

Barbie continues to be best-seller in U.S.

By Venessa Wong, Bloomberg Businessweek

She looks great for 52. She also has a sweet boyfriend, an hourglass figure, a positive attitude and a penchant for pink. And despite some people who think she can be too superficial or overly plastic, she's super-popular.

In fact, she's so popular that for the second year in a row, Barbie is the top holiday import to the United States.

That's no mean feat for a toy that has been duking it out for decades in the competitive holiday gift market. Over the years, Barbie's pre-eminence has been assailed by many would-be aspirants, such as Bratz and Liv dolls – not to mention such other hot toys as Furbys and Tickle-Me-Elmos – but the old gal's combination of glamour and can-do optimism, not to mention slick marketing, continues to keep her in the top spot.

According to an analysis of the 75 most popular holiday gift items by Panjiva, a New York company that collects data on global trade, the United States received 2,598 shipments of Barbie products (many coming from Hong Kong and Indonesia) in August and September, the period when most items are shipped for the holiday shopping season. That represents a 13 percent increase over the same period in 2010.

After Barbie, the next most popular holiday imports among the 75 items were headphones, perfume, earrings and champagne.

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