

Variety is the spice of Toys R Us holiday picks

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(Repeating a story originally filed late on Monday)

By Dhanya Skariachan

NEW YORK, Sept 20 (Reuters) - Toys R Us Inc [TOY.UL] is betting on variety to hit its sales target in perfect harmony with every squeeze, to a \$110 remote-controlled monster "Bigfoot."

The world's largest dedicated toy retailer is also offering more exclusives and opening more toy stores.

Its holiday hot toy list, to be officially unveiled on Tuesday, features 36 new items, including a Star Wars action figure <JAKK.O> and a Lego board game that dares kids to wade through a tricky maze to reach a princess.

The top picks also include educational toys like "Leapster Explorer," a \$70 handheld gaming device that is made by LeapFrog Enterprises <LF.N>.

"We don't want to miss anything," Lisa Harnisch, vice president and divisional merchandise manager, said in an uncertain environment.

The company is counting on its wide assortment to boost sales amid its efforts to go public. It faces competition from Walmart <WMT.N>, Amazon.com Inc <AMZN.O> and Target Corp <TGT.N>.

Last year, Toys R Us posted higher earnings in the fourth quarter on a 7.3 percent sales rise that was helped by a 10 percent increase in the number of stores.

The top toy list "is the culmination of year-long process and is no easy feat," Harnisch told Reuters.

Toys R Us' "Fabulous 15" top picks includes Monster High dolls, offsprings to famous monster characters and a board game that involves cup tricks using a wall.

"Our list has a wide range of prices on it," Harnisch said. "So depending on parents and gift-givers, there's something for everyone."

Harnisch said the company was "laser-focused" on managing an inventory of potential hot products.

In other efforts to make shopping convenient, the retailer is opening 600 Toys R Us Express stores in 2009. It runs 587 full-size namesake stores.

The company, which is hiring 10,000 workers to staff the new stores, is also opening 10 FAO Schwarz stores.

From a karaoke machine named after the popular TV show "Glee" to a unique board game from the company's discount chains and online rivals.

"Competitors can't cut prices on items they don't have," Chief Executive Jerry Storch said at a news conference.

Last year, Wal-Mart expanded its \$10 holiday toys program, offering more than 100 items for \$10. (Reporting by Dhanya Skariachan; Editing by Richard Chang)

Glance: Toys R Us' top 15 holiday toys

Here's a look at the top 15 toys that Toys R Us is betting will be holiday hits:

By [The Associated Press](#)

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Here's a look at the top 15 toys that Toys R Us is betting will be holiday hits:

- Calico Critters Luxury Townhouse by International Playthings: A doll house for Calico Critters dolls available exclusively from Toys R Us. \$79.99.
- Cuponk by Hasbro Inc: A game that combines electronic cups and ping-pong-like balls. \$14.99.
- **Disney Princess & Me dolls by Jakks Pacific. Five 18-inch dolls of princesses from Disney movies, available exclusively at Toys R Us. \$49.99.**
- Disney/Pixar's "Toy Story 3" Imaginext Tri-County Landfill by Mattel's Fisher-Price. A playset that recreates the landfill scene from "Toy Story 3." \$49.99.
- Fast Lane Wild Fire RC by Toys R Us. A four-wheel remote control car over a foot tall. \$89.99.
- Imaginext Bigfoot the Monster by Fisher-Price. A Bigfoot that moves around, stomps and throws tantrums. \$109.99.
- Leapster Explorer by LeapFrog: Electronic handheld device that has a library of 40 games and activities and other features. \$69.99.
- Loopz from Mattel: Electronic memory game in which users try to repeat patterns of light and music. \$34.99.

- Minotaurus by Lego Systems Inc. A board game from Lego. \$26.99.
- Monster High Cleo DeNile and Deuce Gorgon doll set by Mattel: Dolls from Mattel's Monster High line. \$39.99.
- Nerf N-Strike Stampede ECS by Hasbro: Nerf blaster that can shoot Nerf darts up to 25 feet. \$54.99.
- Pillow Pets by Ontel Products Corp.: Plus stuffed animals that convert into a pillow by opening a Velcro strap. \$19.99.
- Sing-a-ma-jigs by Mattel: Plush creatures that harmonize and sing together or apart. \$12.99.
- Squinkies Cupcake Surprise Bake Shop by Blip Toys: A play set that doubles as a toy vending machine for 9 included Squinkies, tiny toy people and animals. \$22.99
- Tomica Hypercity Mega Station Set by Tomy: A Toys R Us exclusive train set. \$79.99.