



## Big Toy Express

[www.bigtoyexpress.com](http://www.bigtoyexpress.com)



### At A Glance:

- **Company:** Big Toy Express
- **Location:** Northbrook, IL
- **Industry:** Retail
- **Challenges:**
  - Toy company needed to establish an online store in time for the holiday season to complement its physical stores
- **Results with NetSuite:**
  - Saved at least \$20,000 in implementation costs compared with comparable e-commerce solutions. An additional \$22,000 a year saved in Web maintenance. Revenues from the online store are approaching the \$200,000 mark



*“For a start up company like ourselves, NetSuite Small Business online store is pure gravy. All the capital necessary to set-up the physical stores can be discouraging not to mention a drain on other projects like e-commerce. NetSuite Small Business made it so easy for us to get up and running online.”*

— Jody Murdough, Co-Founder

*Big Toy Express*

### The Results: No Difference

With most of its capital tied up in the launch of its physical stores, the company needed to squeeze every dollar in setting up its online presence, explains Big Toy Express co-founder Jody Murdough. “NetSuite Small Business is among the least expensive ecommerce applications out there — yet when you look at the finished product and its sophisticated functionality you could never tell how little it costs.”

By choosing NetSuite Small Business, Murdough estimates the company saved at least \$20,000 in implementation costs, plus another \$22,000 a year in Web maintenance, compared to comparable solutions.

### The Challenge: Holiday Rush

When Murdough and his brother, Marshall, decided to go into business together, there was never any question what they would sell: toys. “It’s in our blood,” Murdough explains. Their father was an executive at a top plastic goods manufacturer, then in the early 1970s founded a new toy company he called “Little Tikes.” “When we were young, my three brothers and I were toy-testers and models for the packaging.” After selling Little Tikes, their father started a new toy company called Step2. “When we were older we worked in his factories and then in the office. These experiences have taught us a lot about the toy industry.”

So when the two brothers decided to strike out on their own, they decided upon, for want of a better word, ‘big toys,’ a category that includes giant climbers, slides and backyard sandboxes, ride-on toy vehicles, play kitchen sets and playhouses.

It was, Murdough says, a niche that for various reasons hadn’t been well served thus far in the toy market. “In the big box retailers — where most of the toy sales are made — shelf space is at a premium. The national chains can’t afford to take up the shelf space with a large selection of

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***“Our plan is to grow our physical presence throughout the Midwest and then the rest of the country. But in the meantime, our online store gives us great national exposure. Even better, by using NetSuite Small Business Dashboard we can see at a glance which toys are selling the fastest online — which in turn helps us with our inventory planning for the physical stores. Because it is a national audience, these trends become apparent much more quickly online.”***

— Jody Murdough, Co-Founder  
Big Toy Express

the type of toys we offer. What’s more they can’t dedicate the aisle space to set up the toys so children and their parents can see for themselves what they are like.”

With Big Toy Express, the Murdoughs hit upon a combination that circumvented these seemingly immutable economic factors: it would slowly grow its physical presence — that is, open landmark stores where the parents and children could come in and have a hand’s-on experience with the toys, while establishing a national presence and sales outlet with its Web site. And, since almost none of the toys are, as Murdough put it, “easy to tuck under your arm and load into your car,” the Web store would also add a valuable delivery component to its customer service.

“Being online was a key requirement for our business plan,” Murdough says.

With their financing in place, the Murdoughs established three physical stores this year, just in time for the holiday rush. But they still needed to go online.

The Murdoughs were looking for an e-commerce solution that they could implement quickly at minimum cost. But they also had their eyes on the company’s long-term needs.

“We had to get our Web site up in a hurry, true. But we also wanted something that could integrate into our back end in order to better manage our financials and accounting and customer relationship management. Ecommerce solutions tend to offer just that — an online presence. We could not find any other vendor that provided an ecommerce application, accounting, finance and customer relationship management in one integrated package.”

### **The Solution: Complementary Approaches**

NetSuite Small Business fit the requirements and within a month of implementation the company’s first goal — an online version of Big Toys Express — was up and racking in revenues.

“Without NetSuite Small Business we would be missing out on a significant stream of revenues for this holiday season,” Murdough says. He estimates that sales from the Web store average about \$2,500 a day. Once the holidays are over, he believes online revenues will come close to totaling \$200,000 year to date.

And because the sales are coming from all corners of the country, Big Toy Express can divine far more quickly from its Web site the demand for certain items in its physical stores. “When we see there has been an increase in sales of a certain item from our Web site over a three day period, for example, we know this will translate into greater demand for that product in our physical stores and we alert our suppliers accordingly,” Murdough explains.

Big Toy Express is able to keep track of such shifts in demand via NetSuite Small Business’s customizable Dashboard, which allows them to program whichever metrics they want to track. On a Thursday some three weeks before Christmas, for example, Murdough checks the Dashboard and sees that the Web store has moved 10 Step2 Lifestyle Deluxe Kitchens for that day. “It’s becoming our most popular item actually,” he says. A quick click or two, and that info is exported to the relevant suppliers. “This is definitely not my father’s toy store operation,” he jokes.

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