

Selling novelty toys to people is more than a trade - it is an art. Toys and novelties come in many different shapes, sizes, colors, and features, but they all have one thing in common - the impulse buy. Very few people set out looking for a particular novelty toy. They might have a certain kind of thing they're looking for - for example, a squirt gun, a noisemaker, or a little plastic toy for a child - but this still leaves a lot of room. When you are selling novelty toys, you have to have the right object with the right flare in the right place at the right time. That may sound easy, and in some ways it is, but there is more to it than you might think.

I run a party supply store downtown. We sell streamers, cups, paper plates, plastic silverware, and other party supplies, but our biggest market is in the novelty toy industry. We have thousands of different items that can be used to stock goody bags, but we only have room to display hundreds of them at once. This causes some difficulties. Selling novelty toys is tough because there are so many retail display decisions you have to make. Some people take a "the more the merrier" approach. Basically, in these kinds of stores the goal is to stuff as many different objects into the space as possible. People are overwhelmed by all of the plastic knickknacks and doodads, and are convinced by the sheer overwhelming mass of it all to buy a handful of this or that.

I take a much different approach to my novelty toys. For me, it is not so much about quantity as quality. Not the quality of the novelties - that doesn't change. I am talking about the quality of the displays. Usually, I arrange my novelty toys along a certain theme. For example, all the plastic dinosaurs, prehistoric plants, and cavemen are in one shelf. On top of that shelf, I have made a little prehistoric display. It is nothing special, but people find it amusing. You wouldn't believe how many novelty toys it helps me to sell.

There are very few novelty toy stores out there nowadays, however the novelties themselves find a place in nearly every business. From drugstores, to gas stations, to party stores, everyone likes to add a few trinkets to spice up the register display and make a few extra bucks on impulse buys.