

Lend a Toy, Gain a Sale

Retailers and Vendors Profit from New Trend

Although selling toys is understandably the focus for retailers, lending them is a trend that may hook customers. Toy loans often turn into toy sales, according to both retailers and manufacturers interviewed by *TDmonthly Magazine*.

"Every time [retailers] loan out a Cogno game, it doesn't come back. They just get a call with a credit card to pay for it." — Jennie Kretchmar, DoubleStar, LLC

Two years ago, Trish Garlock, owner of The Treasured Child in La Grange, Ky., established a lending library of about 20 games. "It works well, especially for the more expensive games and games that are more difficult to demo. On the whole, I haven't had any bad experiences with it."

Garlock got the idea for a toy library when one toy maker offered her a free game to put in a lending library if she bought six more. Since then, Garlock has approached other manufacturers and has found many who liked the idea.

When customers check out a game, they leave a \$5 deposit, which they get back when they return the product.

Many manufacturers see a lending library as a way to benefit both retailers and toy makers.

"We had one retailer tell us that every time they loan out a **Cogno** game, it doesn't come back. They just get a call with a credit card to pay for it," said Jennie Kretchmar, director of operations and marketing for **DoubleStar, LLC**, makers of Cogno products.



Cogno

Although the idea is new to her, Brandy Lindstrom, owner of Little Blue Choo Choo in Scottsdale, Ariz., thought the concept sounded promising.

"It does seem like a good idea with some of the more expensive games. It gives people a chance to get to know the product."

The idea of a toy lending library is not new. The nonprofit Los Angeles Toy Loan Project, in operation since the 1930s, allows children to borrow and even earn new toys, said director Sylvia Bratincevic.