

From blind boxes to big buzz

(<https://english.mathrubhumi.com/lifestyle/ananya-panday-to-rihanna-why-celebs-are-carrying-labubu-dolls-xhi5klmn>)

In 2019, Chinese toy giant Pop Mart partnered with Kasing Lung to bring Labubu to life in the form of collectible vinyl toys.

The twist? They're sold in "blind boxes" — you never know which version you're going to get until you open one.

That mystery element turned Labubu into an instant hit with collectors. Each figure comes with its outfits and dessert themes to punk vibes and fantasy costumes. Some are common, while others are ultra-rare "secret editions" that fans scramble to find.

<https://www.nascode.com/articles/marketing-lebanon/blog/what-marketing-tools-and-strategies-did-pop-mart-u/en>

<https://www.marketbrew.in/weekly-insights/labubu-dolls-crade-decoded-market-brew>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/strategic-brilliance-behind-labubu-from-nordic-myth-global-sutar-5a8qc/>

Labubu has evolved from a niche design into a global collectible phenomenon, generating over \$419 million in revenue in 2024 and in 2025, its revenue more than doubled in 2024 to 13.04 billion yuan (\$1.81 billion).

Labubu has been a bonanza for Pop Mart. Its revenue more than doubled in 2024 to 13.04 billion yuan (\$1.81 billion), thanks in part to its elvish monster. Revenue from Pop Mart's plush toys soared more than 1,200% in 2024, nearly 22% of its overall revenue, according to the company's annual report.

Labubu latched on to the blind box phenomenon, where the purchaser does not know exactly which version of the plush toy they will get. And Pop Mart made sure there is a Labubu for everyone, regardless of income. Most are priced in a wide range between \$20 and \$300, with certain collaborations or limited editions priced higher, according to Brough.

Artificial scarcity-the deliberate limitation of a product or service's availability, even when the means to produce or distribute more of it exist.

Kidults-millennials and genZ adults are the fastest growing age demographic for such toys

Resale of labubu in blackmarket

Beijing auction for labubu

Blindbox model is the USP

Such trends go from being mainstream to cringe in 3 social media cycles.

In June, Labubu sales in the US were up by 5,000% compared to a year earlier, according to estimates from equity research firm M Science.

"I've not seen anything like this from other toy companies," M Science senior analyst Vinci Zhang told the BBC.

The company has huge potential in the US where it operates about 40 shops compared to around 400 in China, he added.

The buying frenzy has created a booming resale market where the dolls, originally sold at around \$10, can fetch up to hundreds of dollars.

Chinese authorities seized more than 46,000 fake Labubu toys in June, as they crack down on a growing black market for the dolls.

In June, a human-sized Labubu sold for [\\$150,000 at an auction in Beijing](#).

A human-sized Labubu doll was sold this week for a record 1.08m yuan (\$150,324; £110,465), according to a Chinese auction house.

The 131cm (4ft 4in) figurine was sold at the Yongle International Auction in Beijing. The auctioneer said it was now the most expensive toy of its kind in the world.

Why Pop Mart Paused In-Store Labubu Sales

The Labubu mania hit a tipping point when massive in-store crowds led to chaos, fights, and overnight camping. With resellers flipping dolls and entry tickets for £150+, safety and customer experience took a hit.

Pop Mart paused in-store sales, stating:

"This is not the kind of customer experience we aim to offer."

Experts weighed in:

Susannah Streeter, Head of Markets at Hargreaves Lansdown:

"Restricting stock and blind box drops fueled the frenzy — but out-of-control crowds risk damaging the brand's playful, fun appeal."

Sarah Johnson, Flourish Retail:

"This is a strategic move. Collectible brands use scarcity as a powerful tool — but it must be balanced with control."

The pause may spike demand online — but that brings risks too: lightning-fast sellouts, inflated resale prices, and fake Labubus flooding the market.

Insight:

This incident highlights the dark side of hype marketing:

- Resale greed vs fan fairness
- FOMO culture turning toxic
- The urgent need for more ethical, controlled drops — like verified pre-orders, online lotteries, or resale limits.

Hype works — but only when it's safe, fair, and fan-first.

Brands need to innovate smarter, safer drop strategies:

Verified pre-orders

Digital waitlists

Anti-resale measures

Community-first policies

Hype without structure burns out fast. But hype with care? That's long-term gold.