

# Toy Depot, Inc. | WSU Existing



Remember the joy of playing with toys as a child? Mark Buckley and Geneva Nisly never lost their love for toys and opened a shop dedicated to just that. Buckley and Nisly collected toys for over 40 years and opened Toy Depot, Inc. on September 2, 2011. Those who like Star Wars, Star Trek, Barbies, Hot Wheels, Ertl Tractors, Breyer Horses, My Little Pony, Tonka Trucks, Lionel Trains, and other high-quality collector toy brands can be sure to find a plethora of vintage toys for their children and grandchildren.

Downtown Hutchinson, Kansas has been changing and growing over the past 10 years and Mark and Geneva wanted to be part of it with their new store. They chose a location between Avenue A Park, and Smith's Market, a local staple, and across the street from the Anchor Inn - a large 500 seat Mexican restaurant. This allowed them maximum exposure and heavy foot traffic in front of their store.

No matter what age you

are, Toy Depot allows anyone to find something that is unique to them. Mark mentioned, "We are one of only 14 vintage toy stores in the world. We are the only store of this type south or west of Chicago and the only one in a city under 3 million."

Starting as a pre-venture in 2011, they contacted the Kansas SBDC at Wichita State University and worked with SBDC advisor Frank Choriego. They needed help with online sales including a website, Facebook, and Instagram accounts, and faced the challenge of securing a website domain and expanding their internet and social media presence. With the assistance of Choriego, he helped the two with marketing, e-commerce, social media, and strategic planning and guided them through their e-commerce woes.

Since working with the Kansas SBDC, Mark and Geneva

have had a twofold increase in sales on their website and on E-Bay, as well as increased customers in the store through social media marketing. Working together was not only beneficial for the store, but also rewarding for Choriego. "To see them moving from a traditional retail store in a smaller Kansas town to a nationally known retailer in the collectible toy space by effectively utilizing e-commerce strategies and tools was a great thing to witness."

Mark and Geneva plan to continue sales expansion on the internet by connecting to more vintage toy sites and eventually selling the business to a younger couple to ensure that their dream will not end. For other people wanting to start a small business, Buckley said, "Do your market research to see if there is a need for your business or product, build a business plan, follow it and revise it annually, review your financials weekly, and work with the Kansas SBDC."



[Hutchtoydepot.com](http://Hutchtoydepot.com)



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The Kansas SBDC at Wichita State University serves the following counties: Barber, Harper, Harvey, Kingman, McPherson, Pratt, Reno, Rice, Sedgwick, Stafford, and Sumner. You can contact the team at [ksbdc@wichita.edu](mailto:ksbdc@wichita.edu), or call (316) 978-3193. Kansas SBDC Advisors: Frank Choriego