of The Toy Association, you have the ability to promote your company to the industry, attend valuable networking events to connect with other industry executives, receive important information about safety regulations and other industry topics, and take advantage of discounts on exhibit space at Toy Fair and other events.

As a member, you will be included in the Association's [Member Directory](#). Available 24/7 with real-time updates for contact information and other key data, this searchable tool assists members in making new industry contacts and connecting with prospective customers. The Member Directory can be searched by company name, professional category, and by member type. (Non-members can also search the directory.)

Members of the Association receive exclusive benefits at our marquee trade event, [Toy Fair](#), including complimentary access to walk the floor, discount rates and priority points on exhibit space, access to the Member Lounge, and educational offerings at the show.

The Toy Association hosts a variety of other events that help members build industry relationships and attract exposure to their business. [Fall Toy Preview](#) and [PlayCon: The Toy Association's biannual International Conference of Play Professionals](#) each boast a networking reception where you are sure to make valuable industry connections. The annual [Toy of the Year \(TOTY\) Awards](#), held in conjunction with Toy Fair each February, offers another perfect opportunity to network with industry executives.

As mentioned previously, safety in toys continues to be an important issue that the industry faces on a daily basis and it starts with toy design. The Toy Association works diligently to maintain the industry's reputation on safety issues and to assure that emerging regulations are practical, sensible, and effective. Our staff ensures that members stay informed of all the latest toy safety developments with updates delivered straight to your inbox through Member Alerts and our weekly e-newsletter, *Toy News Tuesday*.

In addition to these offerings, the Association sponsors periodic seminars, trade show workshops, and referral services for toy inventors and designers. Members have access to all of this information free of charge. For more information about membership, or to join, please visit the [membership section](#) on the Association's website.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Creative Factor educational sessions at Toy Fair are specifically tailored to entrepreneurs and inventors. At Toy Fair 2019, Creative Factor will have an even more visible presence and feature an expanded line-up of content presented by experts across a wide range of disciplines. Visit [ToyFairNY.com](#) for more information.

Resources

[The Toy Association](#)

[Toy Association Inventors & Designers Resource Page](#)

[Toy Association Member Directory](#)

[Toy Association U.S. Safety Standards Resource Page](#)

Toy Trade Shows and Inventor Events

Toy Fair New York (New York City - February)

Toy Fair, c/o The Toy Association, 1375 Broadway, Suite 1001, New York, NY 10018

Phone: 212.675.1141 | www.ToyFairNY.com

toyfair@toyassociation.org

Toy Fair Dallas (Dallas - October)

Fall Toy Preview, c/o The Toy Association, 1375 Broadway, Suite 1001, New York, NY 10018

Phone: 212.675.1141 | www.FallToyPreview.org

falltoypreview@toyassociation.org

Chicago Toy and Game Fair (Chicago – November)

6842 N. Kilpatrick Ave, Lincolnwood, IL 60712

Phone: 847.677.8277 | www.chitag.com

info@chitag.com

Associations

America's SBDC (Small Business Development Centers)

8990 Burke Lake Road, Burke, VA 22015

703.764.9850 | AmericasSBDC.org

America's SBDC represents the country's 63 Small Business Development Centers, a national network of partnerships uniting higher education, state and local nonprofit economic development organizations, private enterprise and government. It is the Small Business Administration's largest partnership program, providing management and technical assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their own businesses.

American Society of Inventors (ASI)

1601 Market St, Philadelphia, PA 19103

215.546.6601 | aso.org

The American Society of Inventors (ASI) is a non-profit organization formed in 1953 to bring inventors together and to educate them on protecting, developing, and marketing or licensing their invention.

National Academy of Inventors

3702 Spectrum Boulevard, Suite 165, Tampa, FL 33612

813.974.4438 | academyofinventors.org

The National Academy of Inventors is a member organization comprising U.S. and international universities, and governmental and non-profit research institutes, with over 4,000 individual inventor members and fellows spanning more than 250 institutions worldwide. Membership with the NAI is available through local university and non-profit research institute chapters only.

United Inventors Association of America (UIA)

1025 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036

583-359-9310 | www.uiausa.org

The UIA is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to providing educational resources and opportunities to the independent inventing community, while encouraging honest and ethical business practices among industry service providers.

Educational Institutions

The following educational institutions offer a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Toy Design:

Fashion Institute of Technology

Toy Design Department – Room A571

227 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001

212.217.7133 | www.fitnyc.edu/toydesign

Otis College of Art and Design

9045 Lincoln Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045

310.665.6800 | www.otis.edu

Publications – Books

Del Vecchio, Gene. **The Blockbuster Toy! How to Invent the Next Big Thing**. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2003.

Levy, Richard C. and Weingartner, Ronald O. **The Toy and Game Inventor's Handbook**. Updated Third Edition, 2013.

Miller, G. Wayne. **Toy Wars: The Epic Struggle Between G.I. Joe, Barbie, and the Companies that Make Them**. Collingdale, PA: Diane Publishing Co, 2001.

Monosoff, Tamara. **The Mom Inventors Handbook: How to Turn Your Great Idea into the Next Big Thing**. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2005.

Peek, Stephen. **The Game Inventor's Handbook**. Cincinnati: Betterway Publications, 1993.

Tinsman, Brian. **The Game Inventor's Guidebook: How to Invent and Sell Board Games, Card Games, Role-Playing Games and Everything in Between**. Garden City, NY: Morgan James Publishing, 2008.

Watson, Bruce. **The Man Who Changed How Boys and Toys Were Made: The Life and Times of A.C. Gilbert, the Man Who Saved Christmas**. New York City: Penguin Books, 2003.

Publications - Consumer Magazines

[*Entrepreneur*](#)

[*Inc.*](#)

[*Inventors Digest*](#)

[*Minority Business Entrepreneur*](#)

[*Make: Magazine*](#)

Publications - Trade Magazines

[*edplay Magazine*](#)

edplay meets the unique needs of stores that sell toys, games, and gifts. The publication provides toy trade news and advice on merchandising and selling different toy, game, and gift product lines and

keeps retailers up-to-date on new and hot play products, offers interviews with toy industry experts, and provides nuts-and-bolts advice on running an independent toy store.

[Gifts & Decorative Accessories](#)

Gifts & Decorative Accessories serves retailers, manufacturers, and vendors of general gift products, decorative accessories, stationery, greeting cards, collectibles, personal care products, jewelry, and gourmet food items. Gifts & Decorative Accessories' monthly coverage includes industry news, trade show news, new product introductions, and trend information.

[Hobby Merchandiser](#)

Hobby Merchandiser is the premier trade magazine serving retailers, manufacturers, and distributors of the model, hobby, and toy industries.

[The Toy Book](#) and [The Pop Insider](#)

The Toy Book is a leading trade magazine serving the toy industry providing news, trends, new products, and happenings within the industry. The Pop Insider features announcements and reviews of the latest collectibles, licensed products, and entertainment content.

[Toys and Family Entertainment \(TFE\) and TFE Licensing](#)

TFE serves the toy industry by delving into the ever-changing interests of today's kids, focusing on toys, consumer electronics, video games, and other related industries and examining how kids spend their time, how they play, and how they shop. TFE Licensing is a supplement inside TFE. The publication examines the licensing industry, with an emphasis on toys and children's entertainment, analyzing branding strategies and how today's consumers spend their time and money.

U.S. Government - Offices/Publications

U.S. Copyright Office

101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC 20559

202.707.3000 | www.copyright.gov

Publications include: [Copyright Basics](#), [Copyright Fees](#), etc.

Inventors Assistance Center

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313

800.PTO.9199 or 703.308.4357

www.uspto.gov

Resources include: [Patent and Trademark Practitioners](#) (licensed to practice before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office), [General Information Concerning Patents](#), [Basic Facts About Trademarks](#), etc.

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
409 3rd St, SW, Washington, DC 20416
SBA Answer Desk: 800.827.5722 | answerdesk@sba.gov
www.sba.gov

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)
4330 East West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814
800.638.2772
www.cpsc.gov
[CPSIA information](#)

U.S. Government Bookstores
866.512.1800
ContactCenter@gpo.gov
bookstore.gpo.gov

List of U.S. government bookstores nationwide and online ordering for such titles as: Starting A Business & Keeping Records; Exporters! The Wit and Wisdom of Small Business Owners Who Sell Globally; and Preparing Your Business for Global E-Commerce: A Guide for U.S. Companies To Manage Operations, Inventory, and Payment Issues, etc.

State Governments - Offices/Publications

Many states have a Department of Economic Development to aid small business owners/entrepreneurs.

General business assistance and information is available in many local offices of the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) and its partner, [Small Business Development Centers](#).

Visit the [Learning Center](#) section of the SBA website to participate in a variety of online courses pertinent to small business owners and entrepreneurs.

For specialized information about the toy industry, you may want to obtain copies of annual reports of publicly-owned toy manufacturers and toy retail chains. Toy consultants can usually provide information themselves or obtain it for you from other sources. Manufacturers' representatives for the toy industry, who are also known as sales or advertising representatives, may be available for consulting purposes. They are salespeople who handle incoming orders for manufacturers and are usually located in major cities in all states.

DID YOU KNOW?

[SCORE](#) is a national association dedicated to helping small business owners form and grow their businesses. Headquartered in Herndon, VA and Washington D.C., SCORE has more than 300 chapters across the country and in several U.S. territories. SCORE is a partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

*"I believe in human dignity as the source of national purpose,
human liberty as the source of national action,
the human heart as the source of national compassion,
and in the human mind as the source of our invention and our ideas."*

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

35th U.S. President (1917-1963)



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