

# Fat Brain Toys Partners with Winona Capital to Fuel Future Growth

Fat Brain Toys to Emerge as Leader in Specialty Toy Arena with Renewed Focus on Brand Growth and Continued Excellence in Customer Care



Winona Capital provides acquisition and growth capital to consumer goods and services businesses in the lower middle market. The new partnership will enable Fat Brain Toys to deliver their combination of industry-leading customer service and product ...

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ELKHORN, Neb. and CHICAGO, March 5, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Fat Brain Toys ([www.fatbraintoy.com](http://www.fatbraintoy.com)) and Winona Capital ([www.winonacapital.com](http://www.winonacapital.com)) announced today the Chicago-based private equity firm has made a strategic investment in Fat Brain Toys. An already well-established leader in the specialty and educational toy industry, the new partnership will enable Fat Brain Toys to deliver their combination of industry-leading customer service and product innovation to a much larger audience.

"After building up a solid foundation over the last 12 years, we are extremely excited for the opportunity to expand our unique brand of toys with the help of Winona Capital," said Mark Carson, President and Co-Founder of Fat Brain Toys. "We've been quietly creating the best toy store the average consumer has never heard of, but now we're ready to make some noise!"

"We are thrilled to partner with Mark, Karen, and the entire Fat Brain Toys team. Theirs is a great entrepreneurial success story, and we are honored to be part of the business going forward," said Jason Starr, a Principal at Winona Capital. "Fat Brain Toys has a tremendous opportunity, not just for amazing continued growth, but to deliver 'a smarter way to play' for children everywhere."

Fresh on the heels of the American International Toy Fair, where Fat Brain Toys garnered three separate nominations for "Toy of the Year," the company is poised for growth in the toy manufacturing side of the business as well.

"Through the success of our Tobbles and Squigz line of toys, we have tapped into a receptive audience of consumers that are seeking open-ended, creative play," explained Carson. "In an era of digital entertainment and media-driven fads, Fat Brain is living proof that toys don't need licensed characters or batteries to be successful."

The company headquarters and distribution center will continue to operate from the Omaha, Nebraska area. Co-founders Mark and Karen Carson and CFO Dean Giesselmann will also continue in their current leadership roles, as will the rest of the company's valued employees.

Fat Brain Toys operates one of the largest online toy stores, two physical storefronts, and wholesales its proprietary products to over 2,000 retailers domestically and around the world.

Sonenshine Partners served as investment banking advisor to Fat Brain Toys.

### **About Fat Brain Toys**

Fat Brain Toys is an Elkhorn, Nebraska based retailer and manufacturer of educational toys and games. Begun as a literal "garage startup" in 2002, husband and wife team Mark & Karen Carson have grown their company into one of the largest toy retailers in the country. For more information on Fat Brain Toys, please visit [http://www.fatbraintoys.com/about\\_us/presskit.pdf](http://www.fatbraintoys.com/about_us/presskit.pdf) ([http://www.fatbraintoys.com/about\\_us/presskit.pdf](http://www.fatbraintoys.com/about_us/presskit.pdf)).

### **About Winona Capital**

Winona Capital provides acquisition and growth capital to consumer goods and services businesses in the lower middle market. Winona partners with high energy, passionate executives who have a shared focus on building great brands with sustained growth over long-term investment horizons. Winona Capital manages more than \$300 million on behalf of its family office and institutional investors. For more information, please visit [www.winonacapital.com](http://www.winonacapital.com) (<http://www.winonacapital.com/>).

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