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Vince Klaseus, president, Universal Brand Development

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SPORTS: ALWAYS IN FASHION

The love for sports—and thus its merch—is perennial, with fan support in every corner of the world.



by **AMANDA CIOLETTI**
content director, License Global

The professional sports sector remains a major hub for licensing activity across the \$262.9 billion consumer products industry, with a 9.6 percent share of the total global market, according to the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association's 2017 Annual Global Licensing Industry Survey report.

The designation is limited to professional organizations and major sporting leagues, including (but not limited to) the National Football League, Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association and the National Hockey League in the U.S.; football (soccer) clubs such as the English Professional League in the U.K.; Germany's Bundesliga; and professional events and associations such as the NFL Players Association, the Olympic Committee, the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup.

On the whole, licensed sports merchandise is big business, bringing in more than \$25 billion in retail sales in 2016, again according to LIMA's report.

And sporting organizations are continuing to recognize the value it has in licensed products and its players.

Established in 1956, the National Football League Players Association is the union for professional football players in the NFL. While the NFLPA is charged with traditional union responsibilities such as representing players for salary matters, it also operates a licensing and marketing subsidiary, NFL Players Inc., that offers the exclusive group licensing rights to more than 1,800 active and retired NFL players. The group is a one-stop shop for licensees or other business partners seeking licensing rights, access to players, endorsements and marketing opportunities.

Major League Baseball also has a similar association, the Major League Baseball Players Association, which too represents professional players for collective bargaining, and also operates the Players Choice group licensing program. The MLBPA Players Choice program functions similar to the NFLPA and holds the exclusive, worldwide rights to use, license and sub-license MLB player names, numbers, likeness and more. Also like the NFLPA, the MLBPA works to protect its players from exploitation, counterfeiting and other infringements.

Sports merchandise is particularly vulnerable to counterfeiting and piracy because of the very reason team emblazoned products are so attractive—lifelong affinity and allegiance.

In *License Global's* December article, "Counterfeiting: A Game of Whack-a-Mole," Bill Patterson, vice president, corporate marketing, OpSec Security, a security solutions firm that fights counterfeits for brands and the like, said:

"What people want to buy follows the trends in the media. What doesn't change is sports. You're always going to be a Manchester U fan, a Major League Baseball fan, an NBA fan. Sports is very much a part of the counterfeiting world, and because so much of it appears on apparel, it has a lower barrier of entry for counterfeiters. These are established brands that have been around for decades, so there is a guarantee that it will be popular. Sports brands do not have to worry about ebbs and flows of trends."

Sports fans are likely fans for life, often developing a team affinity in early childhood and carrying on that love, and therefore the love for products that let the world know they are team players, for life as well. Sports brands have constant customers.

This connection between team affinity and licensed consumer products is manifesting itself in the very fabric of companies' forward strategies, most recently seen at ESPN. In March, the sports network, a part of The Walt Disney Company (and the world's No. 1 licensor, according to *License Global's* annual Top 150 Global Licensors report), named James Pitaro as president. Pitaro most recently served as chairman of Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media.

The move also can be arguably attributed in the general sporting industry's need to shake up how its viewership is watching live events. With SVOD becoming more and more accessible, and the "cutting the cord" phenomenon becoming increasingly common, traditional networks are also getting creative to ensure fans keep coming back.

For example, in March, T-Mobile announced a program to gift new customers a free year of MLB.TV and the organization's "MLB At Bat" app premium features.

MLB is also growing its digital presence in a deal with Facebook and an expanded partnership with YouTube. Facebook has grabbed the exclusive streaming rights to 25 games during the current season; while YouTube TV will serve as the presenting sponsor of the 2018 and 2019 MLB World Series.

And in December 2017, the NFL and Verizon agreed to a \$2 billion five-year deal that gives the telecom company live streaming mobile rights to games, including the Super Bowl.

These deals and others like it are making sporting events more accessible than ever before and targeting fans where they are, all of which bolsters products and merch that much more.

Find MLBPA, NFLPA, and more licensing agents that support the sports category (Brandgenuity, Dorna Sports, IMG Licensing, etc.) at Licensing Expo, May 22-24 at Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nev. ©

BBC

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WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR AT LICENSING EXPO 2018

Steven Ekstract knows how to shop Licensing Expo, and now you do too.



by **STEVEN EKSTRACT**
brand director, global licensing
group, UBM

While much can be said about the disruptions facing all industries, one thing remains constant: licensing is a solid tool to help companies sell more products. Here's a primer in how to make licensing's biggest event of the year, Licensing Expo, taking place May 22-24 in Las Vegas, Nev., work for you.

Retail Disruption Equals Opportunity

Retail is simply a distribution channel. As technology shifts, so will retail. Despite Toys 'R' Us closing, the toy business continues to grow. Licensed toy sales represented \$35 billion globally in 2016, up 3 percent, according to the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association. Licenses based on toy IP are becoming more ubiquitous, so keep an eye out for them while walking Licensing Expo.

Listen and Learn

Take advantage of educational opportunities at Expo. The Licensing Expo Opening Keynote will be presented by Amazon, who will share its vision for the future of retail and licensing. Licensing University offers many valuable sessions that can help you navigate in the world of retail, as well.

Content Remains King

The fastest growing and wealthiest digital disruptors are Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google, and they all have one thing in common—content drives their success. As you walk the aisles of Licensing Expo, remember this: they walk among you. You're in good company!

Movies

In 2017, the 10 best-performing films at the global box-office did a collective \$10.1 billion. Each were franchise films with significant licensing attached. The Hollywood studios now create long-term, sustainable franchises. Disney, Warner Bros., NBCUniversal, Sony, Lionsgate and Paramount go from strength to strength when creating merchandisable franchises.

SVOD

Streaming video, once thought to be the future, is now. Whether it is Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, YouTube, Twitch or Crunchyroll, this is the future of entertainment and a huge driver for licensing. SVOD is also creating new licensing opportunities with properties such as "Stranger Things," "Bojack Horseman" or Crunchyroll's anime offerings.

Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers like Jojo Siwa, Jake Paul and

LaurDIY are just a few who are now signing licensing deals. Each have licensing agents engaged, which are on the show floor.

Nostalgia

In uncertain political or economic times, the familiar is what sells. This year, Mickey and Minnie Mouse are celebrating their 90th anniversary, *Star Wars* recently turned 40 and both D.C. Comics and Marvel are 80-year-old companies. Classic characters like Pokémon, Power Rangers, Hello Kitty and Betty Boop are always in style.

Animation and Digital Properties

Traditional kids' TV is still strong, whether for preschoolers or edgier animation from Cartoon Network. The fastest growing SVOD viewership is for kids' content. Digital-based properties like Emoji, BuzzFeed, Line Friends and pocket.watch are all experiencing significant traction as well. If you are in the market for digital brands, check these out.

Gaming and eSports

Social gaming has serious fans. "Call of Duty," "Overwatch" and "Halo" are creating huge merchandising opportunities, particularly for eSports. It has arrived, it is big and it is growing. If you are not in eSports yet, jump on it.

Fashion

As more companies like Authentic Brands Group purchase brands such as Nautica and Nine West, the intersection of fashion and licensing is becoming intertwined.

Agents

Traditional bellwether brands ripe for licensing such as Ford, Pepsi, Hershey's, Corona and more are exhibiting at Expo and looking for partners. You can find these brands represented by their licensing agents including Beanstalk, CAA-GBG, IMG, The Joester Loria Group, Global Icons, Brandgenuity, Brand Central, The Wildflower Group and Seltzer Licensing, to name just a few.

Non-Profit Brands and Sports

Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts, Red Cross and the rise of players' associations have given Millennials and Gen Z the ability to exercise their social awareness through purchasing power. Non-profits and players' associations doing good for their players appeal to both generations' sensibilities. They are here at Licensing Expo and they are the future of sports merchandising. ©



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LICENSING FOR THE LEAGUE OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Blizzard Entertainment's Daniel Siegel unpacks how eSports is changing the game for licensing, opening up exciting new ways to engage fans.



by **DANIEL SIEGEL**
head of eSports licensing,
Activision Blizzard Consumer
Products Group

Daniel Siegel, a veteran of global sports and entertainment licensing, is the head of eSports licensing at Activision Blizzard Consumer Products Group. Most recently, he was the vice president of licensing at WME|IMG.

Last year, eSports, also known as professional competitive video game playing, drew an estimated 285 million viewers globally with a Millennials audience share two-to-three times than that for the big four U.S. sports, according to NewZoo. The industry is only expected to continue to grow.

At Blizzard, we have more than 25 years of experience building iconic transmedia entertainment brands, centered around epic games and game universes such as “Overwatch,” “World of Warcraft” and “StarCraft” that are inhabited by millions of fiercely passionate players around the world.

Our company culture is oriented around respecting and responding to gamers as a highly-engaged constituency, and through this work and shared passion with our audiences, we’ve developed a strong understanding of how they interact with our games and other products. In addition to enabling us to continue creating entertainment content with broad global appeal, this has helped lead us to a unique opportunity to change the game in global licensing for eSports.

The “Overwatch” League, in particular, makes for a compelling case study in how global licensing is being disrupted by the growth of eSports. With the launch of the inaugural season in January, some of the top players and most passionate fans of “Overwatch” piled into the Blizzard Arena Los Angeles in Burbank, Calif.

What makes the league truly groundbreaking is that it’s the first major global, city-based professional eSports league. The 12 inaugural teams, representing major cities around the world such as Seoul, Houston, London, Shanghai and New York, face off each week at the Blizzard Arena, with plans for future season play to take place in home city venues. We believe that organizing the league by cities, a format long embraced by traditional sports, can create the most rewarding and engaging experience for teams and fans by amplifying the affinity between them, fueling passion around competition and rivalries, and contributing to the growth of unique cultural elements around the game.

Fans of eSports have shown that they embrace innovative opportunities to play, display, wear and live the brands they love. This can include everything from virtual skins to re-imagined apparel, accessories, trading cards, publishing, toys, collectibles, memorabilia, customized headwear and, of course, headsets and gaming equipment.

There’s already been an overwhelming response for both real world and virtual merchandise for the “Overwatch” League, but we haven’t even scratched the surface of what’s possible when it comes to creating an immersive, multiplatform experience for fans.

Working with the right licensing partners to design the experience so that gamers have something that’s truly meant for them is extremely important. We are creating a whole new sub-industry that’s built around fashion and performance for gamers. There is no template to follow; this is new and uncharted territory.

There is also a great deal of potential in how the intellectual property is utilized in licensing for eSports. For licensees, the suite of IP offered by licensors in eSports is going to be critical. It’s game-changing to have a one-stop shop for logos, content and game rights like we do with the “Overwatch” League. From an operational standpoint, this saves licensee time and resources typically allocated to organizing key IP that is essential to maximizing the opportunity. And, from a creative standpoint, it makes for a much richer collaborative relationship with partners. It also delivers an unprecedented opportunity to create, manage and control what the experience is and then deliver products for Overwatch League fans that eSports has never been able to deliver.

Some of the world’s savviest business people and sports owners such as New England Patriots’ Robert Kraft, Los Angeles Rams’ Stan Kroenke and New York Mets’ Jeff Wilpon are getting in on eSports early, recognizing the huge opportunity. Many endemic and non-endemic consumer brands like Twitch, HP, Intel, Toyota, T-Mobile and Sour Patch Kids are also seeing value in eSports and are making sponsorship investments.

With the opening week of competition for the “Overwatch” League drawing more than 10 million viewers and a massive dedicated global audience tuning in weekly via multiple platforms globally, it’s clear that traditional sports models and consumer demands are changing, and partners and owners must all adapt. We’ve only just begun to see how eSports and its licensing products can serve the highly coveted Gen Z and Millennial demographic everyone is chasing. It’s time to get in on the game. ©



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BOOKMARKING A TREND

Print is alive and well in the children’s books section, with licensed books for the under-12 set accounting for more than a quarter of overall book sales for 2017.

Compiled by



For all books sold in the U.S. in 2017, licenses made up 12 percent of sales, reaching 85 million units, and 28 percent of all children’s book sales last year, with 63 million units sold*, according to The NPD Group. Licensed books, where the publisher has paid the original intellectual property owner for the right to publish the character or property in book form, feature popular characters from movies, TV, games, toys and lifestyle brands.

As proof that classics continue to appeal to readers in today’s connected, digital world, the leading book license in 2017 was also one of the most distinguished: Dr. Seuss. The Walt Disney Company, with its strength in movie franchises and classic characters, was the leading license owner. Penguin Random House, the No. 1 publisher in the U.S., was also the leading publisher of licensed books, according to the new NPD BookScan License Reporting Service, which tracks approximately 4,000 licenses across more than 16 million weekly book sales in the U.S.

Other licensed book content in 2017 include popular video games like “Five Nights at Freddy’s,” toys such as

Shopkins, well-trafficked YouTube creators including Nerdy Nummies and adult lifestyle brands like Weber Grills.

It used to be that book licensing was confined to popular television and film properties, but now there are all kinds of interesting and creative examples of licensed books from a much wider content universe. Given the ubiquity of popular franchises, and the way content can spread rapidly across platforms, licensing is one of the hottest areas in publishing to watch.

There is no such thing as a predictable pattern when it comes to licensing anymore. Bringing popular licenses from other platforms into books gives license owners a powerful way to extend the world of their brand into an affordable, high value format. Publishers reap the benefits of a built-in—and plugged-in—fan base that can stimulate sales right out of the gate.

We can expect licensed publishing to be one of the higher-growth areas in the book industry for years to come. It’s also one to watch carefully, as a bellwether of larger consumer trends. ©

Top Book Licenses in 2017		Top Publishers		Top License Owners	
1	Dr. Seuss	1	Penguin Random House	1	The Walt Disney Company
2	James Patterson	2	The Walt Disney Company	2	Penguin Random House
3	<i>Harry Potter</i>	3	Scholastic	3	Scholastic
4	<i>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</i>	4	Hachette Book Group	4	Nickelodeon/Viacom
5	<i>Star Wars</i>	5	HarperCollins	5	Abrams

NPD BookScan is the gold standard in POS tracking for the publishing market, covering approximately 85 percent of all the print books sold in the U.S. through direct reporting from all major retailers including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Walmart, Target, independent bookstores, and many others. Each sale of the more than 14M units tracked on a weekly basis includes geographic information making it possible to identify key markets, map regional sales trends, and index the likelihood of purchase in 200 major metro areas. NPD BookScan is also the exclusive provider of ALR data for Barnes & Noble, Target, Walmart, and Sam’s Club to U.S. publishers.

**Insights from Kristen McLean, books industry analyst for The NPD Group:*

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Kipling Styles New Emoji Gear

The Emoji Company and Kipling APAC have teamed up to launch a new handbag and accessories collection, called the Kipling x Emoji Asia Exclusive collection.

The entire range aims to deliver a new Kipling brand experience with emotional expressions across five key lines.

The first collection, the Emoji Plus Cotton Bi Patch, includes six styles including a

handbag, tote bag, shoulder bags and backpacks that feature a variety of emoticons created by The Emoji Company on a denim-like fabric.

Meanwhile, the Emoji Stripe collection features a blue stripe print with emoticons and a Kipling banana keyring across seven different designs including a backpack, shoulder bag, handbag, tote bag, shopping bag and wallets.

The Emoji Plus Cotton Grey C

collection also features six styles spanning backpacks, shoulder bags, tote bags and more, and features a removable coin purse inspired by the heart shape eyes icon.

Next, the Pink Emoji Stripe line was designed with a shopping theme in mind and aims to “remind ladies to fresh up their wardrobe.” The range, which includes a shoulder bag, cross-body pouch and more, features a pink, tailor-made Kipling monkey emoji as well as all-over patterns such as heels and bags.

Finally, the Summer Emoji Stripe range is a beachy print that features drinks, watermelons, palm trees and pink monkey emoticons. The shoulder bags, cross-body pouches and backpacks also feature the Kipling banana charm.

Kipling has also created a line of small bags and accessories such as cross-shoulder bags and zipper pullers.

“We are happy at having entered into this exciting brand collaboration with Kipling,” says Marco Hüesges, chief executive officer, The Emoji Company. “Kipling stands for the highest quality and melds both passion and creativity when it comes down to creating bags and lifestyle accessories. Both brands—Kipling and Emoji—spread positive emotions, and the new expressive line Kipling x Emoji will surely make the consumer happy.”

Additionally, Kipling APAC unveiled “Kipmoji Connect,” a new web game to coincide with

the collection. During the game, users will be able to answer questions using icons created by The Emoji Company for points, which can then be used to redeem free in-game items designed including Kipling x Emoji APAC exclusive Emoji patch sets and a Kipling x Emoji KipMoji pink monkey coin purse. The game was launched earlier this year and was supported by in-store promotions and with VIP Days in April.

“Kipling is honored to be collaborating with the Emoji brand in the creation of the Kipling x Emoji Asia exclusive limited edition collection,” says Qin Shen, vice president and managing director, Kipling APAC. “We hope to share our core brand message—stylish and functional product that lightens your day—with Emoji to bring over happiness and fun and connect everyone around us! I believe this creative and playful collection will attract the new generational of younger female groups who are looking for handbags that symbolize energy and fun.”



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Sony Pictures Bets on Licensing Flashback



With a robust number of licensees to support their newest projects, Sony Pictures Consumer Products is hedging on nostalgia to promote its films. Here, Jamie Stevens, executive vice president, worldwide consumer products, explains why they want to go back to push things forward.

Why is Sony taking a nostalgic route with its licensed products?

We have a vault of great classic films that are shared and enjoyed by generations of fans. We have found that pop-cultural driven moments bridge generations and keep our brands relevant. Many films from the '80s and '90s are also on trend right now, which also provides a perfect opportunity to reintroduce nostalgia products.

How will this approach target new and old fans of the franchises?

Nostalgia is the key trend and these franchises continue to grow in popularity because the storytelling and characters have a timeless quality. The products are also a big factor as they appeal to multiple generations through classic imagery and new art that is based on pop cultural trends. We will continue to reinvigorate our iconic franchises that present the biggest growth opportunities for old and new fans.

Do any of the new products hover between "then" and "now?"

Ghostbusters is a great example. It has multi-generational appeal, which is greatly due to a sustained marketing effort on the part of Sony Pictures and Ghost Corps. Recent examples of products that live between the then and now timespan include our "Stranger Things" x *Ghostbusters* Reebok special edition retro-sneakers that coincided with plot points in the Netflix original program "Stranger Things" and our new and upcoming "Ghostbuster World AR" mobile game. Technology is finally catching up with some of the concepts in the first film that fans can experience in a whole new way.

Which of the new franchises are going into evergreen territory?

Sony Pictures' *Peter Rabbit* film is a good example. After the success of the film, many retailers have expressed interest in developing ongoing seasonal opportunities. They really loved that a classic heritage brand is now presented in a contemporary context that speaks to

a new generation. The success of the film and consumer products give us an opportunity to reinvigorate the franchise and appeal to a new audience.

Why is Sony targeting some of its new franchises for more seasonal opportunities?

We have a number of films that in the last few years of our motion picture slate have content that is specific to the traditional seasonal calendar. Films like *The Star*, *Peter Rabbit* and *Hotel Transylvania* fall into that seasonal specific calendar. What I think is more interesting is how we have transformed a seasonal Halloween-centric business, like *Hotel Transylvania*, into a 365-day-a-year business. Fans everywhere can stock up on *Hotel Transylvania* toys, apparel, publishing, games and more just in time for the third film *Hotel Transylvania: Summer Vacation*, in theaters July 13. Master toy partner Jazwares will lead the program with a line of toys that will kick off the biggest consumer products program ever for *Hotel Transylvania*.



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Godzilla Stomps Into the Global Market

Keiji Ota, chief Godzilla officer, Toho, shares how the Godzilla brand is consistently expanding its reach in Japan and globally.

What is the primary appeal, value and potential of Godzilla as a licensed property?

Godzilla has become an iconic creature in entertainment. We believe it to be the most powerful monster in the world in many ways. If you mention the name, it immediately gives a clear image of the character to anyone in the world. This overwhelming recognition is a huge advantage for a licensed property.

Why is Godzilla widely recognized and accepted in the international market?

Above all, it's because Godzilla's absolute "coolness" reminds any audience (especially males) of childhood and playing with dinosaur toys. Godzilla is also the only being that has the power to wipe away social contrivances, such as politics and the economy, with its massive destructive force.

How will Godzilla be developed as a licensed property in the global market?

Moving forward, Godzilla will be exposed to the global audience through the Hollywood films and Toho's animations. We plan to hit all target demos from kids to teens and adults, women and men.

What product categories or retailers are you targeting for Godzilla?

Globally, we aim to offer products that hit multiple price points from mass market toys and novelties to larger, higher quality statues and collectibles, and work with major retailers around the world for global distribution.

Aside from the North American market, are you targeting any particular territories?

We believe that China has huge potential.

The country is showing outstanding development and progress, both in the general consumer products field and in the digital sectors (such as video games). China is also the home country of the Wanda Group, the parent company of Legendary Pictures. Legendary will be managing licensing activity for the new film with respect to China. Thus, we hope to collaborate further in that territory for the overall Godzilla property.

In Latin America, where Godzilla already enjoys a strong popularity, the convention and trade shows are growing rapidly. The Southeast Asian market is also expanding, with streaming and e-commerce serving as the fastest growing fields. In the Middle East, the ban on cinema has been lifted, and as a film company we are carefully watching for opportunities in that market. The European market, meanwhile, is mature and has stable strength and is one of the markets where we expect the Godzilla business to grow.

Why are you exhibiting at Licensing Expo in Las Vegas this year? What do you expect to gain from your participation?

Licensing Expo is a destination for brands with massive licensing opportunity. We believe the shows are the best place to take our first step into the global market and to launch an appealing licensing program. We want everyone in the global industry to have a look at the Godzilla brand, and we look forward to building and nurturing direct relationships with key licensees and retailers in this worldwide licensing business.





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Line Friends Makes Moves Beyond the Screen

What originally launched as a series of sticker characters for the mobile messenger application “Line” in 2011, Line Friends is now a global phenomenon, boasting more than 100 retail locations, new IP like BT21 and a score of licensees worldwide. And the brand isn’t about to stop there.

Seven years following its introduction, Line Friends now claims a robust portfolio of 5,000-plus products from licensees including Beats by Dr. Dre, New Era and Brompton, among many others. The brand has also partnered with a score of retailers such as 7-Eleven, McDonald’s and Uniqlo, and has been featured prominently across multiple promotional materials including within PepsiCo China’s “Lay’s Funny Potato” campaign, which featured Line Friends’ characters on its packaging as well as social media promotions.

At Licensing Expo China 2017, the brand was awarded “Most Popular IP” and “Best Licensed Product” during the China Licensing Awards, which were held during the show and in conjunction with the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers’ Association (LIMA).

“Line Friends has worked with globally well-known brands from a wide range of businesses, from fashion to beauty and foods, which are closely related to people’s lifestyles,” says Keke Oh, vice president, consumer products, Line Friends. “Because of Line Friends’ ongoing dedication to quality and

experience, it works with brands that will both shape and accentuate its characters’ unique personalities and attain an aura of distinctiveness in the character brand industry.”

In addition to licensed merchandise, Line Friends has expanded its portfolio to include animation, mobile games, cafés, hotels and theme parks. Most recently, the company opened its first large-scale flagship in Japan, marking the company’s 100th store, and as of April, has opened a total of 103 stores in cities such as New York, Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taipei and Tokyo. Line Friends is also gearing up to open a pop-up shop in the U.S.

In an effort to continue Line Friends’ growth trajectory, the company has also been seeking new opportunities with licensees in the artificial intelligence and information technology sectors that other character manufactures haven’t pioneered yet.

Other key initiatives include the launch of the “Friends Creator” project, which allows it to create new character IP based on the creativity of global artists from different fields. To kick off the project, Line Friends partnered with boy band and K-Pop group BTS to design and debut BT21.

The BT21 characters quickly took off, with products launching at the Line Friends flagships in Harajuku, Tokyo and New York City last December. However, the new IP



is continuing to expand and most recently debuted a branded block action puzzle game, called “Puzzle Star BT21,” on the App Store.

In the past year, Line Corp., the parent company of Line Friends, also introduced the Line Creators Market, where “Line” app users can create and sell their own stickers. The Line Creators Market is already paying off, however, as Line Friends has already brought products featuring characters created from the platform into the market. As of March, more than 720,000 creators have registered on the Line Creators Market, according to the company.

Line Friends will be at Licensing Expo to showcase its characters as well as BT21 and feature a dedicated Line Friends zone with Mega Brown greeting visitors at the entrance, a BT21 zone with BT21 character statues, a Brown Farm zone and more. Line will also debut its new Clova cloud-based virtual assistant during the show.

Hasbro Buys Saban’s ‘Power Rangers’

Hasbro and Saban Brands have signed a definitive agreement that will see Hasbro acquire a variety of Saban’s assets, in a deal valued at \$522 million.

“‘Power Rangers’ is an iconic brand built on a heritage of great storytelling and



merchandising with tremendous upside potential when fully executed across Hasbro’s Brand Blueprint,” says Brian Goldner, chairman and chief executive officer, Hasbro. “Shortly after entering into our licensing arrangement, it became clear that now was the time to begin investing in unlocking ‘Power Rangers’ full potential. We see significant opportunity for ‘Power Rangers’ across our entire brand blueprint, including toys and games, consumer products, digital gaming and entertainment, as well as geographically throughout our global retail footprint. We couldn’t be more pleased that Haim Saban will continue in a consulting role to further guide our development of this valuable property for the next generation of ‘Power Rangers’ fans.”

Moving forward, Hasbro will also own

brands such as “My Pet Monster,” “Popples,” “Julius Jr.,” “Luna Petunia” and “Treehouse Detectives,” among others. Most recently, Hasbro paid Saban \$22.25 million for its “Power Rangers” master toy license agreement, which will be credited toward the purchase price. Hasbro will also pay an additional \$229.75 million in cash as well as issue \$270 million worth of Hasbro common stock for the assets.

“Twenty-five years after launching ‘Power Rangers,’ I believe the future for this brand has never been greater,” says Haim Saban, founder, Saban Brands. “Hasbro’s leadership in innovation, storytelling and brand stewardship makes it the perfect company to further develop the global reach and appeal of the ‘Power Rangers’ property. I look forward to working with Brian and the team in the years to come.”

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Wonder, Dream World and Uni the Unicorn Tell Great Tales for Random House

Random House is debuting at Licensing Expo 2018 and is ready to showcase several of its publishing properties, namely *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, Emily Winfield Martin's *Dream World* and *Uni the Unicorn*, as well as new properties and modern classics.

"*Wonder* is a key initiative for Random House," says Rachel Bader, director, licensing, Random House Children's Books. "We're looking to leverage the success of this huge publishing franchise—it has sold 9 million books worldwide and was a hit film for Lionsgate."

Random House's *Wonder* program stems

from the *New York Times* best-selling young adult novel about an ordinary boy with an extraordinary face and heart that has been translated to more than 45 different languages around the world and spawned a movement that asks children to "choose kind." It also has a major motion film adaptation, which starred Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson and Jacob Tremblay, who played lead character Auggie Pullman.

At Licensing Expo, Random House will look to expand the brand, targeted at kids 8- to 12-years-old, into deeper licensed product categories such as sleepwear, backpacks and jewelry, as well as a back-to-school program for the fall.

"The one thing to take away about *Wonder* is that it has been around since 2012, and since, Random House has been incredibly committed to promoting and marketing the books," says Bader. "It has also taken on a movement, #ChooseKind, with teachers reading it to their kids in the classroom to help students understand kindness. It is an important publishing franchise."

Licenees already tapped for the brand include Clarkson Potter for stationery and journals, Changes for t-shirts, Out of Print Clothing for accessories, SG@NYC for jewelry and Raymond Geddes for an anti-bullying kit, a critical piece of the *Wonder* program.

Random House is also bolstering the brand with a complementary picture book, *We're All Wonders*, also by author Palacio, for children ages 3- to

7-years-old.

"We're extending the brand to a younger audience to offer an earlier entry point and to expand its licensed merchandise," says Bader. "In support of that, we'll be launching an Auggie plush toy with Yottoy this summer, and that will also be filled out with more apparel and back-to-school products for the fall. We're also talking to games partners for younger audiences."

Dream World by Emily Winfield Martin is a lifestyle brand geared to Millennial moms of infants and toddlers. Martin's *The Wonderful Things You Will Be* has sold more than 1 million copies, and held a spot on the *New York Times* best-seller list for more than year.

Partners on board for the program include Finn + Emma for apparel, accessories and toys, and Milestone for special moments memory cards.

A new property from Random House for Expo is *Uni the Unicorn* by the late Amy Krouse Rosenthal and illustrated by Brigette Barrager. The best-selling children's book flips the unicorn narrative on its head as it centers on Uni, a unicorn just like all other unicorns, except for one thing: she believes little girls are real. The franchise already includes the original title and follow up, *Uni the Unicorn and the Dream Come True*, with four additional books set to roll out over the next two years.

"The cool thing about *Uni the Unicorn* is that it is completely on trend," says Bader. "It crosses over to teens, moms and Millennials, and the art is exquisite. What's unique about this title is that it offers fans of unicorns a special spin. Random House is really getting behind this property by blowing it out across more formats for 2019 and 2020."

Bader says Random House will unveil a comprehensive style guide at Licensing Expo, as well as announce a toy partner for the brand. Spin Master has also recently launched the title in its Moonlite program, which is a story projector for mobile phones.



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Meet Disney at the Movies

Starting this spring, Disney has a slate of new films coming to theaters. Tapping into the anticipation for another *Black Panther* as well as the return of *Incredibles 2*, its consumer product lineup is sure to appeal to fans of every age.



Disney's approach to merchandise at retail for highly-anticipated films like *Avengers: Infinity War* or *Black Panther's Quest* is long-term and thoughtful.

"Through collaboration with our partners, we are able to create programs that reach fans and families with new and innovative products and experiences that bring our beloved characters to life," says Josh Silverman, executive vice president, global licensing, global product management and distribution, Disney Parks, Experiences and Consumer Products. "For Marvel Studio's *Black Panther*, we created the largest assortment ever for a Marvel origin film. Coming off of the record-breaking box office success, we are working closely with our licensee partners to ensure we are meeting demand through ongoing product releases that will continue throughout the year. *Black Panther* is also featured as part of the robust program for *Avengers: Infinity War*, which helps create newness in between content releases."

While Disney has a pulse on what moviegoers are looking for, what will the company do with a property that was last seen in theaters back when trucker hats were all the rage?

"We've seen such strong affinity for *Incredibles* over the last 14 years, which is why it's the most requested Pixar sequel of all time," says Silverman. "*Incredibles 2* picks up right where the first one left off. Family is at the heart of this film, giving it broad appeal—from original fans to those meeting the Parrs for the first time—so we had the opportunity to create a cross-category assortment for kids, adults and families."

Look for a robust program for *Incredibles 2*



with toy partners Jakks Pacific and Thinkway, as well as apparel and accessories partners including Trina Turk, Alex Woo, Stance and INVICTA.

"All Disney parks, particularly Pixar Pier at Disneyland Resort, are an example of how we bring beloved characters and stories to life in new and exciting ways," says Silverman. "With the addition of *Toy Story* lands at Walt Disney World and Shanghai Disney Resorts, these immersive experiences connect guests to the Disney characters while building anticipation for new stories to come."

There will also be brand-driven activations at Disney parks around the world like *Star Wars* Force Friday, the annual Minnie Rock the Dots program and the recent Marvel Universe Unites campaign.

Jeep, Dodge Investing in Product Expansions Via IMG

FCA U.S. has appointed brand licensing agency IMG to serve as the exclusive global representative for its Jeep, Dodge, Ram and Chrysler brands.

The multi-year deal will see IMG form a transnational team, led by its North American office, to build and manage extensive licensing programs that will expand each brand region-by-region across a range of categories

including apparel, accessories, gaming, outdoor

gear, equipment, toys and experiences.

"All four of these brands undoubtedly share a rich heritage, global popularity and best-in-class expertise," says Bruno Maglione, president, licensing, IMG. "Each brand has its own unique identity and characteristics, which we look forward to extending into a diverse range of quality products across multiple new categories and markets."



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Caterpillar Morphs from Books to AR

Next year marks the 50th birthday of the classic children's book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. In anticipation of the milestone, Joester Loria Group, the brand's licensing agent, has developed a global strategy to bring Eric Carle's stories and art off the pages and into product, school curriculum programs, pop-up shops and cafés, theater stages and smartphones around the world.

Highlights include "*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* Live Show," a live puppet show featuring four Eric Carle stories, which has garnered rave reviews on three continents, and continues to tour the U.S., Australia and the U.K., with residencies in London and New York. The production is booked for extended runs in China, Japan and Germany, and stops are planned for Saudi Arabia and Dubai in 2019.

The World of Eric Carle apps have been global top sellers, with the award-winning "*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*" app downloaded 5 million times and topping children's app charts in 24 countries. In April 2018, The World of Eric Carle, licensee Touch Press and Apple partnered to introduce a new

subscription based app, "*Eric Carle's Hungry Caterpillar Play School*." Aimed at children ages 2-6, the app entertains and educates with exclusive branded content including numbers, activities, books, lessons, songs and videos.

"Extending Carle's work from books to digital content provides a new platform for children and families to discover his timeless stories, iconic characters and unique art," says Debra Joester, president, Joester Loria Group. "Eric Carle book sales are at an all-time high, but we recognize that iPads and smartphones are another important way to engage children."

In 2014, The World of Eric Carle partnered with U.K. charity Action for Children to create The Giant Wiggle to raise funds for Britain's oldest children's charity. In 2019, The Giant Wiggle celebrates 5 years and more than \$375,000 raised, as tens of thousands of children wiggle in classrooms, nurseries, parks and other venues in a continued effort to fund the important work done by Action for Children.

"The Giant Wiggle has become a wonderful Spring event in the U.K. and a great opportunity to encourage children to give back," says

Joester. "This campaign is also a reflection of the brand's ongoing commitment to engage children and families in important causes."

In 2019, JLG continues to prioritize the Asian market for The World of Eric Carle, with a focus on extending the popularity of the brand in Japan to China.

In Japan, the brand is a leading infant and toddler brand across apparel and toy categories, supports dozens of pop-up shops and recently launched pop-up restaurants; while in China, Eric Carle books are responsible for 25 percent of Penguin Random House sales in the region, says JLG.

"Eric Carle's books have become the go-to brand for teaching children English in China," says Joester. "We are seeing enormous interest in extending the brand to immersive experiences, apparel, feeding, toys, early learning materials and other categories."

"With a global reach of books, licensed products and experiences, all age groups can enjoy Eric Carle's work as we celebrate the 50th birthday of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in 2019," says Joester.



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Mad Engine LLC, a leading full-service apparel company that was founded in 1987, has now evolved from a screen printer of men's T-shirts to a leading lifestyle apparel wholesaler. The company has an expanding roster of over 100 licenses and has gained full vertical capabilities over the past 30 years, enabling greater control over sourcing and the supply chain. In more recent years, Mad Engine has diversified product offerings by launching additional divisions outside of its core male apparel business. Starting in 2014, Mad Engine acquired Xtreme Worldwide, their Canadian division, which expanded their apparel wholesale empire business globally. Soon after Mad Engine launched their first venture into branded apparel by acquiring streetwear brand Lifted Research Group Inc. in March of 2017. Lifted Research Group Inc. (LRG), is a streetwear brand that was created in order to bridge the gap between skateboarding and hip hop, which at the time of creation had not been done before, and is now a globally recognized brand. This division operates out of Mad Engine's branded office located in the heart of Orange County, California. Along with LRG, Mad Engine acquired in May 2017 the brand Neff Headwear, which is also held in the Orange County office. Neff is known for their iconic youth-focused headwear, accessory, and apparel brand famous for beanies, hats, snow accessories, and whimsical, on trend graphic t-shirts.

Mad Engine is excited to announce their fourth acquisition in August of 2017, Mighty Fine Inc, which is housed in their Glendale office. Joining forces with Mighty Fine also allows Mad Engine to contend in the Juniors apparel space – an incredible quick-turn and competitive arena. It is with Mighty Fine's expertise in design, lead by SVP of design and merchandise Sara Scargall, that Mad Engine is now one of the most well-rounded and innovative players in this market. Mad Engine continues to diversify with the addition of accessories division. The accessories division will operate in Glendale, CA with Vice President David Scalese leading the charge. Today, the accessories division is excited about its newest property, Bendy and the Ink Machine. The division will focus on bringing to market unique, high-quality accessories, on-time delivery, competitive price points, and most importantly, successful retail placement. This key initiative shows retailers and licensors that Mad Engine is now a complete one-stop-shop for all consumer products.



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Britney Spears Duets with Epic Rights

Fresh from her Las Vegas residency, “Britney: Piece of Me,” and in anticipation of her upcoming tour, multi-platinum Grammy Award-winning pop star Britney Spears will join forces with global brand management and licensing company Epic Rights to develop and launch a line of fashion and lifestyle products that reflect her personal style.

With a fragrance line with Elizabeth Arden available in more than 85 countries and her recent campaign with Kenzo, Spears and Epic Rights will continue to expand her brand presence in the marketplace globally.

Spears’ personal involvement will be in all aspects of the collection including fashion apparel, footwear, hair care, health and beauty,

exercise, electronics and home furnishings.

The anticipated retail launch for the Britney Spears lifestyle program is spring 2019.

“Epic Rights is thrilled to be partnering with Britney Spears on the development of a high-quality fashion and lifestyle program,” says Lisa Streff, executive vice president, global licensing Epic Rights. “Britney Spears is one of the biggest, legendary pop icons in the world, with numerous platinum records and awards over the last 20 years. Pulling from her artistry, business sense and dedication as a mother, this contemporary lifestyle collection will give Britney’s fans a piece of her.”

Epic Rights will also manage Spears’ e-commerce initiatives including Amazon.

Crayola Imagines New Line of Developmental Toys

Crayola has granted A1 Toys the rights to develop and produce a collection of preschool toys under the Crayola brand name.

The new toys will aim to assist in the development of cognitive, problem solving and fine motor skills in young users.

In a separate deal, Crayola and A1 Toys have inked an agreement that will see the toymaker produce Crayola Slime, a branded range of slime featuring Crayola’s colors.

“Building on the success of the Crayola Dough launch, we are excited to grow our partnership with Crayola and look forward to seeing what our second year brings,” says Scott Davis, president, A1 Toys. “Crayola Preschool will launch in the North American market and Crayola Slime will be available in more than 15 countries by this fall.”



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Zag Expands ‘Miraculous’ Program

“Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir” has announced a new slate of licensees for 2018. Zag Animation Studios, the team behind the animated series, recently announced its new line up of consumer products for the children’s program, which is Zag’s main focus for Licensing Expo 2018.

As of now, there are 300 licensed products for “Miraculous,” which is aired in five countries and clocked in more than 17 billion watch-time minutes since its premiere in 2015, says Zag.

“It’s hard to mention only one alliance we are looking forward to,” says Andre Mayer, president, global brand strategy and consumer products, Zag Animation. “2018 is to be the biggest year so far for the show.”

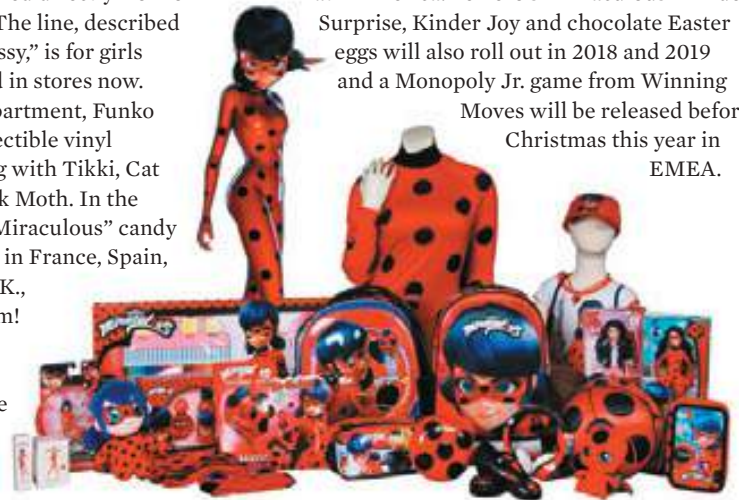
Let’s start with its digital ventures: there’s a new web series that will feature the “chibi” style versions of the series’ characters later this year, and a “Miraculous” global game

from Tab Tale, which debuted last month. In apparel, there’s Guess Kids for the Guess x Be Miraculous Ladybug Fashion kids’ capsule line, featuring designs pulled directly from or influenced by the series. The line, described by Mayer as “cool and classy,” is for girls and boys, ages 6 to 12, and in stores now.

In the collectibles department, Funko has released a trio of collectible vinyl figures including Ladybug with Tikki, Cat Noir with Plagg and Hawk Moth. In the summer, PEZ will have “Miraculous” candy dispensers at retail stores in France, Spain, Italy, Germany and the U.K., in a deal brokered by Team! License, Zag’s licensing agent in Germany.

This fall, Zag will have several ways to reach its “Miraculous” global

audience. A worldwide promotion is planned with Burger King, while a live musical based on the series is in development for Europe and Latin America. Ferrero’s “Miraculous” Kinder Surprise, Kinder Joy and chocolate Easter eggs will also roll out in 2018 and 2019 and a Monopoly Jr. game from Winning Moves will be released before Christmas this year in EMEA.



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WHAT TO EXPECT AT LICENSING EXPO 2018



Licensors, licensees, retailers and more from around the world will converge at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nev., May 22-24, for educational events, business-building opportunities and more at this year's Licensing Expo.

by **AMBER NICOLE ALSTON**

The lights of Las Vegas will fall on the licensing industry next month as Licensing Expo takes center stage at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center. Sponsored by the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association, the annual trade show will take place May 22-24 and will showcase more than 5,000 brands that reflect the latest developments in consumer trends.

The industry's definitive event will see more than 16,000 attendees, licensees, retailers, manufacturers, distributors, brand owners, licensing agents and IP holders, representing more than 65 countries, enjoy a wide selection of networking, educational and business-building opportunities.

Licensing Week will once again run concurrent with the event and will provide industry professionals forums associated with the licensing business as well as entertainment options.

"Licensing Week was born out of a desire to give our attendees a well-rounded, 360-degree experience at Licensing Expo, and this year's lineup certainly reflects this mission," says Jessica Blue, senior vice president, global licensing group, UBM. "From the VIBE activation to the networking sessions and Licensing University educational talks and content, I'm confident that anyone seeking to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the licensing world will walk away with practical tools they can immediately put to use."

New exhibitors for Licensing Expo include Country Music Association, Flying Colors Apparel, Gearbox, Members Only, Penguin Random House, Pocket watch, Swissbrand World, Tetris, TOHO, Tokidoki, U.S. Marine Corps Trademark Licensing, Van Gogh Museum and Warner Music Group, among others.

These new exhibitors join a plethora of returning exhibitors including 4K Media, Aardman Animations, Activision, American Greetings Entertainment, Atlantyca Entertainment, BBC Worldwide, Bravado International Group, BuzzFeed, CAA-GBG Global Brand Management Group, Cartoon Network Enterprises, Discovery Consumer Products, Genius Brands International, Grumpy Cat, ITV Studios Global Entertainment and more.

"Exhibiting at Licensing Expo has become a priority for brands and agents as the licensing industry realizes continued growth year-over-year. As the premier event for this market, companies understand this is the best platform to find partners who can uphold the quality and integrity of their brands," says Blue. "The diversity of brands and companies represented truly enhances the experience on our show floor, and I'm pleased that Licensing Expo effectively touches and supports the many industries and facets of the licensing world."

The rapidly changing landscape of e-commerce and customer expectations will also be on display at Licensing

Expo. Nicholas Denissen, vice president, Amazon, will deliver the opening keynote address at Licensing Expo, and will speak to how brands can grow their business online and what Amazon is doing to enable them. Denissen, as well as panelists from industry-leading companies working with Merch by Amazon, will also discuss how brand owners are capitalizing on e-commerce and reshaping their businesses to better anticipate customer appetite for unique content and a larger selection.

Following the opening keynote, this year's Licensing University will offer a more curated and dynamic schedule to better address the needs of the industry and the changing retail landscape. LIMA's Licensing University program will offer guests insight into current licensing trends as well as panels on the fundamentals of licensing, sports licensing, AR/VR technologies and more, with courses including "Trendwatch: What's the eSports Opportunity?" "Trend-Spotting and Innovation: How Do You Search for 'New'?" and "Navigating Licensing as a Small Manufacturer."

Other Licensing Week events include a score of invitation-only entertainment showcases, which will see the world's leading brands and studios host sneak previews of upcoming projects to provide industry professionals insight into future licensing opportunities; and the Agents' Business Forum, which will invite brand owners to join exhibiting licensing agents for an afternoon of networking and refreshments. Featured agents include: Brandgenuity, Licensing Works, Seltzer Licensing, Firefly Brand Management, Learfield Licensing, The Joester Loria Group, The Wildflower Group and Striker Entertainment.

Additionally, Licensing Week will provide supplementary tools for non-American and new industry players. The U.S. Department of Commerce's International Buyer Program *Select* will host a networking event to will provide exclusive insight on licensing opportunities and trends in China, Brazil, Canada and India. The *IBP Select* is a government industry initiative that offers thousands of international buyers the opportunity to come to the U.S.

for business meetings and networking opportunities with U.S. firms, exhibitors at major industry trade shows.

Meanwhile, InventHelp will introduce its Virtual Invention Browsing Experience (VIBE), which will connect enterprising brand owners and manufacturers directly with forward-thinking inventors looking to bring the newest products to market. The state-of-the-art viewing station will allow companies to privately browse ideas from InventHelp clients.

"InventHelp is thrilled to be a part of this year's Licensing Expo and to bring extra added value to its numerous attendees and exhibitors," says Ronny Smith, managing director, Intromark. "We have more than 1,400 new invention ideas that will be displayed in InventHelp's VIBE. We know from experience that many companies are looking to add to their product lines and will enjoy our interactive virtual viewing stations."

Once again, Licensing Expo will offer its Matchmaking Service to registered attendees. The Matchmaking Service allows users to seek out meetings and opportunities that suit their needs.

LIMA will also announce the winners of its annual International Licensing Excellence Awards, which showcase the industry's best in creativity and performance across all major sectors of licensing, on May 22. During the ceremony, LIMA will also recognize this year's Hall of Fame inductees—Elias Fasja-Cohen, chief executive officer and founder, Tycoon Enterprises, and Brian Goldner, chairman and chief executive officer, Hasbro.

Finally, the annual Opening Night Party, held in association with LIMA, and sponsored by The Brand Liaison, Dependable Solutions, Jelly Belly and Rovio, will take place Tuesday, May 22, at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center from 7:30-10:30 p.m. The event will celebrate the 20th anniversary of *License Global* and attendees are encouraged to "Party Like it's 1998" with retro-inspired outfits.

For more information about Licensing Expo, visit LicensingExpo.com. ©





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LICENSING EXPO

THE NEW CLASS

Meet some of the fresh faces that will be exhibiting on the Licensing Expo floor this year.

by **AMBER NICOLE ALSTON**

Another year, another Licensing Expo filled with exciting prospects. Licensors, IP holders, agents and other industry professionals will take to the Mandalay Bay Convention Center show floor, and among them, are a roster of fresh, new faces who represent apparel, music and everything in between. Here are 10 new exhibitors you won't want to miss.

Country Music Association Booth #C102

Founded in 1958, the Country Music Association was the first trade association to promote a music genre. The organization now includes more than 7,500 industry professionals who work to heighten the awareness of country music and support its ongoing growth through education and communication.



As a first-time exhibitor, the Country Music Association will spotlight its membership of country music artists as well as its roster of events including CMA Country Christmas, Forever Country, The CMA Awards and CMA Fest.

Infinity Lifestyle Brands Booth #G118



Infinity Lifestyle Brands represents a vast portfolio of fashion, home and consumer electronic brands including Starter Athletic, Pillowtex Mills Corporation, Linens & Things, Sharper Image, Polaroid and more. Specializing in the acquisition and repositioning of “mismanaged, underutilized or dormant consumer brands,” the company also owns and operates several affiliate businesses that manufacture, merchandise and distribute products worldwide.

As a first-time exhibitor, Infinity Lifestyle Brands will use Licensing Expo to further maximize the value of its consumer brands and intellectual property.

Toho Booth #R234



TOHO

Based in Japan, Toho is a film, theater and real estate company that maintains production and distribution across several platforms. The company is best known for its Godzilla property which it is working to expand across consumer product categories including mass market, novelties and collectibles. Tapping into the nostalgia associated with the franchise, Toho is looking to target larger demographics for a licensing program that covers action figures, statues, fashion and amusement parks, as well as marketing activities for the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020.

“We believe the shows are the best place to take our first step into the global market and launch an appealing licensing program. We want everyone in the global industry to have a look at the Godzilla brand, and we look forward to building and nurturing direct relationships with key licensees and retailers in the worldwide licensing business,” says Keiji Ota, chief Godzilla officer, Toho.

Gearbox Publishing Booth #U251



Founded in 2016, Gearbox Publishing allocates marketing, sales, distribution, public relation needs and more to third party developers as well as its parent company Gearbox Software (known for properties like “Borderlands” and “Duke Nukem”). Recently, the publishing group organized a new licensing team in an effort to re-launch and expand its existing licensing efforts.

As a first-time exhibitor, Gearbox Publishing will spotlight plans for its IPs and look for innovative partnerships to support its initiatives.

“We hope to find new licensees and partners who are just the right fit for each of our owned IPs,” says Erica Stead, director, licensing, Gearbox Software. “We are interested in expanding in many of the traditional categories—clothing, toys, collectibles. But we are also particularly interested in ‘new frontiers’—amusements, television, food and beverage and digital content—perhaps even avenues we haven’t yet considered. We are very open to new ideas and out-of-the-box collaborations.”



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Warner Music Artist Services

Booth #B204

Created in 2016, Warner Music Artist Services handles ancillary rights services for recording artists across the Warner Music Group label, including direct-to-fan e-commerce, fan-clubs, website design, ticketing, merchandising, marketing, account management and data research and analysis. The team looks for partners, brand collaborators and licensees that understand the connection an artist can have with a fan and appreciate both the marketing and revenue potential in creating an authentic fan-centric experience. With offices across the world's music capitals, recent projects have included Bruno Mars, Wiz Khalifa, Michael Bublé and more.

"We are a relatively new division for Warner Music Group and one of the few labels that offer these services fully in house, so we hope to bring more awareness to the artists on our roster with new global business opportunities," says Alex Kram, vice president, global consumer products, Warner Music Artist Services. "We look forward to growing our business via the diverse group of licensees and retailers attending this year's show."



WARNER MUSIC
ARTIST SERVICES

Van Gogh Museum Enterprises

Booth #C82

The Van Gogh Museum maintains the largest collection of works by artist Vincent van Gogh. The internationally recognized cultural hub has expanded into licensing through Van Gogh Museum Enterprises, a licensing arm that leverages its extensive knowledge of van Gogh's life and art to develop products and make the artist's work accessible to new audiences.

As one of the world's most recognizable bodies of work, the Van Gogh Museum has recently partnered for a variety of consumer products including postcards, puzzles, games, marketing and furniture across China, Korea, Japan, the U.S. and China.



Spin Master

Booth #O236

Spin Master is a global children's entertainment company that creates, designs, manufactures, licenses and markets a wide portfolio of toys, games, products and entertainment properties. In recent years, the company has experienced a tidal wave of success in the form of its, Hatchimals, "Paw Patrol" and "Bakugan" brands and its numerous acquisitions including rplexus Brands and Gund.

This year, Spin Master will capitalize on the excitement surrounding the Hatchimals brand, which currently holds more than 50 license agreements, and layout licensing plans around the launch of Fuggler, Toca Boca and the classic Etch-A-Sketch.

Spin Master will use Licensing Expo to "continue to build relationships with the licensing community, as well as highlight our exciting new Spin Master initiatives."



The Tetris Company

Booth #S256



Released in 1984, Tetris is an iconic video game that continues to delight global audiences across more than 50 gaming platforms. As it heads into its 35th year, the Tetris Company is readying a lineup of licensees and partners to introduce games, beauty, apparel and more in 2019.

"As we head into this historic anniversary year, and to meet the demand of the brand's ever-growing fan base, we've developed a comprehensive consumer products strategy with a keen focus on delivering merchandise and experiences that are unique to each region and culture," says Maya Rogers, president and chief executive officer, Blue Planet Software. "We're eager to grow the brand's remarkable footprint by creating meaningful opportunities for brand and licensing expansion in markets around the world."

The Tetris Company will look to expand further in the games and lifestyle products.

Penguin Random House

Booth #B96



Penguin Random House is an international publishing group with more than 250 independent publishing imprints including Penguin Classics, The Princeton Review, Alfred A. Knopf, Sylvan Learning and more.

The company will showcase a wide variety of children's properties, along with some new illustrated art brands including *Corduroy*, *Mad Libs*, *Uni the Unicorn*, *Duck and Goose*, *The Little Engine that Could*, *Dream World* and *Women in Science*.

The company has expanded licensing efforts for *Wonder*, and teamed up with Entertainment One for "Peppa Pig"-inspired books.

Major League Baseball Players Association

Booth #A208



The Major League Baseball Players Association is the collective bargaining representative for all professional baseball players of the 30 MLB teams. The organization also serves as the exclusive licensing agent for all commercial and licensing activities involving active players, which it operates through its Players Choice group licensing program. The group holds the exclusive, worldwide rights to use, license and sublicense the names, numbers, nicknames, likeness, signatures and other personal indicia across single products, brands and product lines as well as corporate sponsorship and contests.

Key product categories include baseball cards, collectibles, apparel and promotion programming, and recent collaborators include Pepsi, T-Mobile and DirecTV. The licensing program also includes special events such as the Players Choice Awards, a by-player-for-players award show.

As a first-time exhibitor, the MLBPA will look to showcase its roster of Major League players as well as its vast array of licensed goods.

LICENSING UNIVERSITY

Class is in session! Organized by the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association, Licensing University will take place during Licensing Expo.

MONDAY, MAY 21

The Basics of Licensing

9:30–11:45 a.m.

Speaker: Ira Mayer, adjunct professor, Long Island University-Post, and former publisher, *The Licensing Letter*; Gary Caplan, president, Gary Caplan Inc.; Katy Briggs, senior licensing manager, Hallmark Cards; Joanne Olds, founder and president, The Buffalo Works.

The Basics of International Licensing

12:45–2:00 p.m.

Speakers: Gisela Abrams, senior vice president, global partnerships, LIMA; Yvonne King, director, Haven Licensing; Miki Yamamoto, senior vice president, IMG Licensing Asia; and Dan Frugtniet, vice president, international licensing and business development, Viacom.

The Basics of Licensing Law

2:15–4:00 p.m.

Speakers: Greg Battersby, managing member, Battersby Law Group, and member, Licensing Industry Hall of Fame; Jed Ferdinand senior managing partner, Ferdinand IP; and Daniel Lacy, general counsel, The Performa Company.

TUESDAY, MAY 22

Reaching New Generations with Classic Icons

9:30–10:15 a.m.

Speakers: Tamra Knepper, senior vice president, Greenlight, Branded Entertainment Network; Ryan Kernan, senior vice president, merchandise licensing, Greenlight, Branded Entertainment Network; Pamela Deese, partner, Arent Fox; and Corey Salter, executive

vice president, celebrity and entertainment, and co-chief business officer, Authentic Brands Group.

Trend-Spotting and Innovation: How Do You Search for “New”?

9:30–10:15 a.m.

Speakers: Genna Rosenberg, chief executive officer, GennComm; Jeremy Padawer, co-president, Wicked Cool Toys; and Naz Amarchi-Cuevas, head of licensing, SYBO Games.

Creating and Maximizing Styleguides

10:30–11:15 a.m.

Moderator: Stan Madaloni, president, Studio 2pt0. Speakers: Tim Bankley, creative director, The Joester Loria Group; Christopher Lucero, vice president, global licensing, Sony Pictures Television; and John Van Citters, vice president, product development, CBS Consumer Products.

Trendwatch: Making the Most of Music

10:30–11:15 a.m.

Speakers: Lisa Streff, executive vice president, global licensing and branding, Epic Rights; Damon Whiteside, chief marketing officer, Country Music Association; Beth Taylor, director, licensing, Bioworld; and Trevor George, president, Trevco.

How to Evaluate Licensed Properties

11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Speakers: Woody Browne, president, Building Q; and Jason Korfine, partner, Licensing Street.

Extending a Brand into Licensed Experiences and Events

11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Moderator: Tamaya Petteaway, senior vice president, brand and licensing partnerships, Endemol Shine North America.

Speakers: Wendy Erikson, country manager, Camp MasterChef; Lisa Lehr, vice president, business development and brand marketing, RWS Entertainment Group; and Robert Tuchman, co-head, premium experience, CAA.

Trendwatch: What’s the eSports Opportunity

1:30–2:15 p.m.

Moderator: Marty Brochstein, senior vice president, LIMA.

Speakers: Daniel Siegel, head of eSports, Blizzard Entertainment; Blake Davidson, vice president, consumer innovation, NASCAR; Jon Wayne Gurman, chief executive officer, Moniker Inc. Worldwide; and Grant Zinn, chief executive officer, Beastcoast.

Finding and Working with Agents and Consultants

1:30–2:15 p.m.

Moderator: Karen Raugust, founder, Raugust Communications.

Speakers: Rita Bonnell Illig, president, RBA Associates; and Ilana Wilensky, president, Jewel Branding and Licensing.

Unique Challenges of Branding and Licensing in the Growing Cannabis Industry

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Speakers: Chris Folkerts, chief executive officer, Grenko

Science; Greg Hill, founder, BrandBirth; Darren Karasuik, vice president, strategy, MedReleaf; Kellen O'Keefe, senior vice president, development, MedMen; and David Schneider, partner, Nolan Heimann.

Case Study: "Peppa Pig"—Extending a U.K. Hit to the Global Marketplace **2:30–3:00 p.m.**

Speakers: Andrew Carley, executive vice president, global brands, Entertainment One; and Joan Grasso, senior vice president, licensing, North America, Entertainment One.

Case Study: Strategic Licensing Framework for Global Food and Beverage Brands—Unilever Ice Cream **2:30–3:00 p.m.**

Speakers: Julie Mcleave, global licensing director, Unilever; and Stu Seltzer, president, Seltzer Licensing

How to Negotiate a Licensing Deal **3:15–4:00 p.m.**

Moderator: Joleen Hughes, managing director, Hughes Media Law.
Speaker: Steven Heller, president, The Brand Liaison.

Licensing in a Direct-to-Consumer World **3:15–4:00 p.m.**

Speaker: Veronica Hart, senior vice president, CBS Consumer Products.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23

Licensing Roundtables: Session One **8:00–9:45 a.m.**

Speakers: Leigh Ann Schwarzkopf, co-founder, Project Partners Network; Lee McEnany Caraher, chief executive officer, Double Forte; Johnathan Symington, chief executive officer and founder, The Lantic Group; Vincent Leoni, partner, Miller Kaplan Arase; Susie Lecker, global brand officer, Mattel; Duncan Hamilton, director of sales, business development and licenses, Devar Entertainment; and Carol Feeley, creative manager, Beacon Creative.

Licensing Roundtables: Session Two **10:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**

Speakers: Lewis Stark, partner, PragerMetis; Mike Slusar, partner, Brandar Consulting; David Schmidt, chief pain reliever and operating officer, TPH Global Solutions; Jim Sachs, partner, Harris-Sachs; Stephanie Pottick, principal, Pottick Law; Juergen Mathwich, co-founder, Authentic Vision; Randy Malone, partner, Brandar Consulting; and Thomas Ferguson, vice president, licensing partnerships, Endemol Shine North America.

Case Study: "Five Nights at Freddy's" **11:00–11:30 a.m.**

Speaker: Marc Mostman, partner, Striker Entertainment.

The Shape of Toy Retailing in a Changed World **12:30–1:30 p.m.**

Speakers: Stephanie Wissink, managing director and senior research analyst, consumer products, Jefferies; Eva Lorenz, general manager, toys and games, Amazon.com; and David Conn, chief executive officer, ThreeSixty Brands.

Unexpected Brands in Lifestyle Licensing **1:30–2:15 p.m.**

Speakers: Jennifer Arnoldt, senior director, retail engagement and experience, Taco Bell; Julie Ann Quay, founder and chief executive officer, VFILES; Allison Ames, president and chief executive officer, Beanstalk; and Shane Grogan, senior licensing manager, Diageo.

How to License Artwork **1:30–2:15 p.m.**

Speaker: Paul Cohen, partner, creative licensing division, The Brand Liaison; Eric Morse, senior vice president, partnerships and general manager, global licensing Redbubble; Julie Smith, chief marketing officer, the Lang Companies; and Debra Valencia, artist, product designer and entrepreneur, Debra Valencia Lifestyle Brand.

Case Study: How a University Deals with Game Day Counterfeiting **2:30–3:00 p.m.**

Speaker: Steve Fuller, associate director, trademarks and licensing, University of Southern California.

Case Study: Keeping a Classic Property Fresh and Relevant **2:30–3:00 p.m.**

Speaker: Roz Nowicki, executive vice president, Peanuts Worldwide.

Case Study: Brand Collaboration **3:15–3:45 p.m.**

Speaker: David Lee, director, licensing, MillerCoors.

Case Study: Licensing into the Service Sector **3:15–3:45 p.m.**

Speaker: Sondra Newkirk, senior director, brand licensing, Meredith Corporation.

Navigating Licensing as a Small Manufacturer **4:00–4:45 p.m.**

Moderator: Steve Rollins, senior vice president, Rock'em Apparel.
Speakers: Andy Friess, president, Friess Marketing Group; Ricky Medina, senior manager, licensing and business development, NFL Players Inc.; and Scott Halpern, licensing director, World Wrestling Entertainment.

Tracking and Dealing with Counterfeits **4:00–4:45 p.m.**

Speaker: Courtney Donovan, licensing coordinator, New Era; Bill Patterson, vice president, global marketing, OpSec Security; and Christina Rowley, vice president, licensing, NYC & Co.

THURSDAY, MAY 24

Tapping into the Power of Micro-Influencers **9:00–9:45 a.m.**

Speaker: Natalie Cupps DiBiasi, co-founder, Laced Interactive.

Adjusting to Fashion's New Pace **9:00–9:45 a.m.**

Moderator: Andrea Spellman, head of new business, WGSN.
Speakers: Chris Vaccarino, chief executive officer, Fanjoy; Patricia Mercer, director, licensing, CAA-GBG; and Simon Douek, vice president, lifestyle brands, Infinity Group.

What Every Licensing Pro Should Know About Royalty Rates **10:00–10:45 a.m.**

Speakers: Louis Drogin, partner, Brandgenuity; James MacIntosh, vice president, general manager, global feminine protection and infant care products, Edgewell Personal Care; Sashim Parmanand, chief executive officer, One Animation; and Steve Scebelo, vice president, licensing and business development, NFL Players Inc.

FutureTech: New Technologies that will Affect Licensing (i.e. AR/VR, voice, etc.) **10:00–10:45 a.m.**

Speakers: David Uy, co-founder, chief executive officer, BLMP Network; Holly Rawlinson, head, marketing, licensing and merchandising, FanShop, Fandango; and Mark Caplan, principal, BD Labs.

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MARKET REPORT: CHINA

Everything in China is big—including its economy. The country is experiencing a fast expansion in every way. How will it effect the global licensing industry?

by SEAN MCGRATH

For the vast majority of recorded history, China was home to the largest economy on the planet. It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution that efficiency of agricultural production accelerated faster than population growth, allowing the average income to rise for the first time in history. This fundamental shift in economic law enabled the West

to become a dominant force for the next 180 years.

But in recent years, the pendulum has started to swing. Since initiating major market reforms in 1978, China has experienced economic growth, the likes of which have not been witnessed since the Industrial Revolution—the value of Chinese trade has doubled every four to five years, according to the World Bank. Even during the financial crisis, with financial institutions failing and most economies pushed into recession, China continued to have one of the highest rates of economic growth across the globe and has remained the largest contributor to world growth since the global financial crisis of 2008.

The social impact of China's economic expansion has been profound. Most notably, some 800 million people have been lifted out of poverty—more than 12 times the total population of the U.K.

But this rapid economic ascendency has also brought many challenges. Per capita income is still a fraction of that in advanced countries, and approximately 55 million remain in poverty, more than the entire population of South Korea. Problems such as inequality, rapid urbanization, environmental issues and an aging population continue to plague the country.

By far the biggest challenge facing China is that of forming a sustainable model for economic stability. The transition from a middle-income to a high-income economy is often more challenging than the transition from a low-income to middle-income economy. While China's economic growth remains impressive by global standards, it has gradually slowed since 2012, and significant policy adjustments are required if the



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nation is to expand on its recent achievements.

To achieve stability, China needs to move away from the low-wage, high-exports model of yesteryear to a balanced economy where domestic spending plays a greater role. In order to successfully manage such a transition, China needs to boost consumption and it is through this prism that the retails and brand licensing markets are so interesting.

Retail Snapshot

Retail has played a major role in China's economic growth as the country continues its transformation journey. Consumption contributed to nearly 60 percent of China's economic expansion in 2017, according to the country's National Bureau of Statistics.

China has now become the world's second largest retail and consumer market, only following the U.S. Retail sales of consumer goods grew 10 percent, exceeding 36 trillion yuan (\$5.69 trillion) in 2017. Disposable personal income has increased 130 percent since 2008, a 10-year period in which most developed nations have seen wages stagnate.

Middle-class consumers in China, estimated to be somewhere in the region of 430 million strong, are becoming increasingly influential in the retail sector. McKinsey & Company estimates that more



than 75 percent of China's urban consumers will earn between ¥60,000 and ¥229,000 per year by 2022.

While China has established itself as a leader in e-commerce, brick-and-mortar stores continue to prosper too. Sales in China's malls have increased an average of 8 percent for the past three years. The country also added 5.75 million-square-meters of retail space last year, according to property services company CBRE.

The continued expansion of brick-and-mortar has presented a clear opportunity for global brands and retailers such as Zara, H&M and Adidas as they continue to ramp up their presence across the country.

E-commerce

Online spending continues to be the shining star in China's retail story. E-commerce saw sales jump 32 percent to ¥7.18 trillion in 2017. Chinese e-commerce has exploded, averaging a 43 percent increase each year for the past five years. Online sales now account for about a fifth of total retail in the region.

Alibaba and its rival JD.com accounted for roughly 80 percent of consumer e-commerce sales between them.

More than 40 percent of all licensed sales now come from online purchases—the highest for any country, according to statistics from the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association (LIMA).



Licensing in China

Considering China is now the second largest economy and consumer market in the world, it holds relatively little sway over the licensing market.

The country saw \$8.072 billion of licensed merchandise sales in 2016, according to LIMA's 2017 Global Study, placing it fifth on the global stage, behind the U.S., U.K., Japan and Germany. Compared to the U.S.' \$144.5 billion worth of



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sales, China remains a small fish in a very large pond. Given the sheer scale of the Chinese economy and consumer market, China is the most under-exploited market of them all and presents a clear opportunity for global licensors.

While the nation's share of the global licensing market remains relatively minute, China's rate of revenue growth is outpacing every other country on earth. In 2016, licensed revenues grew 6 percent year-over-year, compared to 5 percent in the U.S., 5 percent in Japan and 4 percent in Germany.

Despite the relatively immature market, there are a few licensed property types in which China punches well above its weight. For example, the country has the second largest publishing sector, with \$289 million in licensed sales in 2017. It is also the third largest contributor to celebrity property sales and the third largest for fashion.

Imports vs. Exports: Overcoming Challenges

With more than 50 million Chinese people living overseas, the potential for China to export brands globally is significant. While the export market remains relatively subdued for now, there is certainly a growing appetite for licensed products and content around the world. For example, the cartoon character Luo Bao Bei has already earned more than 1 billion yuan (\$156.8 million) in gross income from overseas licensing deals. Its producer Hangzhou MagicMall

Animation Production has signed licensing agreements with broadcasters in Australia, France, Italy and the U.S.

However, it is the U.S. and European brands that stand to gain the most by tapping into China's burgeoning middle class. While the potential rewards



are great, so are the challenges. Cultural differences, market conditions and government regulations all pose significant barriers for companies seeking to operate in China. On top of this, the country is often criticized for its lack of legislative protections for intellectual property, as well as widespread counterfeiting activities.

These barriers have the potential to undermine the value of licensing deals and have undoubtedly stunted the growth of the licensing market over the years; however, the potential market is so significant that China has taken significant measures to make the country a more attractive option for foreign brands.

Since joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), the country has strengthened its commitments to IP protection and the National People's Congress has established a framework of laws, regulations and departmental rules to tackle trademark violations.

As a result, nearly 87,000 copyright cases were filed in China last year, a 15-fold increase from 2006.

Key Markets

Over the past 20 years, China has become a linchpin in the global supply chain. From low-end toys to high-end electronics, the words "Made in China" can be found across products in every corner of the globe. The country makes 63 percent of the world's shoes, more than 70 percent of the world's smartphones, 80 percent of the world's energy saving light bulbs and provides 80 percent of the world's solar capacity. The nation has built a reputation as a low-cost powerhouse, which has seen it become the largest exporter of goods on planet.

The irony? As China continues its transformation to a consumer-based economy, there is now a domestic demand for the goods it is famed for manufacturing and exporting. As wages continue to grow, manufacturing margins have been squeezed and many companies are now looking to countries like India to maintain the low-cost production of goods.

Meanwhile, the country's burgeoning middle-class is looking for new ways to spend its disposable income. Foreign licensors are acutely aware that this new market of Chinese consumers represents a lucrative opportunity and are looking for ways to capitalize on it. There are several product categories that are proving to be key markets for licensors in China.

Fashion

The global fashion accessory manufacturing industry has significantly grown over the past five years as a result of overall improving economic conditions,

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and nowhere is this trend more apparent than China. The country generated \$1.68 billion in licensed revenues for fashion accessories in 2016, making it the second largest market, behind only the U.S.

Demand for higher priced luxury products has also led many Europe-based accessory companies to shift their focus to emerging markets such as China, and global revenues for fashion accessories have grown at an annualized rate of more than 5 percent as a direct result.

Despite the strong growth for accessories, China remains a relatively untapped market for foreign players. For example, China is the second largest market for jewelry in the world, yet imports only account for 6.2 percent of domestic Chinese demand.

Toys

Toys remain the largest licensed product category in China, with \$1.85 billion of licensed retail sales in 2016. As household income has increased, domestic toy demand grew an average of 8 percent per year between 2012 and 2016. China remains the largest manufacturer and exporter of toy products, producing over 70 percent of the world's total.

For many Western nations, China is something of a paradox. They struggle to comprehend how a country

can be both communist and hyper-capitalist at the same time. But the truth is, this is just the tip of the paradoxical iceberg. China contradicts almost every facet of socioeconomic convention. It is an undisputed global superpower, yet struggles to generate enough energy to power its cities. It holds \$1 trillion in U.S. debt, but its per capita GDP remains roughly one-tenth of the U.S. It invests more each year in renewable power than any other country, but the skies above its cities remain encircled by smog.

When one looks at the licensing market through this enigmatic lens, the possibilities are both finite and endless. China has more relatively affluent consumers than any other nation on earth, the retail market is growing faster than most any other domestic sector and as the government begins to ease restrictions on global trade, a generation of Millennials are hungry for global brands.

At the same time, the barrier to enter the market for global licensors is much higher than other more mature markets. Despite a marked effort from the government to bring the Chinese licensing market in line with its Western counterparts, significant barriers remain.

Those that can successfully overcome these challenges in the coming years will have access to the most under-exploited and potentially lucrative licensing market to-date. ©





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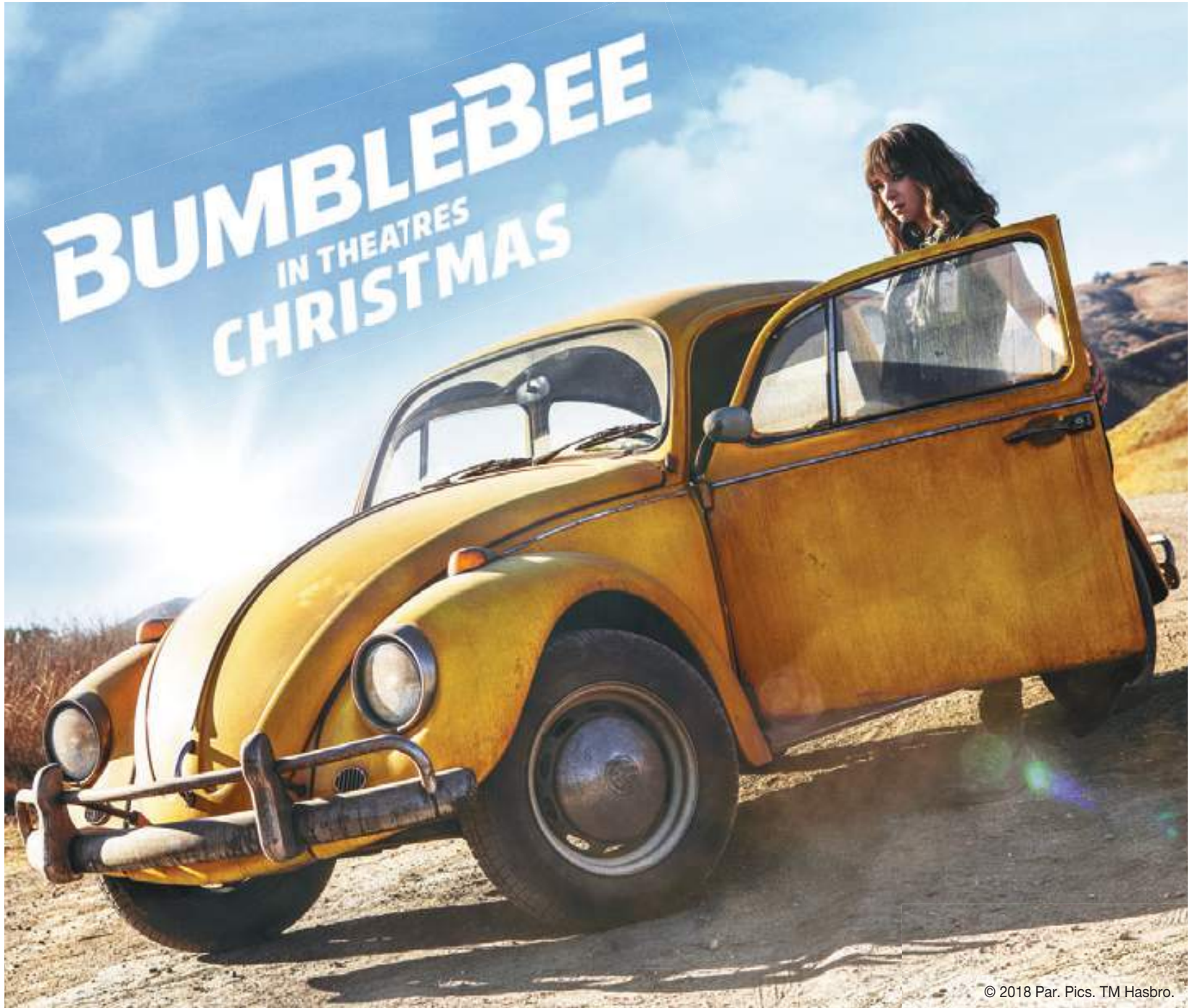
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Uniquely Universal

Universal Brand Development's Vince Klaseus has organized an infrastructure that builds global brands from a distinctly Universal point-of-view.

by AMANDA CIOLETTI

Universal Brand Development's Vince Klaseus is a busy man. As president, Klaseus is charged with overseeing Universal's ever-growing portfolio of brand-building divisions—consumer products, games and digital platforms and live events—a structure that has only come about in the past few years.

Klaseus joined parent company NBCUniversal in fall 2014 at a time when the studio's consumer products business was primed for an overhaul. To give his vast transformation some additional context, NBCUniversal came in at No. 34 on *License Global's* annual Top 150 Global Licensors report in 2014, with a reported \$1.75 billion in retail sales of consumer products. Flash forward to 2018, and NBCUniversal, for which Universal Brand Development drives the revenue for the ranking, is No. 4, reporting \$7.3 billion.

Walk into Universal, headquartered in North Hollywood, Calif., just in the shadow of the famed Universal Studios theme park, and you'll find a completely different organization than pre-Klaseus, with a scale and breadth that rivals any other world-class licensor. And now, thanks to some critical and strategic planning, the organization is perfectly positioned to cement its status as a veritable content powerhouse with sweeping

demographic appeal, from young to old, in all corners of the world.

Klaseus joined Universal post-finalization of the major Comcast buyout in 2013, which gave the combined media monolith not only the entertainment people enjoy, but also the means to get it into their homes, and creating an organization that Comcast chief executive officer Brian Roberts then called “the ideal entertainment and distribution company,” and marking the first time a traditional cable company effected full control of a content broadcast network.

Klaseus' pedigree prepared him for the undertaking. He began his career in 1995 at Mattel, later moving to The Walt Disney Studios for a dozen years, helping to launch iconic franchises such as *Cars*. Post Disney, Klaseus served as the chief executive officer of Cartwheel Kids.

So then, armed with a backing from the greater organization and up to the task, Klaseus walked through the doors of NBCU and shook up the foundation.

First things first, Klaseus changed the consumer products division's name from Universal Partnerships and Licensing, which relied on more traditional, promotionally-based business, to what it's known as today—Universal Brand Development. It's a move that is important as it set the tone



VINCE KLASEUS
president, Universal Brand Development



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for what Klaseus envisioned for the future.

“One of the very first things I did was change the name to reinforce the change of mission and what we were trying to do at the end of the day,” says Klaseus. “At Universal Brand Development, we identify the IP and help build brands from the wider company and translate it into franchises. The change has been pretty dramatic and unprecedented in terms of where we were and where we are today. I can’t think of another entertainment company that has gone through this kind of transformation in such a short period of time.”

So brick-by-brick, Klaseus and his team embarked on the construction of a new organization, rebuilt from the ground, up, completely renovating the new venture from floor to ceiling, systems to infrastructure.

But Klaseus needed a solid foundation, and identified the need to establish a franchise management team, something he says had not existed in the film company’s 100-plus years.

“I needed a team and a process in place that would take Universal’s IP and strategically build it out across the company—as well as outside the company—and transform it into a brand, whether it’s an event or the isolated medium of television,” he says. “We took a uniquely Universal approach. The franchise management team is straddled between the Universal Brand Development group and the film group, and takes an approach that is collaborative and coordinated between key divisions that have a touchpoint in the brand to create a narrative that supports and builds an integrated approach for expansion.”

David O’Connor was tapped to lead that piece, and serves as executive vice president, franchise management and brand strategy.

Klaseus also needed to establish a formalized consumer products group, and set a precedent

for how business, and subsequently new revenue streams, would build for the future.

“The consumer products program was and remains one of the biggest opportunities for the company,” says Klaseus. “What we did was create a virtual consumer products company. And I say ‘virtual’ because although we don’t directly manufacture, we built all of the disciplines—the retail organization, the category organization and a robust product development organization with experts from the industry, disciplines and brands—and then tasked them to work hand-in-hand with Universal partners. It’s really and truly a collaborative effort. It’s taking the passive experience out.”

In North America, Joe Lawandus is charged with overseeing the consumer products business as senior vice president and general manager.

The Universal consumer products group creates multi-category products that span toys and hard lines, fashion, homewares, food, health and beauty, stationery and publishing.

But being as Universal properties have global, and therefore widespread, appeal, the international component quickly became critical. Phase two, then? Open up new territory offices.

Boots on the ground are very much in the DNA of the new Universal, and offices in all major territories, from China to EMEA and Latin America, were and are essential. And so, in 2015, Klaseus opened the first dedicated Universal office in China, which he says had absolutely “zero volume” on day one but now is a significant driver of revenue with huge growth potential ahead of it. Today, Universal has 14 offices covering 22 countries, with strong agent partnerships around the world.

“The international piece is very interesting and will continue to be a growth opportunity for us,”





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says Klaseus. “As much ground as we’ve covered already, there remains a lot of opportunity out there for us. As the initial offices mature and capabilities increase, we’ll continue to expand and dive into the international specifics—we see a huge runway.”

The first wave of Universal offices opened in Japan, Benelux and the G5, with the rest opening over the last 12 months.

Marc Low, senior vice president and general manager, has been tasked with overseeing consumer products internationally.

“Our global consumer products business unit has grown exponentially over the last two years, both in the U.S. and international territories. As we continue to expand our business both creatively and categorically, both Joe and Marc have the proven ability to amplify both our businesses and partner relationships as we set new benchmarks for the future,” said Klaseus at the time of both Lawandus and Low’s appointments.

And then it was time to work on the meat and potatoes, so to speak, and focus on building content engines that fuel the heart of Universal. Enter phase three... build a strong kids and family business filled with evergreen and new properties.

This began with the partnership and collaboration with Illumination Entertainment for the release of *Despicable Me* in 2010, and then in 2016 Universal bought DreamWorks Animation, a critical move, says Klaseus, for the entertainment studio’s total portfolio of business.

“The DreamWorks acquisition was a strategic move because Universal’s business is a family business, and what we needed was more IP and more content engines,” he says. “What came out of that particular acquisition was an additional content creation studio and

a TV engine for kids—two incredible sources for us.”

Today, NBCU’s DreamWorks is one of the world’s largest producers of children’s animated television series, as well as the owner of a vast vault of classic properties that span everything from entertainment to publishing including *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, “Noddy,” *Pat the Bunny*, *Where’s Waldo?*, “Voltron,” “VeggieTales,” “Lassie,” *Little Golden Books* and so much more.

“DreamWorks has 20 series in production—the output and quality is mind-boggling,” says Klaseus. “What DreamWorks unlocks is new IP and also gives us a sustaining vehicle to keep the bigger franchises alive.”

Feature animation will continue to play a huge role in the Universal business development plan as it taps into the ramp up in production the studio has slated.

Beginning in 2020, NBCUniversal will consistently develop three to four animated films per year.

“2020 will be a big leap for us when we ramp up dramatically,” says Klaseus. “That starts mapping out another big growth trajectory going forward.”

Upcoming animated films on deck from Illumination include *The Grinch*, out this holiday season; *The Secret Life of Pets 2*, due next year; and *Minions 2* and *Sing 2*, both out in 2020. DreamWorks releases include *How to Train Your Dragon 3* for spring 2019, and *Trolls* returns in 2020 with a sequel.

“The mission is to build a larger kids and family business, which is also part of the larger company’s mission as a whole,” says Klaseus. “And a part of that is to build these big, global franchises. All hands are on deck and leaning into that. You’ll start seeing it take shape from the various content pieces that roll out, as well as coordination within the company among its different units.”

With this ramped up production schedule and





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with a sophisticated global organization to support, also comes a more refined approach to products, particularly for Illumination's *Minions 2*, says Klaseus.

"For *Minions*, we'll lean into the fashion-forward, trend-driven elements of the brand to deliver products or experiences," he says. "We're refining our approach."

But Universal is not limited to just kids and family entertainment. Scripted and non-scripted television, films and horror, as well as the deep Universal Vault (known colloquially as the U-Vault) offer a huge portfolio of properties to exploit.

From "American Ninja Warrior" and "Battlestar Galactica" in the adult TV space to DreamWorksTV kids' series like "Troll Hunters" and "Spirit," heritage films like *E.T.* and *Back to the Future* in the U-Vault and content under the Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment and Classic Media banner, the opportunities for brand development are seemingly endless.

An interesting opportunity, says Klaseus, is horror, which Universal can tap into for products and brand development under its partnership with Blumhouse, a production house hyper-focused on micro-budget films such as the *Paranormal Activity* and *The Purge* franchises.

As part of building a more modern, forward-thinking business, Klaseus says digital and data is a big investment for Universal now and into the future, and one where internal resources are heavily being allocated.

"It's such a fragmented market out there that you have to look at the world differently," says Klaseus. "There's not a silver bullet anymore. This omni-platform approach is where you need to be. We'll continue to invest our internal resources into places like our own DreamWorksTV on

YouTube, Games Network or in our robust partnerships with companies like Netflix, Amazon and Walmart.com.

"You have to be everywhere where that customer wants you to be or expects you to be," continues Klaseus. "It's getting increasingly more complicated. Oftentimes, it requires a different product set or content set, as well as marketing, which is also more investment. It's hyper-localization at its best. You have to have the sophistication internally, the right resources and the right people to make that map for the future."

The upping of sophistication is a thread that runs throughout everything Klaseus is doing to take the Universal business to the next level, including its gaming component, or phase four.

Last year, Universal announced it was strategically focusing on gaming and building an internal organization with the capabilities to self-publish its own mobile titles, giving the company a more direct role in the creative, development, marketing and distribution of games based on its wealth of IP. Chris Heatherly, executive vice president, games and digital platforms, was tapped to oversee the sub-division, Universal Games.

"We have moved rapidly into building up those capabilities right now, hiring, on-boarding, building up systems, all of the things that come with that business, which is a unique animal in its own right," says Klaseus.

A year on, and the company's efforts are yielding results as gaming titles begin to roll out largely tied to the upcoming *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* film launch, hitting theaters next month. The first title to debut under this new strategic focus is a location-based mobile game, titled "*Jurassic World Alive*," which also





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capitalizes on augmented reality technology. “*Jurassic World Evolution*,” a licensed console game available for PC, PlayStation 4 and Xbox One with narration from actor Jeff Goldblum, is also set to debut. More announcements are to come for mobile titles in particular.

Universal is also taking an active role in moving the gaming industry forward and innovating in the space. At the Game Developers Conference, which took place in March in San Francisco, Universal Games, in partnership with Unity Technologies, announced the Universal GameDev Challenge, sponsored by Intel and Microsoft. The challenge invited developers from around the world to submit game designs and pitches based on Universal IP for a chance to win a \$250,000 cash prize and the opportunity to be published.

“This is a great example of how we’re trying to think differently about this business,” says Klaseus. “We want to innovate and be first to market because the world is changing so rapidly, and you have to. You can’t follow suit. The old model of pulling the pages out of what we have done in the past is not going to work. We’re really trying to be, internally and externally, a partner and a model that is willing to take risks and do things differently.”

The last step Klaseus and Universal has taken to transform and round out the world-class organization is to fully-form a live events group, led by Carol Nygren.

Through immersive experiences, the live entertainment component of Universal focuses on creating experiential extensions around NBCU IP. Pairing with best-in-class partners, the group

produces exclusive touring entertainment.

Klaseus says the live entertainment group’s offerings will start to roll out next year, first with the “*Jurassic World Live*” arena tour, in partnership with Feld Entertainment. “*Jurassic World Live*” will bring a herd of life-size dinosaurs—some up to 40-feet long—to the stage in a production that will kick off in fall 2019 in the U.S. and later tour around the world.

“Experiences is a movement that families and young adults are looking for. For us, it’s a great touchpoint and engagement vehicle, and of course a new revenue stream,” says Klaseus.

For Klaseus and Universal, growth has come at a dizzying and sometimes frenetic pace, but it’s one that is thoughtful all the while and on par with the greater organizations goal—to bring quality entertainment into the lives and homes of its fans.

“The drum that we have been beating since we walked in the door is that we are creating a best-in-class organization,” says Klaseus. “The company has some wonderful attributes to draw on such as integrity, collaboration and creativity—we’ve pulled and drawn on that hard to distill down how we’ve built this team.

“There is a lens that we look through that speaks to that and reiterates why we specifically called our group Universal Brand Development... it is because we feel that products and experiences truly are great touchpoints and engagement vehicles,” he continues. “They’re great revenue drivers and robust businesses unto themselves, as well, but at the end of the day they help build and expand powerful brands.” ©



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PAM WESTMAN
head, Nelvana Enterprises

POISED FOR GROWTH

Nelvana is gearing up for another big year as it prepares to celebrate the 40th anniversary of “Max and Ruby,” introduce new brands to the market and bring its existing properties into new territories.

by **ERICA GARBER**

License Global spoke with Pam Westman, head, Nelvana Enterprises, about the company’s biggest initiatives for 2018, its plans for the future and how it hopes to achieve them.

What will be Nelvana’s major focus for Licensing Expo and the remainder of 2018?

We have three major objectives for 2018, all of which will be featured at Licensing Expo. First and foremost, we will be focusing on our Nelvana-owned properties such as “Ranger Rob” and “Mysticons,” and expanding their reach into key international markets, so we’re really looking to bring agents and licensing partners on board for some of the areas that we don’t already have.

Next we’ll be expanding into the digital world and really playing around with licensing and digital properties. “Bravest Warriors,” for example, started on YouTube and we’re now creating a series to take linear. This is a really niche property that targets an older demographic. So how do we create a licensing program around that? We’re looking to target retailers like Hot Topic as well as Comic-Con-niche licensees.

For the younger age group in digital, the focus will be on our Soft’n Slo Squishies digital shorts. We’ll be licensing the property at Licensing Expo and will likely be announcing four major apparel licensees. The brand is very trend-based, and we are thinking about how we get product into market quickly. It’s a different feel for us in terms of delving into that part of the licensing world.

The third focus will be on our agency business in Canada and France. We represent properties like

“Peppa Pig” and “PJ Masks,” as well as Cartoon Network, in Canada, and we’re going to expand our licensing portfolio in a big way right before Licensing Expo, so we’re really looking at becoming the premier licensing agent in France and Canada.

As ‘Max & Ruby’ heads into its 40th anniversary, what categories and new initiatives are you planning that will help grow and expand the brand?

“Max and Ruby” has had continual support from Nickelodeon, a fantastic broadcast platform, as well as Treehouse here in Canada; however, we haven’t really had any licensed product outside of some publishing and some categories and products like vitamins, which have lasted through the years. So how do we revitalize that? We’re going to use the 40th anniversary to make a product that really matches what “Max and Ruby” is in today’s world—we’re going to have a new publishing program, specialty toys and apparel that will be driven by new content and characters. We’re also going to wrap that up into special anniversary plans that will hopefully kick start “Max and Ruby” back into the licensing arena.

Nelvana recently picked up the Soft’n Slo Squishies toy brand, what will the consumer product program look like? What is that timeline?

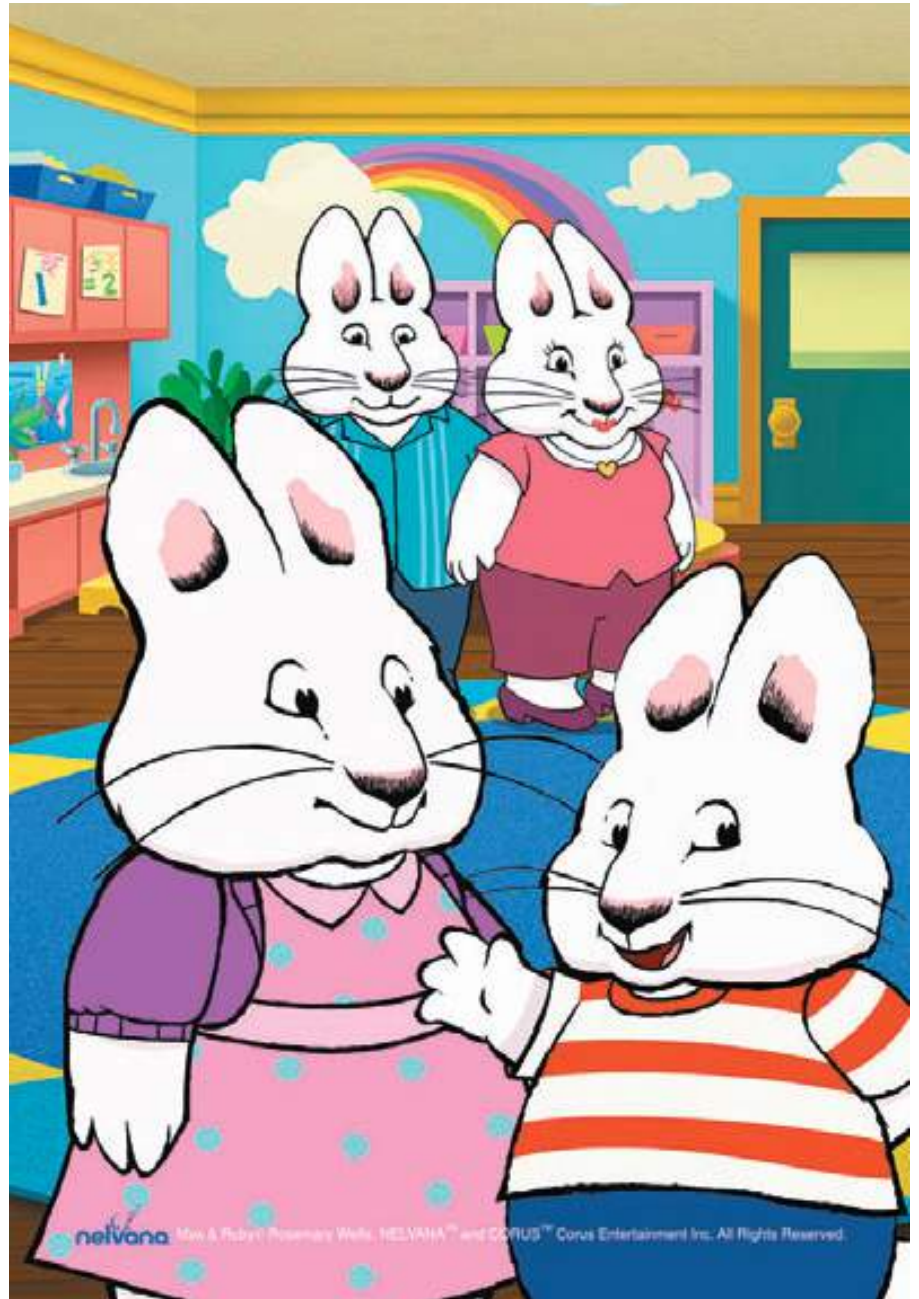
We recently released our first Soft’n Slo Squishies digital short on YouTube and it’s already gaining a lot of traction, which is fantastic. It is a real trend-based item, so we’re looking at getting key partners on board, which we’re very close to signing, and getting into retail quickly. We’ve had some great response from retail after our partners approached them, and we’re talking to major mass retailers in both the U.S. and Canada because that’s really where the squishy trend is right now.

We’re going to start off with apparel, accessories, sleepwear and more, which we’ll launch at mass merchants where it makes sense, as well as at retailers that specialize in the girls, age 8- to 12-years-old, demographic.

The timeline to launch is currently set for fall, and we’re going to ride it as long as the squishy trend goes. Soft’n Slo Squishies isn’t like “Max and Ruby,” it’s a trend that has maybe a two-year window and needs to get into the market quickly.

What is the strategy for “Ranger Rob?”

For “Ranger Rob,” we’re focusing on product that is coming out this fall. The show has been on Treehouse in Canada for a couple of years, and we have some great broadcast partners in the U.K., France and Germany. We’re just about to announce a new broadcaster in Latin America as well. So, we’re going to be looking at creating programs



within those individual regions that really match the kind of supportive viewership and fan base that the show has.

When we look at expanding into larger territories like the U.S. where the show just launched on Hulu and NBCUniversal’s Sprout, we need to let that gestate a bit before we expand outside of the aforementioned regions. That will really allow us to create product, test it and to see what works.



What is Nelvana’s international presence like? How are its properties performing?

We actually have an amazing presence internationally, especially in Europe due to our office in Paris, which has a strong consumer products licensing team. They are actively working on “Mysticons” and “Ranger Rob,” as well as some third-party agency deals like “Beyblade,” which they’re doing amazing with.

Our consumer products licensing team in France is very well established, but we want to focus on expanding into and re-focusing our attention on the U.K., Australia, Latin America and Asia.

In the U.K., we recently signed a deal with FremantleKids, which was bought by Boat Rocker, to be our agent, and they’re already ramping up “Max and Ruby,” “Mysticons” and “Ranger Rob” in the territory.

Hopefully by Licensing Expo we will announce a new partner in Australia, which we’re very excited about having on board. We’re also focusing on partnerships in China and Japan.

Looking ahead to 2019 and beyond, what are the key factors that will position Nelvana for growth?

Nelvana has an enviable position in that we’re a very important division within the Corus world, and Corus owns

all of the major broadcasters in Canada including the top five kids’ channels in Canada: Treehouse, YTV, Disney, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network. Due to this, one of our strengths is leveraging our broadcast assets as well as expertise in licensing and merchandising to offer property owners the opportunity to take advantage of all our assets within the marketplace. I think that’s really one of the key factors that will help position us for growth. It will also help us in ways like expanding into digital shorts and content.

Our agency business is also an area of growth for us.

Have you added any new team members to support this growth?

We’ve had a little bit of a re-organization here in the last few months and we’ve put more resources and focus into our consumer products business.

In doing so, we were able to convince Mellany Masterson to come back. She’s heading up our consumer products division and has amazing experience in the digital world as well as the toy business. She’s hit the ground running and is aggressively growing our presence within the licensing community globally.

We’re looking at a really exciting Licensing Expo and the rest of the year, so we’re really happy to have her on board. ©

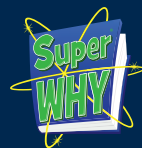


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2018 Flick Pics

License Global's annual "Flick Pics" feature notes the upcoming films and TV series—hitting screens big and small—that are ripe for licensing and consumer product deals. **by PATRICIA DELUCA**

Title & Release Date	Synopsis	Licensees & Partners
<p>NBCUniversal</p>		
<p>DreamWorks Animation</p>		
<p>How to Train Your Dragon 3 March 1, 2019</p>	<p>From DreamWorks Animation comes the continuation of one of the most beloved animated franchises. As Hiccup fulfills his dream of creating a peaceful dragon utopia, Toothless' discovery of an untamed, elusive mate draws the Night Fury away. When danger mounts at home and Hiccup's reign as village chief is tested, both dragon and rider must make impossible decisions to save their kind. For this film, series director Dean DeBlois returns alongside the all-star cast.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>Trolls 2 April 17, 2020</p>	<p>Can't stop the feeling as the wondrous Trolls return for DreamWorks <i>Trolls 2</i>, the follow-up to 2016's global hit about how far you'll go for happiness... and how far you'll go to get it back. Anna Kendrick and Justin Timberlake reprise their roles as the eternal optimist Poppy and the curmudgeon Branch in the new musical comedy-adventure from the creators of <i>Shrek</i>.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>

Illumination Entertainment		
<p>Dr. Seuss' The Grinch November 9, 2018</p>	<p><i>The Grinch</i> tells the story of a cynical grump who goes on a mission to steal Christmas, only to have his heart changed by a young girl's generous holiday spirit. Funny, heartwarming and visually stunning, it's a universal story about the spirit of Christmas and the indomitable power of optimism. Academy Award nominee Benedict Cumberbatch lends his voice to the Grinch, who lives a solitary life inside a cave on Mt. Crumpet with only his loyal dog, Max, for company. With a cave rigged with inventions and contraptions for his day-to-day needs, the Grinch only sees his neighbors in Whoville when he runs out of food. Each year at Christmas they disrupt his tranquil solitude with their increasingly bigger, brighter and louder celebrations.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>The Secret Life of Pets 2 June 7, 2019</p>	<p>Illumination's <i>The Secret Life of Pets 2</i> will follow summer 2016's film about the lives our pets lead after we leave for work or school each day. Illumination founder and chief executive officer Chris Meledandri and longtime collaborator Janet Healy will produce the sequel to the comedy.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>Minions 2 July 3, 2020</p>	<p>No synopsis available.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>Sing 2 December 25 2020</p>	<p>No synopsis available.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>

Universal Pictures		
<p>Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom June 22, 2018</p>	<p>With all of the wonder, adventure and thrills synonymous with one of the most popular and successful franchises in cinema history, this film sees the return of favorite characters and dinosaurs—along with new breeds more awe-inspiring and terrifying than ever before.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>Mortal Engines December 14, 2018</p>	<p>Following the conclusion of <i>The Hobbit</i> and <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> trilogies, three-time Academy Award winning filmmakers Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh return to the screen with a startling and sweeping new vision of a future where Earth's cities now roam the globe on huge wheels, battling each other in a struggle for ever-diminishing resources. This is the world of <i>Mortal Engines</i>, the story of how two unlikely heroes come together and change the course of the future. From the award-winning book series by Philip Reeve, published in 2001 by Scholastic.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>The Voyage of Doctor Dolittle Project April 12, 2019</p>	<p>Robert Downey Jr. brings a signature new take on a very particular genius in <i>The Voyage of Doctor Dolittle Project</i>, a sweeping adventure directed by Academy Award winner Stephen Gaghan.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>

Lionsgate		
<p>Robin Hood November 21, 2018</p>	<p>Robin of Loxley (Taron Egerton), a war-hardened crusader and his Moorish commander (Jamie Foxx) mount an audacious revolt against the corrupt English crown in a thrilling action-adventure packed with gritty battlefield exploits, fight choreography and a timeless romance.</p>	<p>Currently seeking licensees across select categories.</p>
<p>Hellboy January 11, 2019</p>	<p>Based on the graphic novels by Mike Mignola, Hellboy, caught between the worlds of the supernatural and human, battles an ancient sorceress bent on revenge.</p>	<p>Currently seeking licensees across select categories.</p>
<p>Chaos Walking March 1, 2019</p>	<p>From Carnegie Award-winning writer Patrick Ness comes the story of Todd Hewitt (Tom Holland) who lives on the distant planet of New World—a new hope for humanity until struck by "The Noise," a virus which inflicts immersive visions of ones' every thought. The cacophony drives many mad until Todd makes a hidden discovery: there is a girl named Viola (Daisy Ridley), who may be the key to unlocking New World's many layered secrets.</p>	<p>Currently seeking licensees across select categories.</p>
<p>John Wick: Chapter 3 May 17, 2019</p>	<p>The <i>John Wick</i> series follows the exploits of the legendary hit man as he unleashes mayhem and fury on the mobsters who have wronged him and the army of international assassins who want him dead. Exploding with highly choreographed gun-fu and combat, the action-packed neo-noir thriller films tell the classic stories of vengeance and redemption.</p>	<p>Currently seeking licensees across select categories.</p>



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Lionsgate continued		
Shaun The Sheep 2	No synopsis available.	Currently seeking licensees across select categories.
The Kingkiller Chronicle	This film is based on the fantasy book series by Patrick Rothfuss including <i>The Name of the Wind</i> and <i>The Wise Man's Fear</i> . Sam Raimi is set to direct the movie adaptation together with Emmy, Grammy and Tony award-winning Lin-Manuel Miranda as creative producer.	Currently seeking licensees across select categories.

Paramount Pictures

Mission: Impossible Fallout July 27, 2018	Ethan Hunt and his IMF team, along with some familiar allies, race against time after a mission gone wrong.	Currently seeking licensees/partners across all categories.
Bumblebee December 21, 2018	On the run in the year 1987, Bumblebee finds refuge in a junkyard in a small Californian beach town. Charlie, on the cusp of turning 18 and trying to find her place in the world, discovers Bumblebee, battle-scarred and broken.	Currently seeking promotional partners across all categories. For licensing enquiries, contact Hasbro.
Amusement Park March 15, 2019	A story of a girl, some animals and a magic amusement park.	Currently seeking licensees/partners across all categories.
Top Gun: Maverick July 12, 2019	No synopsis available.	Currently seeking licensees/partners across all categories.

Sony Pictures

Superfly June 16, 2018	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation (3D) July 13, 2018	Mavis surprises Dracula with a family voyage on a luxury monster cruise ship so he can take a vacation from providing everyone else's vacation at the hotel. The rest of Drac's pack cannot resist going along, and once they leave port, romance zings Drac when he meets the mysterious ship captain Ericka. Now it's Mavis' turn to play the overprotective parent, keeping her dad and Ericka apart. Little do they know that his "too good to be true" love interest is actually a descendent of Van Helsing, arch-nemesis to Dracula and all monsters.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Venom (3D) July 13, 2018	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Goosebumps 2: Haunted Halloween October 5, 2018	The second film based on <i>Goosebumps</i> , the worldwide best-selling literary franchise by R.L. Stine, is back with returning fan-favorite and new characters.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
The Girl in the Spider's Web November 9, 2018	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Spider-Man: Into the Spideverse (3D) December 14, 2018	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Holmes and Watson December 21, 2018	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
A Dog's Way Home January 11, 2019	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Charlie's Angels June 7, 2019	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Men in Black Untitled June 14, 2019	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Spider-Man: Homecoming 2 July 5, 2019	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.

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Where Imagination and PLAY Meet



Sony Pictures continued		
Once Upon A Time In Hollywood August 9, 2019	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.
Angry Birds 2 (3D) September 20, 2019	No synopsis available.	Contact Sony for licensing opportunities.

Twentieth Century Fox

The Darkest Minds August 3, 2018	When teens mysteriously develop powerful new abilities, they are declared a threat by the government and detained. Sixteen-year-old Ruby, one of the most powerful young people anyone has encountered, escapes her camp and joins a group of runaway teens seeking safe haven. Soon this newfound family realizes that, in a world in which the adults in power have betrayed them, running is not enough and they must wage a resistance, using their collective power to take back control of their future.	Licensees to be announced.
The Predator September 14, 2018	Decades after the first fateful encounters between elite American forces and the extraterrestrial Predators who hunt humans for honor and sport, Special Forces captain Quinn McKenna (Boyd Holbrook) encounters a Predator marooned in the Mexican wilderness. But soon after the captive Predator becomes the centerpiece of a top-secret study under evolutionary biologist Casey Brackett (Olivia Munn), a deadly new breed of Predator arrives on Earth, with plans that could threaten the entire planet's future. Now Brackett, McKenna, his son and a squad of military misfits have to band together to fend off both the alien threat and a human conspiracy -making surprising allies in the process.	NECA, Changes, Surreal, Forecast Agency, Funko and Titan Publishing.
Bohemian Rhapsody November 2, 2018	No synopsis available.	Licensees to be announced.
Alita: Battle Angel December 21, 2018	Visionary filmmakers James Cameron (<i>Avatar</i>) and Robert Rodriguez (<i>Sin City</i>) create a groundbreaking new heroine in <i>Alita: Battle Angel</i> , an action-packed story of hope, love and empowerment.	Funko, Prime 1, Hot Toys, Weta, ACDC, Lounge Fly, Titan and Ripple Junction.
Spies in Disguise April 19, 2019	The animated buddy action-comedy set in the high octane, globe-trotting world of international espionage. Will Smith will voice the super-skilled spy Lance Sterling and Tom Holland is Walter, a scientific genius who invents the gadgets Lance uses on his missions. When events take an unexpected turn, Walter and Lance suddenly have to rely on each other in a whole new way.	Merchandise includes a wide assortment of spy gear, games, books, puzzles, apparel, accessories, home, plush and vehicles.
Death on the Nile November 8, 2019	No synopsis available.	Licensees to be announced.

The Walt Disney Company

Lucasfilm

Solo: A Star Wars Story May 25, 2018	Board the Millennium Falcon and journey to a galaxy far, far away in <i>Solo: A Star Wars Story</i> , an all-new adventure with the most beloved scoundrel in the galaxy. Through a series of daring escapades deep within a dark and dangerous criminal underworld, Han Solo meets his future copilot Chewbacca and encounters Lando Calrissian, in a journey that will set the course of one of the <i>Star Wars</i> saga's most unlikely heroes.	Broad licensing program.
Star Wars: Episode IX December 20, 2019	No synopsis available.	Broad licensing program.

Marvel Studios

Ant-Man & The Wasp July 6, 2018	In the aftermath of <i>Marvel's Captain America: Civil War</i> , Scott Lang grapples with the consequences of his choices as both a superhero and a father. As he struggles to re-balance his home life with his responsibilities as Ant-Man, he's confronted by Hope Van Dyne and Dr. Hank Pym with an urgent new mission. Scott must once again put on the suit and learn to fight alongside The Wasp as the team works together to uncover secrets from their past.	Broad licensing program.
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Marvel Studios continued		
Captain Marvel March 8, 2019	Ace Air Force pilot Carol Danvers becomes one of the universe's most powerful heroes when Earth is caught in the middle of a galactic war between two alien races. <i>Marvel's Captain Marvel</i> is an all-new adventure from a previously unseen period in the history of the Marvel cinematic universe.	Broad licensing program.
Marvel's Avengers: Untitled May 3, 2019	A culmination of 22 interconnected films, the fourth installation of the <i>Avengers</i> saga will draw audiences to witness the turning point of this epic journey. Our beloved heroes will truly understand how fragile this reality is and the sacrifices that must be made to uphold it.	Broad licensing program.
Pixar Animation		
Incredibles 2 June 15, 2018	Helen (voice of Holly Hunter) is called on to lead a campaign to bring Supers back, while Bob (voice of Craig T. Nelson) navigates the day-to-day heroics of "normal" life at home with Violet (voice of Sarah Vowell), Dash (voice of Huck Milner) and baby Jack-Jack—whose superpowers are about to be discovered. Their mission is derailed when a new villain emerges with a brilliant and dangerous plot that threatens everything. But the Parrs don't shy away from a challenge, especially with Frozone (voice of Samuel L. Jackson) by their side.	Broad licensing program.
Ralph Breaks the Internet: Wreck-It Ralph 2 November 21, 2018	<i>Ralph Breaks the Internet: Wreck-It Ralph 2</i> leaves Litwak's video arcade behind, venturing into the uncharted, expansive and thrilling world of the internet—which may or may not survive Ralph's wrecking. Video game bad guy Ralph (voice of John C. Reilly) and fellow misfit Vanellope von Schweetz (voice of Sarah Silverman) must risk it all by traveling to the world wide web in search of a replacement part to save Vanellope's video game, "Sugar Rush." In way over their heads, Ralph and Vanellope rely on the citizens of the Internet—the netizens—to help navigate their way, including a website entrepreneur named Yesss (voice of Taraji P. Henson), who is the head algorithm and the heart and soul of trend-making site "BuzzzTube."	Broad licensing program.
Toy Story 4 June 21, 2019	Disney/Pixar's <i>Toy Story 4</i> opens a new chapter in the lives of Woody, Buzz Lightyear and the <i>Toy Story</i> gang. Directed by Josh Cooley (<i>Riley's First Date?</i>) and produced by Jonas Rivera (<i>Inside Out</i> and <i>Up</i>).	Broad licensing program.
Walt Disney Studios		
Christopher Robin August 3, 2018	Winnie the Pooh and friends reunite with old pal Christopher Robin, now an adult.	Broad licensing program.
Nutcracker and the Four Realms November 2, 2018	All Clara (Mackenzie Foy) wants is a key—a one-of-a-kind key that will unlock a box that holds a priceless gift from her late mother. A golden thread, presented to her at godfather Drosselmeyer's (Morgan Freeman) annual holiday party, leads her to the coveted key, which promptly disappears into a strange and mysterious parallel world. It's there that Clara encounters a soldier named Phillip (Jayden Fowora-Knight), a gang of mice and the regents who preside over the three realms: Land of Snowflakes, Land of Flowers and Land of Sweets. Clara and Phillip must brave the ominous fourth realm, home to the tyrant Mother Ginger (Helen Mirren), to retrieve Clara's key and hopefully return harmony to the unstable world.	Broad licensing program.
Mary Poppins Returns December 25, 2018	The all-new sequel to Disney's 1964 film <i>Mary Poppins</i> is drawn from the wealth of material in PL Travers' additional seven books. Set in 1930s Depression-era London, Michael Banks and Jane Banks are now grown up, with Michael, his three children and their housekeeper, Ellen, living on Cherry Tree Lane. After Michael suffers a personal loss, the enigmatic nanny Mary Poppins re-enters the lives of the Banks family, and, along with the optimistic street lamplighter Jack, uses her unique magical skills to help the family rediscover the joy and wonder missing in their lives.	Broad licensing program.
Dumbo March 29, 2019	Holt was once a circus star but he went off to war and when he returned, it had terribly altered him. Circus owner Max Medici (Danny DeVito) hires him to take care of Dumbo, a newborn elephant whose oversized ears make him the laughing stock of the struggling circus troupe. But when Holt's children discover that Dumbo can fly, entrepreneur V.A. Vandevere (Michael Keaton), and aerial artist Colette Marchant (Eva Green) swoop in to make the little elephant a star.	Broad licensing program.

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Walt Disney Studios continued

Aladdin May 24, 2019	No synopsis available.	Broad licensing program.
The Lion King July 19, 2019	From Disney Live Action, director Jon Favreau's all-new <i>The Lion King</i> journeys to the African savanna where a future king is born. Simba idolizes his father, King Mufasa, and takes to heart his own royal destiny. But not everyone in the kingdom celebrates the new cub's arrival. Scar, Mufasa's brother and former heir to the throne, has plans of his own. The battle for Pride Rock is ravaged with betrayal, tragedy and drama, ultimately resulting in Simba's exile. With help from a curious pair of newfound friends, Simba will have to figure out how to grow up and take back what is rightfully his.	Broad licensing program.
Artemis Fowl August 9, 2019	No synopsis available.	Broad licensing program.
Frozen 2 November 27, 2019	No synopsis available.	Broad licensing program.
Mulan March 27, 2020	No synopsis available.	Broad licensing program.

Warner Bros. Pictures

Teen Titans Go! to the Movies July 27, 2018	When the "Teen Titans" go to the big screen, they go big! The satirical superheroes star in their first feature film—a fresh, gleefully clever, kid-appropriately crass and tongue-in-cheek play on the superhero genre, complete with musical numbers. It seems to the Teens that all the major superheroes out there are starring in their own movies—everyone but the Teen Titans, that is. De facto leader Robin is determined to remedy the situation, and be seen as a star instead of a sidekick. If only they could get the hottest Hollywood film director to notice them. With a few madcap ideas and a song in their heart, the Teen Titans head to Tinsel Town, certain to pull off their dream. But when the group is radically misdirected by a seriously super villain and his maniacal plan to take over the Earth, things go awry. The team finds their friendship and their fighting spirit failing, putting the very fate of the Teen Titans themselves on the line.	Targeted licensing program. Partners not yet announced.
The Nun September 7, 2018	When a young nun at a cloistered abbey in Romania takes her own life, a priest (Demian Bichir) with a haunted past and a novice on the threshold of her final vows (Taissa Farmiga) are sent by the Vatican to investigate. Together they uncover the order's unholy secret. Risking not only their lives but their faith and their very souls, they confront a malevolent force in the form of the same demonic nun that first terrorized audiences in <i>The Conjuring 2</i> , as the abbey becomes a horrific battleground between the living and the damned.	Targeted licensing program. Partners not yet announced.
Smallfoot September 28, 2018	An animated adventure for all ages, with original music and an all-star cast, <i>Smallfoot</i> turns the Bigfoot legend upside down when a bright young Yeti (Channing Tatum) finds something he thought didn't exist—a human. News of this "smallfoot" (James Corden) brings him fame and a chance with the girl of his dreams. It also throws the simple Yeti community into an uproar over what else might be out there in the big world beyond their snowy village, in a rollicking story about friendship.	Targeted licensing program. Partners not yet announced.
Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald November 16, 2018	The second of five all-new adventures in J.K. Rowling's Wizarding World. At the end of the first film, the powerful dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald (Johnny Depp) was captured by the Magical Congress of the United States of America, with the help of Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne). But, making good on his threat, Grindelwald escaped custody and has set about gathering followers, most unsuspecting of his true agenda: to raise pure-blood wizards up to rule over all non-magical beings. In an effort to thwart Grindelwald's plans, Albus Dumbledore (Jude Law) enlists his former student Scamander, who agrees to help, unaware of the dangers that lie ahead. Lines are drawn as love and loyalty are tested, even among the truest, in an increasingly divided Wizarding World.	Targeted licensing program. Partners not yet announced.

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Warner Bros. Pictures continued

<p>Aquaman December 21, 2018</p>	<p>An icon for more than 75 years, Aquaman is known by fans of DC as the ruler of Atlantis but committed to protecting the entire globe, both land and sea.</p>	<p>Broad licensing program. Partners not yet announced.</p>
<p>The LEGO® Movie 2: The Second Part February 8, 2019</p>	<p>The sequel to the critically acclaimed and global box office phenomenon, <i>The LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part</i> reunites many of the beloved characters from the first film in an all-new adventure.</p>	<p>Targeted licensing program. Partners not yet announced.</p>
<p>Shazam April 5, 2019</p>	<p>We all have a superhero inside us, it just takes a bit of magic to bring it out. In Billy Batson's (Asher Angel) case, by shouting out one word—SHAZAM!—this streetwise 14-year-old foster kid can turn into the adult superhero Shazam (Zachary Levi), courtesy of an ancient wizard. Still a kid at heart—inside a ripped, godlike body—Shazam revels in this adult version of himself by doing what any teen would do with superpowers: have fun with them. Shazam sets out to test the limits of his abilities with the joyful recklessness of a child. But he'll need to master these powers quickly in order to fight the deadly forces of evil controlled by Dr. Thaddeus Sivana (Mark Strong).</p>	<p>Broad licensing program. Partners not yet announced.</p>
<p>Shaft June 14, 2019</p>	<p>The newest chapter in the film franchise featuring the coolest private eye on any New York City block. He may be a cyber security expert with a degree from MIT, but to uncover the truth behind his best friend's untimely death, JJ—aka John Shaft Jr. (Jessie T. Usher)—will need an education only his dad can provide. Absent throughout JJ's youth, the legendary locked-and-loaded John Shaft (Samuel L. Jackson) agrees to help his progeny navigate Harlem's underbelly. And while JJ's own FBI analyst's badge may clash with his dad's trademark leather duster, there's no denying family. Besides, Shaft's got an agenda of his own, and a score to settle that's professional and personal.</p>	<p>Targeted licensing program. Partners not yet announced</p>
<p>IT 2 September 6, 2019</p>	<p>The continuation of the story of the blockbuster horror hit <i>It</i>, based on Steven King's seminal novel.</p>	<p>Targeted licensing program. Partners not yet announced.</p>
<p>Untitled Wonder Woman Movie November 1, 2019</p>	<p>No synopsis available.</p>	<p>Targeted licensing program. Partners not yet announced.</p>

Streaming

Streaming services like Hulu and Netflix can't be ignored across entertainment. And while they tend to favor surprise film releases rather than pre-marketing, they do generate a lot of buzz around their series. Here are some TV shows on the horizon... or possibly already in your queue.

<p>"DreamWorks Trolls: The Beat Goes On!" Now streaming on Netflix</p>	<p>An all-new chapter in the adventures of <i>DreamWorks' Trolls</i>, as Poppy, Branch and all of Troll Village keep the dance party raving in their fantastical forest home. Picking up where the blockbuster film left off, the Trolls are settling into a new era with Poppy as queen.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>"DreamWorks Spirit Riding Free" Now streaming on Netflix</p>	<p>Inspired by the 2002 Oscar-nominated film, <i>Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron</i>, "DreamWorks Spirit Riding Free" centers on a group of three friends and their horses, who together experience coming of age and the power of friendship. Lucky, a gutsy 12-year-old girl, befriends a wild mustang she names Spirit. With her two best friends, Abigail and Pru, and their horses by her side, they explore a world filled with endless rides and never ending fun.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>



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Streaming continued		
<p>"DreamWorks Voltron Legendary Defender " Now streaming on Netflix</p>	<p>Five teenagers are transported from Earth into the middle of a sprawling intergalactic war and become pilots for five robotic lions in a battle to protect the universe from evil. Only through the true power of teamwork can they unite to form the mighty warrior known as Voltron.</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>"DreamWorks Trollhunters" Now streaming on Netflix</p>	<p>Teenager Jim Lake Jr. stumbles upon a mystical amulet on his way to school one morning and inadvertently discovers an extraordinary secret civilization of mighty trolls beneath his small town of Arcadia. Suddenly destined to play a crucial role in an ancient battle of good and evil, Jim is determined to save the world—right after gym class. Filmmaker Guillermo del Toro brings viewers of all ages into the rich and creative world of "DreamWorks Trollhunters."</p>	<p>Contact Universal Brand Development for opportunities.</p>
<p>"Fancy Nancy" Summer 2018 on Disney Channels worldwide</p>	<p>Based on <i>The New York Times</i> best-selling books by Jane O'Connor and Robin Preiss Glasser, Disney Junior's "Fancy Nancy" is an animated family comedy centered around six-year-old Nancy, a girl who likes to be fancy in everything from her advanced vocabulary to her creative, elaborate attire.</p>	<p>Broad licensing program.</p>
<p>"Marvel's Cloak and Dagger " June 7, 2018 on Freeform</p>	<p>Two teenagers from very different backgrounds find themselves burdened and awakened to newly acquire superpowers which are mysteriously linked to one another.</p>	<p>Licensees to be announced.</p>
<p>"Marvel's Luke Cage Season 2 " June 22, 2018 on Netflix</p>	<p>After clearing his name, Luke Cage has become a celebrity on the streets of Harlem with a reputation as bulletproof as his skin. But being so well known has only increased the pressure he feels to protect the community. With the rise of a formidable new foe, Luke is forced to confront the fine line that separates a hero from a villain.</p>	<p>Licensees to be announced.</p>
<p>"Marvel's Spider-Man Season 2" Summer 2018 on Disney XD</p>	<p>As the iconic and relatable superhero, Spider-Man showcases that with great power there must also come great responsibility.</p>	<p>Licensees to be announced.</p>
<p>"Marvel Super Hero Adventures Season 2 Adventures" Summer 2018 on Disney Junior</p>	<p>"Marvel Super Hero Adventures" is a preschooler's first introduction into the Marvel universe. Kids will engage with Marvel superheroes through aspirational content and heroic merchandise.</p>	<p>Licensees to be announced.</p>
<p>"Marvel's Avengers: Black Panther's Quest" Fall 2018 on Disney XD</p>	<p>The Avengers inspire with the power of teamwork as they combine their unique skills to face threats too big for any one hero to face alone.</p>	<p>Licensees to be announced.</p>
<p>"Marvel Rising: Secret Warriors " Fall 2018 on cable</p>	<p>They're inexperienced, have clashing personalities and all the problems that come with being teenagers. Yet this crew must rise above it all by proving to themselves and the world that they are indeed the next generation of great Marvel superheroes.</p>	<p>Broad licensing program.</p>
<p>"Marvel's Iron Fist Season 2" TBD on Netflix</p>	<p>Danny Rand, The Immortal Iron Fist and Colleen Wing set off on a new adventure as the protectors of Chinatown in New York City where death, action and surprises await them around every corner.</p>	<p>Licensees to be announced.</p>
<p>"Marvel's Runaways Season 2" TBD on Hulu</p>	<p>Every teenager thinks their parents are evil. What if you found out they actually were? "Marvel's Runaways" is the story of six diverse teenagers who can barely stand each other but who must unite against a common foe—their parents. Following the events of the first season they now find themselves on the run after being framed for murder.</p>	<p>Licensees to be announced.</p>

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FANTASTIC BEASTS
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Film Fandom

As the film industry adjusts to how consumers are viewing the latest blockbusters, licensees are finding it challenging to forecast which movie will be the next consumer product hit and how soon it needs to be on shelf, but also what to do if a property becomes buzzworthy within hours. by PATRICIA DELUCA

The film industry is in the midst of a sea change. For starters, there is no one way to watch a movie. Ten years ago, the only way to see a highly-anticipated film was to visit the nearest movie theater. In 2018, some film companies are bypassing the big screen altogether in favor of the personal laptop or smartphone screen. Streaming services like Netflix, Amazon and Hulu are now major players in the entertainment industry, producing original TV series or film, featuring everything from superhero franchises to independent movies.

Variety reports that the number of Netflix subscribers went up by 74 million in Q1 2018, an increase of 1 million users compared to the same time in 2017. A closer breakdown shows 1.96 million new streaming subscribers in the U.S. and 5.46 million internationally—



that's 125 million total subscribers worldwide who are ready to binge on programs such as season two of "Luke Cage."

Hulu has more than 20 million subscribers as of this month, according to *Kidscreen*, up 7 million from the last report in 2016. Hulu's canon of video is vast, with 1,700 TV shows and more than 75,000 episodes, ranging from original programming like "Marvel's Runaways" to vintage TV shows.

Recently, Hulu announced a deal with DreamWorks Animation to launch multiple kids programs, a first for the streaming network.

Companies like Netflix and Hulu have influenced how moviegoers are buying theater tickets. MoviePass, the subscription-based service for movie theaters launched



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in 2011, dropped its monthly fee to \$10 in August 2017 and subsequently increased its base by 20,000. With more than 2 million subscribers now, anyone with a MoviePass can see a movie a day. However, consumer confidence is shaky. According to movie industry consulting firm National Research Group, 32 percent of current MoviePass subscribers doubt the “too good to be true deal” will last. This month, MoviePass reverted back to its \$10 monthly fee after a promotion with iHeartRadio raised its rate to \$30 and four movies per month, much to the dismay of its subscribers. The company also announced a no-repeat viewing policy to cut back on fraud.

On the consumer products front, licensees and licensors may have an uphill battle. *Bloomberg* reported that sales for *Star Wars* lagged in 2017 and didn’t match the anticipated fanfare of previous *Star Wars* product roll outs. Although loyal collectors snapped up the newest toys for *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, the film didn’t seem to resonate with children as it did with *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. In the *Bloomberg* article, an analyst for BMO Capital Markets attributed the lack of sales to Millennial and Gen Z’s increasing preference for streaming services.

If consumers suffered from movie fatigue in 2017, then they were revitalized earlier this year with Marvel’s *Black Panther*. According to *Dateline Hollywood*, since its release in January of this year, *Black Panther* passed \$600 million in box office sales internationally, beating out *Iron Man 3* and *The Fate of the Furious* to become the No. 12 world film release ever.

While most licensees will announce rollouts of consumer products to coincide with a film release, sometimes the zeitgeist has other plans. Now movie theater excursions are becoming an event not just for fans of the comic book series, but for the general public. Chances are you’ve seen filmgoers decked out in homemade costumes inspired by *Black Panther* on your social media news feeds.

On-demand marketplaces like Merch by Amazon and Redbubble are on the rise, and these too are helping to get product to market at the speed of customer demand and allowing licensees, or your average maker fan, to capitalize on less predictable hits.

Redbubble puts the creative control in consumers’ hands. Said Eric Morse, senior vice president, partnerships and general manager, global licensing, Redbubble, (as first reported in the *LicenseGlobal.com* article, “The Redbubble Dilemma—Can Fan Art and Licensing Live Together?” published in

February): “Redbubble as a marketplace is not the retailer. The actual, independent artist is the retailer. They are the seller in this case—they choose what they want to sell, how they want to sell it and we provide the service of connecting them with third parties to fulfill and ship the product.”

The print-on-demand movement gives fans a way to make movie merchandise not suited for mass market retail, such as viral content from memes or obscure film phrases, available within minutes.

Merch by Amazon works with licensors, licensees and content creators to create, promote and sell branded merchandise without risk and without any up-front costs.

“We noticed that many app developers have a few things in common: a fan base, creativity and design skills and no easy or natural path to get their own branded merchandise into the hands of fans,” says Miguel Roque, director, Merch by Amazon. “With that in mind, we developed Merch by Amazon to help developers increase revenue through the sale of branded merchandise designed by them and produced, sold and shipped by Amazon.” (From the April issue of *License Global*, “Merch On-Demand.”)

Licensors and licensees have recognized that producing consumer products around hit films for retail must happen faster than ever. During the “Need for Speed” session at *License Global’s* NYC Licensing Summit in February, the panel of licensing industry vets talked about how striking while the iron is hot is more important than ever for retail.

“We’re looking to interpret the pop culture zeitgeist,” said Brian Mann, vice president, head of licensing and new business development, Loot Crate, at the event. “It’s a distinct point of view that feels personal.”

For consumer product companies to predict consumer trends, monitoring social media closely can help.

“In a perfect world, if you can let licensors see what’s in the story, it’s a goldmine,” says Cindy Levitt, vice president, general merchandise manager, Hot Topic and BoxLunch.

Hot Topic was tapped by Marvel to produce a line of *Black Panther*-inspired apparel to fulfill and meet fan demand.

In short, traditional product launches in support of film events aren’t going away anytime soon. Entertainment companies will still collaborate with toy, apparel and gaming companies year after year to get as many consumer products with film tie-ins to retail. However, they may be paying closer attention to social media trending topics, to make sure the customer is getting what they want. ©



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RETRO: ALWAYS IN STYLE

Fashion is taking a cue from the 1980s and 1990s, reinventing popular brands of decades past for new generations.

by AMANDA CIOLETTI

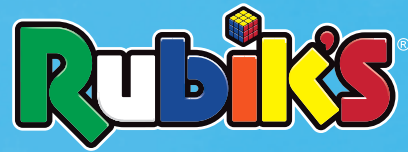
Take a look at any young person today, and chances are you'll recognize something they are wearing as a piece you probably once wore decades ago.

Everywhere you turn, be it on television or in film with its years-long spate of remakes, to toys, games and apparel, we are reminded that the infamous last decades of the 20th century are back with a vengeance.

From festivalgoers donning waist-high denim shorts, crop tops and yes, even fanny packs, to the resurgence of chokers, overalls, stirrup pants, skinny ties, flannel and track suits, beloved late century brands are back on shelf and ready to grow again.

The truth is, trends are recurrent, and the best—or at least that which invokes warm and fuzzy feelings for good times gone by—will always find its way back. Now, we're seeing apparel that once seemed dated made fresh again for a new generation of trend-hungry consumers.

"Fashion is cyclical. With fashion, it's what goes around, comes around, and that is really what's helping brands that were super popular in the 1980s and 1990s right now," says Chelsea Tirone, digital marketing manager, Members Only.



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“Of course there are timeless trends—look at the skinny jeans trend that was widely popular a few years ago... now what’s in is the boyfriend, relaxed and even bell-bottom style jeans that were once popular years ago.”

Did you have a Members Only jacket? Every cool kid in the 1980s did, and probably in an array of colors.

Originated in 1975 and cemented into the fashion annals of history thanks to ‘80s entertainment and media exposure, Members Only was founded on the back of its recognizable Iconic Racer jacket that featured unforgettable shoulder epaulettes, a throat latch and of course, its subdued logo.

“Since the ‘80s and ‘90s, Members Only has kept the one jacket that everyone has come to know and love,” says Ron Malhotra, managing partner, Members Only. “While the materials, fit and hardware get better, the overall look and feel of the Iconic has remained the same. We hear so many great stories from people who remember the brand from 80s and those who know the brand now. We even received an e-mail one time that someone’s grandfather requested to be buried in his Members Only jacket! It’s truly an iconic piece.”

Today, Members Only is eyeing a future beyond its signature jacket and aspiring to become a true lifestyle brand, expanding into new categories via licensing. The brand is further gaining support with consumers via influencer marketing programs, which began organically but are quickly becoming its most effective campaign, says Members Only.

Probably as synonymous with ‘80s and ‘90s fashion as the Members Only jacket is Le Tigre and its tiger-emblazoned polo.

“Le Tigre has a special place in the market because it has always been cutting edge, even when it first appeared in the late ‘80s. It had a different approach to the fundamental polo—it brought a fresh, new, young approach that rejuvenated that business and took the market by storm,” says Ike Franco, managing director, Infinity Lifestyle Brands, which, in connection with Hilco Global, acquired the Le Tigre brand in 2015.

Launched in 1977, Le Tigre truly hit its stride in the ‘80s when it cracked the

code for cool kids everywhere. Over the years, Le Tigre has dipped back into popularity—there was a peak in the early 2000s thanks to re-entry at retailers like Urban Outfitters, but it’s only now, in 2018, that the brand is ready for a proper re-launch. Le Tigre has been using the past three years to set up a global program that will roll out across multiple categories including apparel, footwear, accessories, outerwear, headwear, fragrance and more. Franco says product will hit specialty retail in not only North America, but Europe and Asia as well, and is already getting a lot of interest from licensees.

The brand rollout will also have coordinated marketing efforts that are supported by influencer campaigns, social and retail activations that illustrate “how the brand can cross over into various categories.”

“The consumer today is looking for a reason to re-engage with brands that have a strong history,” says Franco. “However, there is a definite movement for authenticity. They want the brands that were the original and which set the tone.”

Arguably most iconic of all is the infamous dance brand, Capezio.

Born in the late 1800s, Capezio was created by Italian immigrant Salvatore Capezio, who created a small shoe repair shop near New York City’s Metropolitan Opera. By the 1930s, Capezio had grown to become a family operation that supplied highly specialized footwear to Broadway productions, eventually finding a place in department stores in the 1950s. By the ‘90s, Capezio, through its partnership with United States Shoe Corporation, evolved to become a fashion and dance brand known and used the world over.

And no matter what, all roads lead back to the classic.

“There is a natural trend curve in fashion and branding which generally points back to the previous generation’s hey-day,” says Mark Prospero, licensing manager, international, Capezio. “That, coupled with the speed at which the market changes, emphasize the importance of a brand like Capezio which has the ability to really transcend generations because of our prominence in an omni-present category such as dance which has the ability to bring generations together.”

Today, Capezio will again tap into the brand’s dance and performance heritage that has resonated not only





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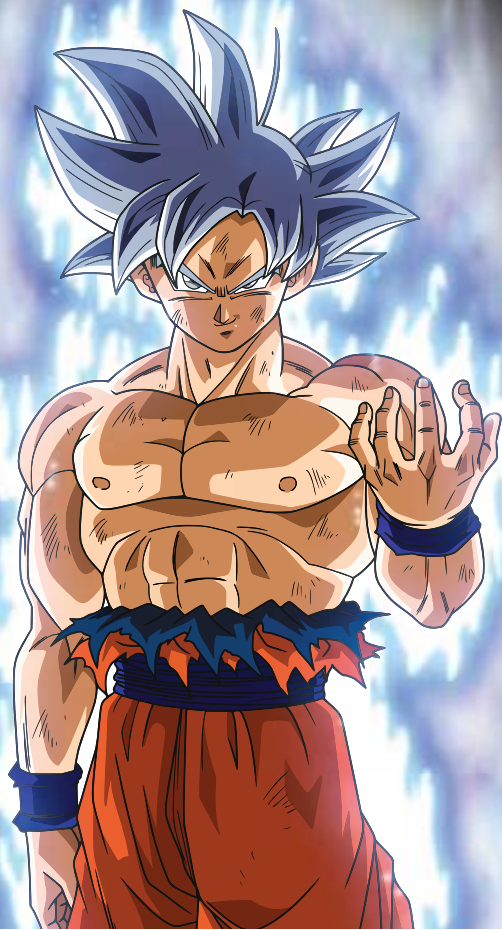


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over the past century, but particularly in the 1980s and 1990s when the brand's strategy, beyond dance, reflected an active lifestyle through casual footwear, handbags, hosiery and other accessories, says Paul Terlizzi, executive vice president, licensing, and member of the board of directors, Capezio.

Now the brand could even further extend into secondary categories such as hard goods like fitness equipment and accessories and consumables.

"We hope to re-create the best of the past successes with women's, men's and children's footwear; hosiery, undergarments and loungewear;

accessories; and enter a few new categories that are very closely aligned and/or compatible with dance and will become obvious once they are secured," says Terlizzi.

And hand-in-hand with fashion is music, which has heavily influenced trends in fashion since time immemorial.

So then, it's no wonder that beloved bands from the '80s and '90s are sparking a renewed interest in fans and igniting retro-themed apparel collections.

"We identified a while ago that there was a trend happening in retro apparel and that's why our '70s and '80s rock artists have performed so well over the last several years. Now we are finding that the '90s has infiltrated this important retro space because of the Millennial generation. These were the artists they grew up with. That's why at the end of last year we signed *NSYNC and this year we partnered with Britney Spears," says Lisa Streff, executive vice president, global licensing, Epic Rights, a music branding and merchandising company.

For boy band extraordinaire *NSYNC in particular, Epic Rights is making a big push, using imagery from the late '90s such as logos, album covers and photos and translating that to new apparel that is on-trend.

Most recently, Epic Rights launched a limited run pop-up experience in Hollywood, Calif., to commemorate the band's Hollywood Walk of Fame celebration that was chalk full of limited edition apparel and merchandise leaning heavily on the '90s aesthetic.

"Apparel, and especially t-shirts, are the biggest category in the retro space, followed by headwear, bags, calendars, wall art, gifts and collectible figures such as Funko Pop! vinyl," says Streff. "We're finding that all channels of distribution want to be a part of this trend with specialty retailers really leading the charge, including Urban Outfitters, Forever 21, Rue 21, Spencer's and Hot Topic, as well as mass market, mid-tier department stores, off-price retailers and e-commerce."

The thing is, retro and nostalgia are always in fashion—it's just a matter of what decade you're re-imagining that resonates. For Millennials, Gen Z and those that listened to their mom sing along to *NSYNC, borrowed their dad's Members Only jacket or grew up dancing in Capezio shoes, the memories and histories of the brands are strong, and that heritage is one worth investing in again.

"I don't foresee the retro trend going away anytime soon. There are endless opportunities available for the right brand," says Streff. "If the program is developed and executed strategically and in a way that stays true to the brand then the fans will support it. We see it having a significant lifespan." ©

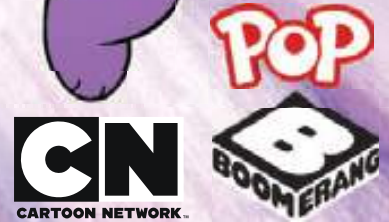




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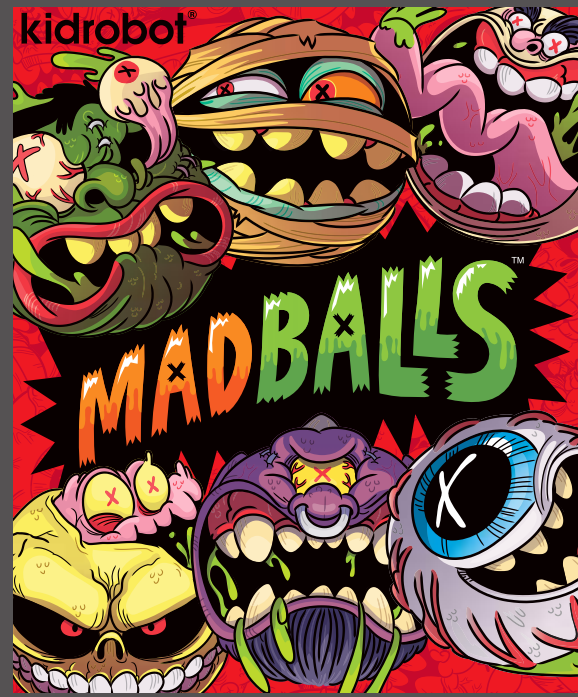
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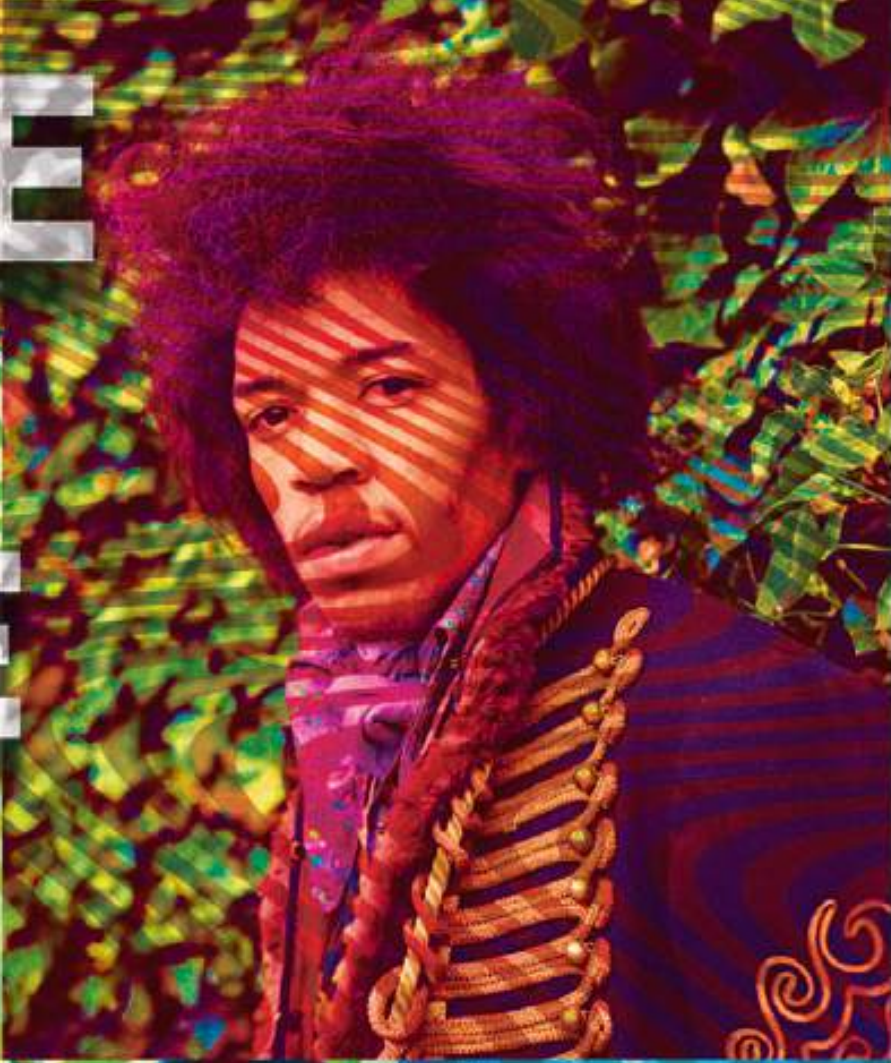
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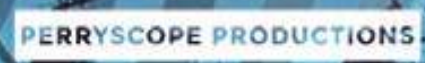
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A close-up portrait of Britney Spears with long, wavy blonde hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Her hand is near her chin, and she is wearing a ring on her finger. The background is dark and out of focus.

BRITNEY SPEARS

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- Las Vegas Residency "Piece of Me" voted Best Show
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LICENSE TO CREATE

Tapping into a colorful segment of the licensing industry, ten independent artists and art agencies have extended the life of their portfolios and captivated new audiences through strategic partnerships. **by AMBER NICOLE ALSTON**

From apparel to homewares, licensed artwork has the power to engage and breathe new life into consumer products. While

consumers have always latched onto evocative imagery as a way of expressing themselves, an increasingly global marketplace and the so-called “Instagram-effect” have

exposed the public to new creators and increased the demand for licensed goods. Here are 10 art brand exhibitors you won’t want to miss at Licensing Expo.

Van Gogh Museum Enterprises Booth #C82

Vincent Willem van Gogh was born in the Netherlands in 1853, yet his legacy and body of work continue to delight and intrigue audiences across the globe. The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam is dedicated to the eponymous artist’s collection (as well as his contemporaries) and is focused on the management and conservation of his portfolio. Van Gogh Museum Enterprises, the business and licensing arm of the institution, offers inspiration, expertise and oversight to parties interested in licensing the master’s work.

That work includes such paintings as “The Potato Eaters,” “The Bedroom” and “Wheatfield with a Reaper.” Inspired by scenes from domestic life and nature, van Gogh developed a style that would later be known as Post-Impressionism—a term used to describe “encompassing works made by artists unified by their interest in expressing their emotional and psychological responses to the world through bold colors and expressive, often symbolic images,” according to the Museum of Modern Art. Van Gogh’s paintings contain bright harmonious colors, shorter brush strokes and a liberal use of paint. Of van Gogh’s 2,100 works, the Museum houses over 200 of his paintings, 500 drawings and 750 personal letters.

Van Gogh’s easily recognizable style and global popularity have made his work attractive to a variety of manufacturers and licensees. Leveraging that appeal, VGME has developed a licensing program, product development division and wholesale business to make the body of work accessible to the public in a variety of consumer product categories including stationary, homewares and apparel. In addition to imagery, VGME offers licenses and business partners insight into each work in an effort to maintain its strict quality requirements.

As it continues to grow its licensing program, VGME is seeking new opportunities to engage the public at large.

The institution’s recent business ventures include granting Nippon Television Network Europe a master license to launch a new licensing business in Japan.

David Lozeau Booth #D74

David Lozeau’s work is best described as “Day of the Dead art with a distinctive lowbrow style.” Influenced by the aesthetic of the Wild West, the underground L.A. pop art scene, quirky characters and the afterlife, Lozeau has employed a fine art technique to develop a distinct style.

“My art is a culmination of many artistic flourishes, but neither my style nor my technique has a name yet. Most of my paintings are figurative or, at the very least, character-driven, and maybe even lean a bit surrealist at times. They’re often humorous, but I tackle serious subjects, still lifes and non-skeletal pieces just as enthusiastically,” Lozeau explains.

On the licensing front, Lozeau’s recent collaborators include Fender, Disney Consumer Products and El Jimador Tequila.

“Licensing makes art more accessible. Some artists want to maintain the fourth wall, keep their fans at a distance. I want anyone who enjoys my art to be able to get it, whether it’s in the traditional form or reproduced as a wearable piece.”

Lozeau has been featured in art books and international publications. He also exhibits his work at galleries around the world.

When asked about Licensing Expo, Lozeau says: “I would like to see my imagery used on a wider variety of products, establish a few new long-term relationships and expand into countries that might not be familiar with my work.”



Jason Naylor Creative Booth #E82

Upbeat messages, colorful visuals and rich blacks are Jason Naylor's signature. Often found painting murals in New York's hottest neighborhoods, the Brooklyn-based artist has taken his passion for strong visual communication and built a portfolio of work that includes public compositions, editorials, illustrations, videos and animation that reflect the artist's commitment to positivity.

Naylor's interest in public art and can't-miss color palettes stem from a desire to captivate and engage a broad audience.

"Putting my work into the public invites anyone and everyone to experience in a way they choose, and similarly, licensing art for any use can create the same effect. Life should be experienced in a colorful and inspired way, and art does this for people. Licensing the art enables life to be brighter for more people, to hide the art in pretentious galleries that don't welcome 'everyone' disables the world from experiencing the excitement and color that is out there," says Naylor.

Most of Naylor's art combines digital design elements with ink or spray paint and juxtaposes a variety of colors against rich blacks to reflect his personal mantras of brightness, positivity and kindness.

Naylor's eye-popping visuals have attracted fans in both the real and digital worlds. He boasts more than 15,000 Instagram followers and his murals continue to be popular photo backdrops.

"Instagram has spread my visibility across the globe in a way that I wouldn't be able to do without it," says Naylor.

His hypervisibility and social media friendly aesthetic has led to collaborations across numerous categories. Naylor's clients include MAC, Urban Decay, Crunch Gym, Lululemon, eBay and more.

"Once you understand a bit of who you are as an artist and as



a brand, you can feel which licensing opportunities are suitable for you, as the success of the collaboration will rely on you being invested and supportive of the agreement," he adds.

As a first-time exhibitor, Naylor hopes to "meet some great people, have some fun and create new opportunities that can spread color and kindness to the world."

Frida Kahlo Corporation Booth #O249

Few female artists have attracted a cult following quite like Frida Kahlo. Born in Mexico in 1907, the famously eccentric visual artist created a body of work that tackled themes that were highly personal, yet universal. Sixty-four years after her death, her legacy continues to attract audiences who feel connected to her imagery and messages of female empowerment and self-reflection.

The Frida Kahlo Corporation holds the rights to the name, imagery and legacy of the 20th century giant and continues to uphold them through select partnerships.

Love, pain and the female experience are just a few of the themes that run through Kahlo's work. Expressed across approximately 200 paintings, still lifes and self-portraits, Kahlo reflected her world through architectural,

surrealist, indigenism, magic realism and other techniques. While she is closely aligned with the surrealist movement, she famously stated: "I do not paint dreams... I paint my reality," a reality which she translated through bright colors and distinctly Mexican sensibilities.

The Frida Kahlo Corporation's licensing faction has worked to establish partnerships with a variety of brands and retailers around the globe to promote Frida's legacy.

Recent collaborators include a partnership with Zara for apparel and Princesse Tam Tam for a line of lingerie inspired by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera's infamous relationship. More ambitious undertakings include the Frida Kahlo Museum in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, and the Frida Kahlo restaurant chain, a bold gastronomic project that features lively plates in an environment that brings the artist's work to life.





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Wild Wings Licensing Booth #G85

Since 1968, Wild Wings has specialized in wildlife, sporting and art-related products. Representing more than 70 artists across the U.S., Wild Wings has established itself as a leader in conservation-minded artwork that appeals to everyone from avid outdoorsmen to city dwellers looking to connect to nature. Wild Wings Licensing works to grant its group of artists opportunities to license work to manufacturers in new categories.

Each artist, some of whom Wild Wings has represented for more than 25 years, draws on their personal interactions with the natural world to create dynamic works that reflect the outdoor lifestyle. Imagery includes hunting, fishing, country life, children, big-game, waterfowl and rural scenes. Art styles include wood carving, sculpting, photography, oil painting, watercolors and more. Wild Wings publishes an annual art print celebrating its portfolio.

Key merchandise categories include housewares, linens, drinkware, novelties and gifts.

Wild Wing's love of the natural world also extends into its corporate initiatives. The company donates a portion of each year's print edition to conservation efforts across North America.



Artestar Booth #F107

Artestar is a global licensing agency and creative consultancy that represents noted artists, creatives, designers and photographers. The company's portfolio includes legacy artists Jean-Michel Basquiat, Patricia Field and Keith Haring.

"We have a team that works collaboratively. We research an assortment of brands, pitching to different markets. It's like curating," says Ted Becksted, chief operating officer, Artestar.

Influenced by Haring's mission to bring art to the public, the agency presents its artists' work in unconventional spaces, regularly partnering with experimental brands and retailers.

"We are deeply invested in the licensing world, yet we offer our customers ways to differentiate themselves in a media saturated environment with art that is both recognizable, yet high quality and high-profile," says Becksted.

This approach has led to a number of key collaborations including Keith Haring x Coach, The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundations runway collection with Raf Simons and Basquiat x Supreme.

"It's not just about image, it's about having a story to tell. Retailers want to create compelling narratives and engage customers with their brand," continues Becksted.

That commitment has led to brands like Urban Decay, Billabong, Comme des Garçons, L'Oreal, Samsung, Toms, Uniqlo, Zara, Forever 21, Absolut, Adidas, Joyrich and Huff turning to the agency for new projects. At Licensing Expo Artestar will seek new opportunities for its clients.

Artestar is based in New York City with affiliate offices in Italy, France, Germany, Sweden, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Israel, South Korea and Japan.



Jewel Branding & Licensing Booth #H94

Jewel Branding and Licensing helps licensees increase customer engagement through design.

"For us, it's important that each brand or designer we work with has a unique design aesthetic," says Ilana Wilensky, vice president, Jewel Branding.

Creators span all segments of the art world including interior design, illustration, watercolor and photography. Jewel's roster includes interior designer Stacy Garcia of Stacy by Stacy Garcia, illustrator Christine Anderson and artist Mia Charro. The company specializes in marketing these artists work in apparel, fashion accessories, cosmetics, stationery, gift, tabletop, home textiles and home décor. Partners include Pottery Barn Teen, FabFitFun and many more.

Jewel Branding is actively seeking new artists who have developed a fan base through social media.

"What we've been looking for in a new client is whether they have a growing and engaged social media following. Retailers often like when the artist promotes their brands through social media," says Wilensky.

The agency recently signed artist/social influencer EttaVee, whose hand painted, colorful designs gained a strong organic following on social media. Licensing partners now include Airbnb and TJMaxx.

At Licensing Expo, Jewel Branding will showcase its roster including the Rachel Hale brand of animal portraits, whom Jewel recently signed.

The female-led Jewel team boasts more than 80 years of collective experience with offices in New York, Los Angeles and Atlanta.



Zolan Licensing Agency Booth #G107

The Zolan Company is a full-service boutique agency that represents a roster of internationally recognized art and design brands, photographers, character licensing and more.

Established in 1993 and developed around the art and business of popular children's artist, Donald Zolan, the agency was one of the first to develop co-branding programs for its artists. Today, the company conducts business around the globe and is heavily invested in licensing for social good.

"[Donald] set the standard for the agency through his values and philosophies about the art business, social causes and licensing with his children's art. We still continue to co-brand and engage in social initiatives through the Zolan Heritage brand. But we've also expanded with young contemporary artists from around the world who share the same philosophy and values," says Jennifer Zolan, president, Zolan

Licensing Agency. "We now have 10 artists in our agency and the idea is not to represent 100 artists, but to represent unique, special and diverse artists, the kind that will set us apart from everyone at Licensing Expo."

Zolan represents a select group of artists and continues to seek out new artists whose aesthetic will stand out in both the U.S. and international marketplace.

"For 2017, our goal was to find brand-new artists that we felt would align with us. It's about licensing them within the greater marketplace," says Zolan. "In the American market, the first artist is Ali Puro, a prominent artist from Madrid and a street artist who creates the phenomenal murals of kids. They all have a messy sweetness and it's all about finding the child inside. Licensing Expo will be the first time he takes his work down the licensing course. We also have Dusty Kid from Hong Kong. The brand is very successful in the region and they now have 100 licensed products as well as partnership with Canon



and Clinique. This is the first time they will bring the brand into the U.S. market."

Beyond commercial licensing, The Zolan Licensing Agency is committed to social responsibility and works closely with Professor Luisella Magnani of Varese, Italy, who uses Donald Zolan's work in psychosocial therapy in pediatric cancer of preverbal children.

Giordano Studios Booth #G87

Since 1980, the Giordano family has worked with a select body of artists to bring traditional illustration and nostalgic scenes to everything from blankets to homewares. Brothers Greg and Bob now sit at the helm of the business their father Joseph constructed years before licensing became a natural step for working artists.

"My dad started 35 years ago in the business, and my brother and I both were raised helping his company as well. We both went to art school. We're lifers," says Greg Giordano, founder, Greg & Company.

This unique insight has allowed the brothers to leverage their knowledge to support artists from contract to creative.

Giordano Studios' artists' specialize in nostalgia, characters, florals, birds and rural scenes.

Greg & Company is a licensing company built around Greg Giordano's own portfolio. He specializes in nature scenes and classic American imagery including mid-century cars, vintage tractors and wildlife.

"I'm like the antique guy—I like to go to flea markets and look for classic Americana... kind of like 'American Pickers,'" says Giordano.

At Licensing Expo, Giordano will seek opportunities for his personal brand as well as his portfolio of artists to build on existing relationships.



Art Brand Studio Booth #F134

Art Brand Studios sees art as a universal language. The branded art program publisher has used its voice to manage the works of legacy artists including Thomas Kinkade, Simon Bull and Blend Cota, among others.

Art Brand specializes in publishing, licensing and marketing and aims to grow its artist's brands through corporate and independent exhibitions around the world, as well as through its numerous licensing agreements.

Over the last 30 years, Art Brand's artist's work has placed it licensed merchandise in more than 16,000 retail locations. Collaborators include Stave Puzzles, Teleflora, Card.com, Mini Masters, Disney, DC Comics, Hallmark and the Bradford Exchange.

The agency has also explored multiplatform marketing that spans multimedia campaigns, web, print and digital.

Through its Thomas Kinkade program, the agency has successfully partnered with the Bradford Exchange for lamps, Hallmark for holiday cards and Plaid for a paint by numbers painting set.

Art Brand Studios continues to acquire artists, and recently acquired fellow art representation company Wild Wings. ©



THE NEW SPIN MASTER

Spin Master is coming into its own and heading into new territories as its business expands beyond its roots. This year at Licensing Expo, it looks to build out its homegrown properties and offer them up to the world at large.

by AMANDA CIOLETTI

Spin Master has been having a good few years. With a huge success in its “Paw Patrol” preschool series (a partnership with Nickelodeon) and retailers around the world clamoring to keep its Hatchimals product in stock, Spin Master is positioned to storm into Licensing Expo, taking place May 22-24 in Las Vegas, Nev., with some serious momentum behind it.

What started as a pure-play toy outfit has now grown into a fully encompassing children’s entertainment company, and the fruits of those labors are primed for further extension.

“To talk about where Spin Master is going, you have to look at where we came from,” says Adam Beder, executive vice president, global licensing and business affairs, Spin Master. “We’re 1,000 percent rooted as a fully-diversified promotional toy company, meaning that we have never played in just one category or one aisle.”

The company has always been hungry though, and eager to grow, so naturally and organically it began looking to licensing and merchandising as a model to bolster its mission.

“But what we realized is that it was hard to find that perfect brand or perfect opportunity, and we started to contemplate an idea... what if we did it all ourselves?” says Beder.

That spark of an idea can be seen in the pivot the company has made in recent years, and can certainly be attributed to its major scaling up. Well, that and “Paw Patrol.”

“When you ask what has catapulted Spin Master into the stratosphere for growth in terms of licensing, it’s ‘Paw Patrol.’ It had a massive hand in that,” says Beder.

“Paw Patrol” is an animated series airing on partner Nick Jr. that centers on 10-year-old Ryder and five plucky pups that each have a real-world job such as construction worker. The show helps preschoolers learn bravery and heroism, as well as teach lessons about caring for animals.

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“Paw Patrol” airs in 160 countries and is the No. 1-rated series for children, ages 2- to 5-years-old, according to Nielson.

“Through a partnership with Nickelodeon, and what incredible partners they have been, we have built an incredible franchise together,” says Beder. “It’s one of those franchises that comes along once a decade, let alone for any one company. It’s a very special property.”

Nickelodeon has global rights for “Paw Patrol” TV distribution and merchandise, which is found on shelves around the world at mass market retailers in almost all categories.

“Through ‘Paw Patrol’ we’ve grown as an organization and realized more so than ever the importance of building IP, owning an intellectual property and commercializing it through more avenues than just toys,” says Beder. “Where we are today is looking at what we do from a toy standpoint and an entertainment standpoint, and we will look at partnerships through a strategic lens.”

Enter Hatchimals, a product range that capitalizes on the of-the-moment trend of surprise and unboxing, combined with a cute character and engaging backstory.

Launched in 2016, the Hatchimals brand has continued to take markets by storm, consistently making all best-of lists since its debut. This August, Hatchimals will kick off its fourth batch, Hatchimals Mystery, which lets kids discover four new and unique characters. Hatchimals will further expand Oct. 5 with another product launch set to announce at the third annual Hatchimals Day celebration.

The Hatchimals world was never meant to be contained to just the core toy, either, says Beder.

“Hatchimals is not just a toy of wonder that amazes children through its play pattern, but also a whole world complete with narrative, character development and a build-out of a story, available not only via webisodes, but also through publishing with our partner Penguin,” says Beder.

An early partner, Penguin Young Readers publishes readers and activity books based on the Hatchimals brand, expanding the character world even further and elaborating on the characters in the Hatchimals universe.

“Penguin came in early before we even sold one piece



to help build the Hatchimals world,” says Beder. “It’s created a whole platform for the CP business, and now we have many partners globally and have created a successful program that sets the stage for Licensing Expo and makes a statement that is multi-branded, driving business through a direct licensing and merchandising business model.”

Currently, the brand has more than 30 licensees on board in North America, and agents tapped in Europe (CPLG), Latin America (Tycoon) and Australia (Haven). More agents are

expected to come on board in Asia territories, as well.

Soft lines including bedding and apparel, in addition to the core toy and its lower price collectible spin-offs, are also a strong category for the brand, which is further supported by web-based content.

Spin Master has new IP on deck for Licensing Expo, as well.

Fuggler is a strange monster doll that has a signature toothy grin.

Fuggler originally debuted as an independent brand in the U.K. and was sold via maker website Etsy. Spin Master acquired the brand in full, and has launched a 40 character strong plush range this month at specialty retailers, which will then expand to Target in August. Core toys will set the tone for the brand and follow with licensed apparel via licensees such as Bioworld.

“Great toys have happened for 100 years, and there have always been toys of the year or toys of the decade that capture an enormous amount of mindshare,” says Beder. “But the way that these new brands and the way in which they break out is a new marketplace dynamic across all the categories. It has to do with how the kids love the toy or character, but they also must have a compelling story or character that allows children to play in that toy’s world.”

“Spin Master is uniquely and well-positioned to leverage an incredible amount of know-how, and I don’t say that lightly,” continues Beder. “There are very few companies that have the expertise and the engineering capacity to deliver the magic in a toy at the right price. There’s so much knowledge and experience now in this company, and it allows us to bring a new way of thinking about bringing characters to life.” ©



ADAM BEDER

executive vice president, global licensing and business affairs, Spin Master

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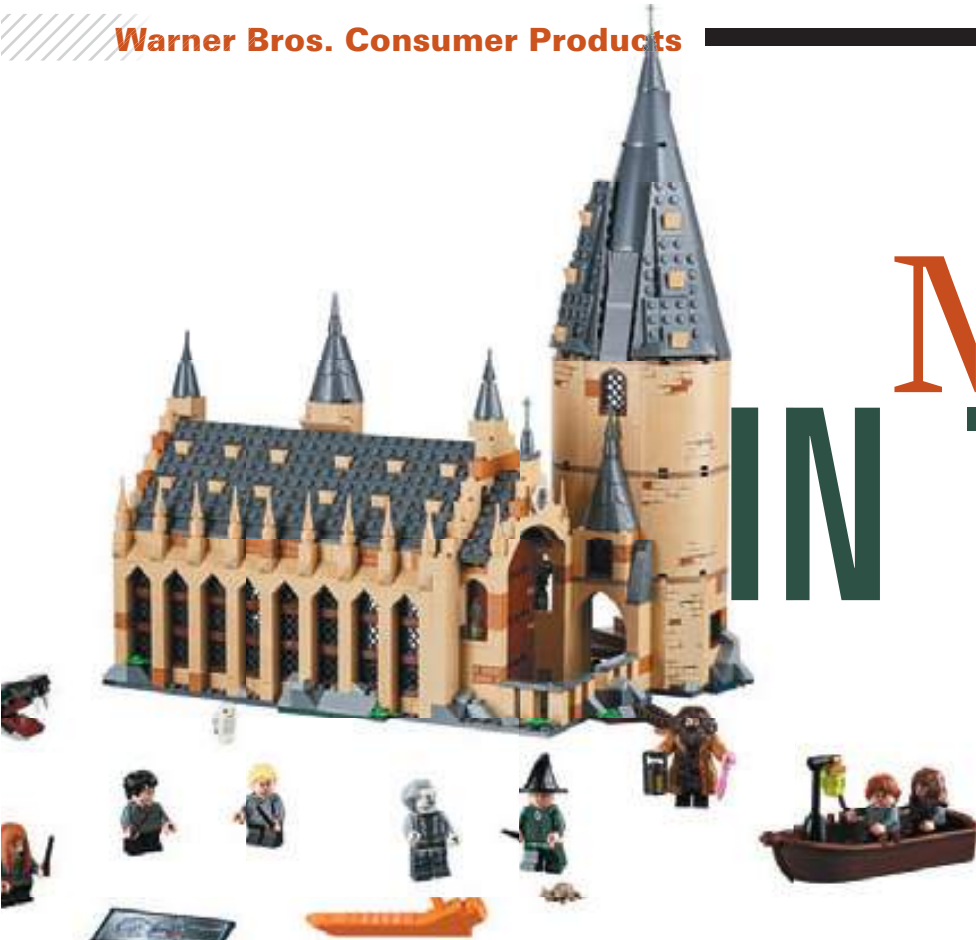


RAINBOW

Magic is IN THE AIR

Harry Potter is celebrating its 20th anniversary, and its Wizarding World universe has grown to become a true evergreen brand that continues to grow year after year.

by BARBARA SAX



Two decades after Scholastic released *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the first installment of the beloved book series by J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter* remains one of the top franchises at Warner Bros. Consumer Products, delighting its expansive and loyal fanbase with new content, engaging products and immersive experiences.

"Research tells us that the Wizarding World is more relevant and contemporary today than ever before," says Maryellen Zarakas, senior vice president, franchise management and marketing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products. "In addition to having a powerful slate of new content and experiences in the pipeline, our fanbase also continues to expand as Millennials, who were once waiting in line for the book release, become parents and are now introducing the franchise to their children."

The magical universe made a resurgence in 2016 when it expanded to include new stories from J.K. Rowling such as the critically-acclaimed play "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" and the blockbuster film *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

Warner Bros. Consumer Products has also kept the franchise visible with the launch of new products and experiences for fans to engage with the brand. For example, WBCP's licensing partner Universal Parks & Resorts expanded The Wizarding World of *Harry Potter* to include Hogsmeade at Universal Studios Hollywood and introduced new shows such as "The Nighttime Lights at Hogwarts Castle," a colorful state-of-the-art

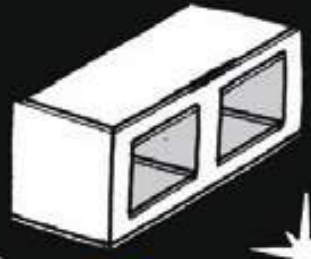
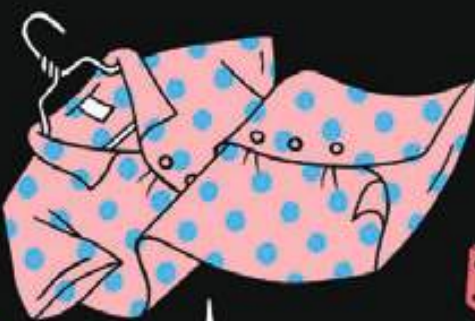
light display featuring special effects projection.

WBCP has also forged a number of new licensing partnerships to expand the brand in new directions. Last year, Pottery Barn Teen and sister company Williams Sonoma launched an inspired line of *Harry Potter* home products. The collaboration with Pottery Barn included themed bedding, accessories, lamps, backpacks, lap desks and blankets, while Williams Sonoma brought themed spatulas and aprons to the market. Partnerships with new and emerging brands in the apparel and accessories space, such as Alex & Ani and Danielle Nicole, also gave *Harry Potter* fans a new way to express their fandom with fashion.

Collaborations with retail partners have also lent some magic to the retail experience. WBCP teamed up with Primark across Europe to bring magical touches inspired by *Harry Potter* in store. Key flagship locations featured everything from floating Hogwarts letters and wands to stacked luggage and other inspired props, delivering a dream shopping experience to fans.

"We are constantly developing new ways to enhance the shopping experience for our fans, driving a more meaningful and long-lasting relationship with the brand and retail partner," says Preston Kevin Lewis, senior vice president, sales and retail business development, Warner Bros. Consumer Products. "We will continue to re-imagine how we show up at retail this year, with plans to deliver even more unique experiences for our fans to engage in the Wizarding World."

WBCP says 2018 will be a momentous year for the



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PRESTON KEVIN LEWIS
senior vice president, sales and
retail business development,
Warner Bros. Consumer
Products.

Wizarding World, with an impressive slate that includes the highly anticipated release of *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* this fall and exciting tentpoles that will fuel the franchise and engage fans throughout the year.

Earlier this year, Warner Bros. released all-new Wizarding World branding that will be incorporated across all franchise activity including packaging and retail displays, starting this July. The new branding speaks to its publishing roots as well as the brand's core DNA in magic by featuring principal character wands.

"With a new brand identity that encompasses the ever-expanding universe, we are taking a fresh approach to fan engagement that fuels storytelling, imagination and creativity," says Zarakas. "Excitement and buzz continues to build as we release new content into the market. Through compelling collaborations, organic promotions and inventive products, we are focused on creating a deeper relationship between the brand and fans."

In addition to the new branding, Warner Bros. plans to fuel the franchise year-round with meaningful activities and products designed to celebrate the action-packed storylines and cast of fan-favorite wizards from the films. The year of the Wizarding World kicked off in January at Universal Orlando Resorts' A Celebration of *Harry Potter*, a three-day event that welcomed thousands of fans.

This back-to-school season, the brand will be celebrating Back to Hogwarts with new products and retail activations planned across multiple departments and retailers around the world. LEGO will launch a new Wizarding World line inspired by both *Harry Potter* and *Fantastic Beasts* films. The collection, which retails from \$3.99 to \$399, already has fans

buzzing. Toy licensee Jakks Pacific will introduce new interactive and technologically enhanced wands that spur imagination and play around *Harry Potter*.

On Nov. 16, the second installment of the *Fantastic Beasts* series, *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*, premieres to audiences around the world. Featuring an array of new creatures and characters, the film draws a close connection to *Harry Potter*. The film will be supported with a global licensing and merchandising program that includes a range of merchandise, from replica artifacts for collectors to lifestyle apparel and accessories for fans of all ages. The licensing program will debut worldwide in September, and also includes publishing, stationery, fine collectibles, gifts and novelties, home décor, apparel, accessories, costumes and more.

In December, the brand will shift into high gear for the holidays with a broad variety of activations for the entire family, including an expanded line of spellbinding products wrapped in festive holiday packaging, and unique holiday merchandise and entertainment, including Universal's projection mapping show "The Magic of Christmas at Hogwarts Castle" at Hollywood, Orlando and Japan locations. The Christmas in the Wizarding World Mall Experience, which welcomed hundreds of thousands of guests at the Utah and Bangkok locations in 2017, will add more locations around the world this holiday season.

"We are eager to share what we have developed for 2018 with our fans, but with affinity and awareness for the brand at an all-time high, we are already looking ahead to how we continue momentum with disruptive partnerships, immersive experiences and breakthrough products," says Zarakas. ©





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TRANSFORMERS

A NEW CHAPTER

Forget the *Transformers* franchise you grew up with... or maybe not. Hasbro has unveiled a series of activations, experiences and merchandise for its modular superhero brand that looks to draw new audiences into the franchise while actively engaging with the time period, storylines and mediums familiar to its original fanbase.

by AMBER NICOLE ALSTON

This holiday season the universe will enter a new dimension when *Bumblebee*, the first spin off of the *Transformers* film franchise, lands in theaters. The new film from director Travis Knight takes place in 1987 and centers on the eponymous yellow and black Volkswagen bug (depicted as a Chevrolet vehicle in previous films).

“It’s remarkable to think over 34 years [*Transformers* has] become a 360-lifestyle brand, encompassing everything from feature films to comics and television, toys, consumer products and video games,” says Tom Warner, senior vice president, *Transformers* franchise, Hasbro. “What’s great about the universe we’ve built around *Transformers* is that we’ve told a lot of great stories, but there are a lot more stories to tell and its ever expanding.

“We decided on Bumblebee because we wanted to go in a bit of a different direction. We wanted a character-focused film versus an ensemble. He is

loved by kids, multiple generations, girls and women. Everyone loves Bumblebee,” continues Warner.

Hasbro is capitalizing on the film’s surroundings with a slate of ‘80s-themed launches including a TV series, a vinyl album and a graphic novel, which the company hopes will “lead a wave of Millennial nostalgia.”

“What’s great is that we’ve built up characters that people have fallen in love with and want more storytelling,” says Warner. “We want to be true to those characters and true to the stories that are being told today, but push them into new areas including gifts and new ways to experience our characters and the *Transformers* world.”

Hasbro is off to a running start with two new television programs, “*Transformers Cyberverse* (Chapter 1)” and “*Transformers: Prime Wars Trilogy*.” The first is an animated series from Hasbro Studios and Boulder Media that follows Bumblebee as he attempts to recover his memories on Earth. “*Transformers: Prime Wars Trilogy*” picks up on the “*Transformers: Combiner Wars*” story line and offers a more detailed look at the franchise’s characters and history.

Though the shows are not set in the 1980s, “*Cyberverse*” emphasizes the idea of keeping memories alive, while “*Prime Wars*,” which debuted on Verizon’s streaming service VerizonGo90, was conceived as a way to reach older, devoted fans who have grown up with the franchise.

“One thing we wanted to do was go after our fans and give them entertainment that was specifically targeted at them—something that had a little more edge and was geared toward an older fan. We knew the best place to reach them was with






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digital because they are very tech savvy fans,” says Warner.

The first two chapters of “Transformers Prime Wars” has achieved more than 2 million views, according to Warner.

“It definitely has universal appeal. There are nuances within the consumer base but overall the idea of Autobots and the overall concept is absolutely universal,” says Simon Waters, senior vice president, global brand licensing and publishing, Hasbro.

Hasbro also spun back in time with Enjoy the Ride Records and Sony Music/Legacy Recordings for the vinyl record “Hasbro Studios Presents ‘80’s TV Classics: Music from the Transformers,” the first official release of the score from the original 1984 animated series in any format.

According to *Forbes*, vinyl sales have grown more than 50 percent since 2014 with Millennial-oriented retailers such as Hot Topic and Urban Outfitters among the top vinyl retailers.

On the publishing front, IDW Publishing is set to release “Transformers: Bumblebee—Win If You Dare,” an all ‘80s graphic novel, in the fall.

“Even those fans who grew up with in the ‘80s understand the history and lore involved. Sometimes they want to go back to the car and the original storytelling. We’ve done that with our partner IDW,” says Waters.

Hasbro’s 360-degree approach to the new film is one that reflects the company’s continuous evolution from a toy company to a global entertainment and play business.

“Our first piece is to step outside of the traditional heartland business and think about opportunities way beyond the toy aisle,” says Waters. “Our blueprint is a dramatic expansion and that includes stories, new movies, consumer products—it’s about navigating the consumer product landscape as a whole and, as all entertainment companies face dynamic challenges, it means not relying entirely on one sector.”

Through that holistic approach, Hasbro is expanding the reach of its iconic franchises and attracting new audiences.

The new film comes to life with the help of actress Hailee Steinfeld and action star John Cena. At

a time when audiences are looking for more female representation on screen, Waters remarks that “the choice to cast Hailee in the leading role may open the traditionally male brand up to female fans.”

“We felt [Hailee] was right for the picture and we are looking to expand our audience and be as inclusive as possible with the franchise,” adds Warner. “This is a step worth noting for a brand that has traditionally been displayed in the boys’ aisle of toy stores.”

The *Transformers* franchise has also given Hasbro an opportunity to expand in China, where the country’s car culture and affinity for action films has piqued the large consumer population’s interest.

This year, the company partnered with Dan Mintz’s DMG Entertainment to launch an immersive interactive digital simulation experience center in Shanghai, which features character interactions and opportunities to explore the *Transformers* universe through AR and VR.

“When we look at location-based experiences, we’re looking at augmented reality or virtual reality as being a very important part of our overall franchise strategy because that’s an opportunity for consumers to interact with giant robots. We wouldn’t have been able to do that 10 or five years ago, but we’re keeping up with technology and immersed in trends so fans can really have an experience with our brand,” says Waters.

Hasbro plans to build more centers in major Chinese cities over the next five years and has plans for more tech-forward experiences around the globe.

“We integrated a lot more of our digital experience across our entire line, including our game line,” continues Waters. “You’re going to see a lot more of us finding ways to marry the digital and the physical world. We work with our design and development teams to try to find new technologies to incorporate in our products. We work with licensees who will bring innovation to the franchise.”

Hasbro, who collaborated with sportswear label Diadora and retailer Bait for a line of high-end sneakers and luxury brand Moschino for branded apparel, also sees future opportunity in fashion and design-oriented consumers.

“It was a real honor to do a fashion collaboration with Moschino,” says Waters. “We reached our existing audience but also tapped into a new one. The beauty of *Transformers* is that we can we can sell a \$1 pencil case and sell a \$1,500 t-shirt at the same time on the same day. That shows the flexibility of the brand across all channels and across all price points.”

With an eye on the past and sights set on a licensing-heavy future, Hasbro will reveal more exciting partnerships.

“We’ve been able to offer something new and different on a regular basis to our customers, which has translated into them wanting to buy product,” says Waters. ©



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THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Whether they're moving, looking to refresh their space or renovating their home, consumers are continuing to lift up the home category—and licensed brands are cashing in.

by ERICA GARBER

Home is where the heart is, and for most consumers that also means filling their abode with quality goods. In today's era, however, there are a multitude of options when it comes to homewares, and with brands like HGTV, *Better Homes & Gardens* and Scott Living, among others, shelling out advice on the latest trends in the space, it only makes sense for these brands to expand into their own ranges of licensed products giving consumers more options than ever before.

"The good news is that consumer demand for home products is not waning. How and where they buy new sheets for their guest bedroom or that

perfect decorative pillow for a pop of color on their couch continues to evolve," says Sondra Newkirk, senior director, brand licensing, Meredith. "We see shopping behavior split between 'need' states and 'want' states: when time is limited, consumers know what they need and can quickly go online. When they're looking for inspiration or for products they want, in-store shopping provides a tactile experience, tapping into the pleasure of discovering what they didn't know they needed."

So, what does it take to meet consumer demand in the home category? Take Meredith, for example, which boasts brands like *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Southern Living* and *Coastal Living*, among others. The world's second largest licensor, according to *License Global's* annual Top 150 Global Licensors report released last month, has utilized these brands to create a robust assortment of branded home goods including patio furniture, cushions, pillows, string lighting, pathway lights, planters, rugs, drink dispensers and much more.

Most recently, Meredith partnered with Universal Furniture for *Coastal Living*-themed living, dining, bedroom and upholstery furnishings celebrating



the look and feel of seaside living. The company also expanded its *Coastal Living* Home Collection with Bed Bath & Beyond last year.

Other highlights from Meredith's home licensing program include Dillard's *Southern Living* collection, which saw double-digit growth and became one of the retailer's most successful partnership in 2017; Clipper Corporation's *Allrecipes*-branded oval roaster set, which includes several kitchen products designed to help home cooks multi-task; and Direct Wines' *Better Homes & Gardens* Wine Club, which ships 12 new bottles to members every three months; among others.

Another brand that has been successful at tapping into consumer demand is Scott Living, founded by Jonathan and Drew Scott (aka "The Property Brothers"). The brand debuted in 2014 and since has entered into a host of categories including outdoor and indoor furniture, tabletop, décor, fabric and more, sold at retailers like Amazon, Wayfair, QVC, Lowe's, Bed Bath & Beyond and more.

The duo has even expanded the Scott Living brand into mattresses with licensee Restonic and is gearing up to add a suite of products in 2019 including mattress pads, bed pillows, fashion top beds, rugs and other home décor items. But Scott Living isn't only helping consumers out in the bedroom; the company is also planning to release a new collection of licensed products that will allow them to build out their entire dining rooms, excluding the food, of course.

"There's a lot of monotony in the industry when it comes to product for the everyday consumer. It's a lot of the same, boring, safe items," says Drew Scott. "One thing we're trying to do is stimulate that and break

things up a little bit, as well as to show people that you can have style and function. Whether you're renovating or putting product in a home, a lot of what's produced isn't functional for the average family, and we really try to think of families and how these products and furniture work in the home when we create them."

Scott Living recently released a line of branded towels on QVC, which racked in \$2.6 million in sales in less than 24 hours, according to Jonathan Scott.

"When people buy \$2.6 million worth of towels in less than 24 hours, you know you've got to be doing something right," remarks Drew Scott.

The Scott Brothers aren't the only celebrities who have built their licensing portfolios in the home category.

Take Kathy Ireland, for example, who through her company, Kathy Ireland Worldwide (the world's No. 27 largest licensor, according to *License Global*), has crafted a significant licensing program within the category.

Most recently, KIWW renewed its licensing agreement with Pacific Coast Lighting, expanded its relationship with Nourison to include its Kathleen Marie New York label and entered into a new partnership with Michael Amini for Kathy Ireland Home Designs.

"People laughed in our faces when we decided to license our brand in the furniture industry, and last year, our company was named one of the 40 greatest influencers in the industry by *Furniture Today*," says Ireland. "The industry has opened up so much since our company first ventured into the home industry, and people are understanding the power of licensing in the home space."

Christopher Knight, known for his role as Peter Brady on "The Brady Bunch," is another celebrity "homing" in on the home industry. The Brand Liaison,



which represents Knight for licensing, has constructed a program spanning bedding, home décor, home accents and more, all of which can be found through traditional brick-and-mortar retailers and through e-commerce options such as Overstock.com.

The Brand Liaison, in partnership with Daymond John's The Shark Group, has also seen success with Catherine Zeta Jones' home brand, Casa Zeta-Jones, on QVC.

The agency has also expanded the fashion brand Gloria Vanderbilt into the home category and is currently working on a program for Romeo and Juliet Couture.

From the art category, Debra Valencia has launched a program that includes bedding, sheets, tabletop and more. And Barbara Ignatiev, The Brand Liaison's newest client, will also debut products, including ceramic and melamine.

Licensing agency Beanstalk is also making its mark on the home category via its clients HGTV Home and Kelly Ripa.

In 2017, HGTV Home's consumer products program achieved \$400 million in retail sales with merchandise spanning paint, furniture, wallpaper, decorative fabric and outdoor living. The brand's most notable initiative saw Sherwin-Williams launch a branded paint collection in Sherwin-Williams' stores and in all Lowe's locations nationwide.

The agency has also painted a robust licensing program for Kelly Ripa Home that spans decorative fabric, wallpaper, bedding, furniture and rugs. Several years ago, the brand partnered with retailer Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft on the exclusive launch of the Kelly Ripa Home decorative fabric collection, which is now available in more than 400 Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft locations. Looking ahead, the retailer will expand its Kelly Ripa Home offerings

to include 10 new fabric options and branded peel and stick wallpaper.

Beyond its traditional home clients, Beanstalk brought British designer Matthew Williamson into the fold with wallpaper and furnishings from Osborne & Little. Once established in the category, Williamson launched his first U.S. home collection in collaboration with CB2. The 39-piece range featured pieces including furniture, table top goods and other



home accessories, all of which showcased the designer's signature style and prints. As a follow-up to the collection, Williamson is gearing up to launch a 12-piece line including rugs, cushion covers and more this summer.

Across the pond, Beanstalk paired Williamson with British-based home manufacturer Duresta to launch his first bespoke furniture collection, which is sold in high-end retailers worldwide. He also designed a collection of bed, bath and decorative accessories for the mid-market department store Debenhams.

All in all, the home licensing industry looks to be in good shape, as does the category's position at retail. According to the National Retail Federation, retail sales at furniture and home furnishings stores were up 6.6 percent year-over-year in January, up 2.9 percent year-over-year in February and up 4.1 percent year-over-year in March.

"Many changes have occurred in U.S. society over the past decade that either directly or indirectly impact the home furniture industry," says Steven Heller, founder, The Brand Liaison. "Technological changes, the rise of social media, evolving demographics and the increasing purchasing power of women are just a few factors that furniture manufacturers and retailers must consider in their marketing efforts." ©



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CHOOSE YOUR OWN

It's possible to spend your free time like you're on your very own show at Nat Geo. The company is extending its consumer product line to give its fans exclusive experiences that only they can do.

by BARBARA SAX

National Geographic Partners continues to build on the momentum it has gained in the past few years. With a new leader at the helm and an expanded consumer products team, the company is leveraging the Nat Geo brand in new and exciting ways in the coming years.

Gary Knell, who took the helm of the global joint venture between 21st Century Fox and National Geographic in March, is no stranger to licensing having spent 22 years at Sesame Workshop, 12 of which as president and chief executive officer, as well as previously holding the position of president and CEO of the National Geographic Society, where he oversaw the organization's non-profit activities in science, exploration, education and media innovation. Now overseeing National Geographic television, print and digital assets and related activities in travel and consumer products, Knell has a deep understanding of the brand.

Knell and Rosa Zeegers, executive vice president of consumer products and experiences, National Geographic Partners, are proving to be the team to watch. Zeegers, who joined two years ago, has significantly extended the brand's reach since she began overseeing the company's global licensing, merchandising, travel, location-based entertainment and National Geographic Live businesses.

"I think there's a strategic set of lifestyle attributes to the National Geographic brand that Rosa and our colleagues have begun to rediscover," says Knell. "National Geographic is a 130-year-old brand with universal name recognition and, at a time when it is hard for media brands to avoid polarization, it stands for universal values of creativity, curiosity and discovery. It's a true global brand that travels around the world. The network is seen in more than 170 countries and we have more than 80 million Instagram followers. It's also a very wide brand that appeals to different age segments, from Nat Geo kids up to older folks who are rediscovering our work through adult learning. The yellow border is a powerful icon that has been built over decades."

The trick, says Knell, is to identify appropriate world-class partners that understand and respect the heritage of the iconic brand and can express it in ways that doesn't lessen its hard-won cachet.

"It's important that products live up to the brand expectation," says Knell. "It's hard work to find partners who can do that, and we're very selective when choosing companies to work with."

Zeegers, Knell and their team of global experts are up to the task and have been working with licensing agency IMG to identify appropriate partners.

Deals signed last year are now being launched, including a partnership with premium luggage manufacturer Eagle Creek for a co-branded line of explorer travel bags that will hit stores this month. Hiking footwear company Dachstein recently launched a shoe in retail locations in Germany and France, and will add a complete hiking footwear collection next year to be worn by several European explorers who are sponsored by National Geographic.

"The ability to tap into our network of explorers makes us truly authentic and differentiates us in this category," says Zeegers.

Since funding research is a key differentiator for the organization (27 percent of all proceeds are directed back to the National Geographic Society in the form of grants and scientific funding), the team recently launched a "Your Purchase has Purpose" campaign that will be executed across every retail touchpoint, from hang tags on apparel to shelf-talkers, to let consumers know that whenever they purchase a National Geographic-branded product, they are directly funding scientific research.

National Geographic is aggressively growing existing partnerships with The Nature Company and iP2Entertainment. Based in Korea, retail partner The Nature Company has been expanding its National Geographic concept doors count from 22 locations last year to 45, and plans to roll the concept out to other parts of the world.

Entertainment partner iP2 kicked off its Ultimate Explorer indoor family exploration centers in China this year.

"Each of these entertainment centers features 18 different attractions based on National Geographic's content geared toward families with school-aged children, ages 5 to 12," says Zeegers. "The plan is to open two in locations in China, one in Kuwait, one in Italy and two in Mexico."

Amplifying consumer reach with immersive experiences is a key component of the team's strategy, and National Geographic and SPE Partners teamed up to produce National Geographic Encounter Ocean Odyssey, a first-of-its-kind immersive family entertainment experience that transports audiences on an undersea journey from the South Pacific across the ocean to the west coast of North America, it debuted this fall in Times Square in New York City.

"This is entertainment with a purpose," says Zeegers.



GARY KNELL
chief executive officer, National
Geographic Partners

ADVENTURE

“The show totally transports people while it educates them about the ocean and inspires them to take a pledge to help preserve the ocean. We’re already at 90 percent of our years’ planned volume Celebrities have visited us, and we have future locations in the works.”

On Earth Day, National Geographic premiered “Symphony for Our World,” a 90-minute live orchestral performance, with groundbreaking imagery and storytelling from 130 years of National Geographic history matched in perfect synchronization with instruments and choir that was presented in concert venues around the world. A co-production with Jason Michael Paul Entertainment and featuring an original symphony created by Bleeding Fingers Music, a company co-founded by Academy Award-winning composer Hans Zimmer and Steve Kofsky, the debut performance was also timed to an hour-long special television event that debuted on National Geographic WILD in 140 countries.

National Geographic named live entertainment merchandise and production company The Araca Group as its e-commerce partner to improve its customer experience across all touchpoints and also develop apparel, accessories and stationery products based on National Geographic’s tentpoles and franchises.

One of the team’s most exciting developments is the fall launch of *Explorer Academy*, a series of seven fact-based fiction books full of adventure, real-world science and code-breaking that focus on a diverse set of characters faced with National Geographic-like missions. The series will tie-in to iP2 Family Entertainment Centers, where visitors can live out the storylines.

“We truly believe this is a story that is a perfect match for the National Geographic brand and is incredibly relevant for our target consumers, kids 7 to 12,” says Zeegers. “Our intention is to build out *Explorer Academy* into a true franchise with a digital component, gaming component and full consumer product component, which we plan to launch in fall 2019.”

The organization’s global initiative to significantly reduce the amount of single-use plastic polluting the ocean has created new licensing opportunities as well. As part of the initiative, National Geographic is creating a consortium of brands with the shared goal of creating a global, high-impact sustainability program.

“We believe that every brand and company

we bring to the consortium will have its own contribution to make,” says Zeegers.

The North Face, a brand whose core values are a natural fit with National Geographic, has signed on as the inaugural partner for the project.

“We’re kicking this partnership off by custom-producing a co-branded product range that will be available this month, the same time that *National Geographic* magazine will have a plastic theme and come for the first time in a paper wrap,” she says. “This initiative with The North Face is not a one-off, it’s a strategic long-term partnership.”

Also new is the launch of four new National Geographic Kids’ trivia games for Amazon Alexa based on the National Geographic hit book series *Weird But True*, which has sold more than 7 million copies and is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. National Geographic’s trivia games Funny Fill-Ins, This or That and Name that Animal round out the new offering.

“We know that artificial intelligence is one of the fastest-growing market segments projected to have 1.6 billion active users by 2020 and we believe this is a fast-growing segment for us. This is a perfect match for us to inspire a new generation of explorers,” says Zeegers.

The organization is also teaming up with footwear manufacturer Clarks on the launch of a desert boot in April 2019, followed by the launch of a full footwear collection inspired by The National Geographic Photo Ark project. Led by photographer Joel Sartore, Photo Ark is a multi-year effort to document every species living in zoos and wildlife sanctuaries, and was founded to inspire action through education and help save wildlife by supporting on-the-ground conservation efforts. The traveling exhibit component of the project has toured globally.

“We developed not only a style guide based on the collection, but a range of collectible hang tags made from durable but sustainable materials that contain facts about the different animals,” Zeegers says.

The Photo Ark collection will be expanded to additional consumer product categories including apparel, stationery and home products, to name a few.

National Geographic has also recently signed a new deal with Mattel for a launch timed to New York Toy Fair 2019.

“We believe this is a long-term sustainable brand that will truly do what National Geographic is best at—inspiring the next generation of explorers,” says Zeegers. ©



ROSA ZEEGERS
executive vice president,
consumer products, National
Geographic Partners



'Prepping for' Peppa MILESTONE

"Peppa Pig" is celebrating its 15th anniversary in the U.K. next year, and the beloved property is on its way to becoming an evergreen license in new markets in the run up.

by BARBARA SAX



ANDREW CARLEY
executive vice president, global
licensing, family and brands,
Entertainment One

Preschoolers around the globe have embraced "Peppa Pig."

"The property works on two levels," says Andrew Carley, executive vice president, global licensing, family and brands, Entertainment One. "Children relate to 'Peppa' because so much of what a preschooler experiences in daily life is represented on the show, and that's not true for many children's shows. On another level, parents and caregivers can relate to the gentle humor in the show. Both levels resonate with audiences and that allows the show to travel well."

And as "Peppa Pig" gears up to celebrate 15 years on-air in the U.K., the company will continue to create engaging digital content for "Peppa" via apps, videos and other assets.

"We want to keep 'Peppa' relevant in an entertaining way so fans remain engaged in watching the show and interacting with the brand, capturing the attention of a new generation of preschoolers. In addition, we have significant marketing budgets to enhance exposure outside of broadcast and a retail budget to support our key partners and drive consumers to retail shelves," says Joan Grasso, senior vice president, licensing, North America, family and brands, eOne.

eOne and Astley Baker Davies are currently in production on 117 new episodes that will launch beginning in spring 2019, which provides a fresh pipeline of content through the end of 2022.

"With the new content you'll see Peppa start to experience new settings and that gives us the opportunity to expand the property's horizons," says Carley. "Now that we have a global footprint for 'Peppa' in licensing, we can reflect those territories in the show. Ashley Baker Davis has become adventurous with storylines, and that's opening up new avenues and new exciting opportunities."

In a special two-part episode, Peppa and her family will travel to a music festival, an adventure that has inspired a style guide and a collection of new toys. Current licensees are at work translating the look into new products.

"We're always careful with the way we translate 'Peppa' into product," says Carley. "Our intention is for 80 percent of the program to remain on the core of the show, while allowing 20 percent to be lifted onto licensing program."

The style guide's graphics and colors inject newness into the evergreen brand to keep it fresh and exciting in mature markets.

"In the mature markets, it's about making sure 'Peppa' remains front and center in consumers' and retailers' minds, so the 15th anniversary in the U.K. is a great platform to build on at retail," says Carley.

Year-long celebrations are planned for next year in the U.K., including brand partnerships, a cinema release and summer experiential opportunities. Two new rides will also launch at Paulton's Peppa Pig World this year, extending the preschool theme park attraction's footprint.

"Move with Peppa," an interactive series of



JOAN GRASSO
senior vice president, licensing,
North America, family and
brands, Entertainment One

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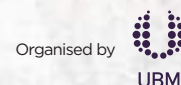


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exercise classes for preschoolers using the stories from “Peppa Pig” episodes, has expanded into nursery schools and children’s parties and will roll out internationally.

In the U.S., the property’s licensing partners, of which there are more than 85, have helped push retail sales to \$345 million. Deal renewals and new partners continue to drive sales.

“We’re very excited about new introductions this year from a range of blue-chip licensees, including Johnson & Johnson for Band-Aid brand products, oral care items from Colgate-Palmolive and craft and activity offerings from Crayola,” says Grasso.

Also new are toilet-training products from Ginsey Home Solutions, juices from Good2grow and baked goods from Give & Go.

“The licensing program has moved beyond the traditional toys, puzzles and clothing to the types of partners that are open only to mature, proven licenses,” says Carley. “It has taken a long time to bring those partners to the table and to move into that sector, so to have Colgate and Crayola come on board really gives ‘Peppa’ that stamp of longevity.”

Grasso says eOne is focusing on expanding in the consumer products and food categories, and will be seeking opportunities with potential new partners at Licensing Expo, taking place May 22-24 in Las Vegas, Nev.

“This will enable us to secure bigger retail promotions and elevate our brands to the next level,” she says. “We are also beginning to explore new ways to expand our already extensive licensing program with collaborations, direct-to-retail deals and new seasonal opportunities, which will also be an area of growth moving forward.”

eOne is investing heavily in the experiential arena.

The “Peppa Pig” stage show, which has seen ticket sales of more than 445,000 generating revenues of \$18 million, continues through 2018 and a new production is planned for 2019.

“We’re seeing increases year-on-year, which is unusual for a preschool show,” says Carley.

Global partner Merlin Entertainments recently launched Peppa Pig Land at Merlin’s Heide Park, with six scenes to explore, meet-and-greet opportunities, a gift shop and “Peppa”-themed rooms at the Heide Park Adventure Hotel. In addition, Merlin is set to create the ultimate “Peppa Pig” indoor play experience in the U.S. and China.

In Australia and New Zealand, eOne has signed several new partners including NurtureCare for diapers

and wipes, Park Avenue Foods for a confectionery line and MJM for puzzles. A live tour, “Peppa Pig’s Surprise,” recently launched and will tour across major Australian cities, and “Play Date with Peppa,” an immersive area experience that allows children to interact with the world of “Peppa,” is set to roll out internationally.

“eOne is making a point of building our experiential business, something that’s important to a mature property. Things like stage shows and theme parks give consumers that opportunity to engage with the property on a deep level,” says Carley.

Licensing programs continue to grow around the world, with 35 percent growth in toys this year in Brazil.

“In new markets where things are moving quickly, it’s all about capitalizing on growth,” says Carley.

High growth markets for “Peppa” include Germany, which had previously been a weak link in eOne’s EMEA global portfolio.

“Our broadcast platform recently changed to Super RTL, so for the first time we’re poised to drive a significant licensing program in Germany,” says Carley.

Partner Jazwares signed on as master toy licensee for Germany, Switzerland and Austria, and will launch a line this fall.

Carley expects China to become one of the largest markets for “Peppa” over the next few years. A number of broadcast platforms, including CCTV and VOD partners Youku, iQIYI and Tencent, have fueled the property’s growth. In response, eOne has bolstered its Hong Kong office team and recently signed Alpha Group, one of the largest toy companies in China, as the master toy partner in China.

“They’ve got access to a huge retail distribution base so there’s potential to transform ‘Peppa’s’ business in China in a manner we have not experienced to-date,” he says.

“eOne will maximize opportunities around 2019’s Year of the Pig, with further support of exclusive retail partnerships.

In Asia, eOne has a significant presence in mall venues with pop-up events and plans to build on that momentum.

“We’ve invested heavily in our experiential team so we’ll become more sophisticated in what those events look like,” says Carley. “As we move in to 2019, there’s going to be a significant amount of experiential activity across China in the form of stage shows, mall appearances and pop-up events.”

In Japan, master toy licensee Sega Toys recently orchestrated the launch of more than 100 SKUs at retailer Takashimaya in Tokyo.

“The Japanese market is probably the last big market for us, and it has great potential,” says Carley.

“Peppa Pig” debuted in India and Vietnam in 2017 and eOne is exploring those markets as well. ©



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LICENSING TO THE TUNE OF

The Country Music Association, the genre's foremost supporting organization, will debut in Las Vegas and present to the world country music's wide-reaching roster of talent. **by AMANDA CIOLETTI**

When you think of classic Americana symbols, nothing pops to mind faster than apple pie, baseball and country music.

With a popularity that spans coast to coast, the U.S. has embraced country music. In fact, more than 115 million Americans count themselves as country fans, according to statistics compiled by the Country Music Association, the trade organization charged with promoting and supporting the genre.

Founded in 1958 on the back of music legend Elvis Presley's popularity, CMA, now in its 60th year, works day-in and day-out to carry on the country music tradition and grow its business around the world.

"Through everything the Country Music Association does, it is all about supporting our country industry members and helping to facilitate growth, not only in the U.S., but globally," says Damon Whiteside, chief marketing officer, CMA.

CMA counts those that make "a majority of their living within the country music industry," says Whiteside, as its members, including artists, artist managers, songwriters, radio professionals and agencies, as well as agents that handle artist and brand extensions.

Through consumer-facing events, television specials and awards, educational opportunities and more, CMA furthers and bolsters its message.

"What we do as a trade association is facilitate educational opportunities, provide tools for our members to grow their business and do a lot of outreach into mainstream markets in the entertainment community, the business community and the licensed product community to let them know about country music and what a great opportunity it is to work with the industry and its artists," says Whiteside.

There are several public events that further

bolster the mission of CMA, including CMA Fest, CMA Awards, "CMA Country Christmas" and CMA Songwriters Series, which is currently in its 14th season and has brought more than 100 live performances featuring world-class artists to cities across the globe over the course of its lifetime.

"CMA is perceived as the brand stamp for the country music industry, if you will," says Whiteside. "We have three shows that air exclusively on ABC Television and include CMA Awards, CMA Fest and 'CMA Country Christmas.' Our CMA Awards in particular are the No. 1-rated country music programming and the No. 2 music awards show on television, just behind the Grammys. We're really proud of that and our huge audience. Fans know us from our brands."

CMA Fest is a four-day festival billed as the "ultimate country music fan experience" that is expected to draw more than 90,000 attendees to Nashville, Tenn., June 7-10. With more than 300 artists performing on 11 stages, this year's event will feature musical acts such as Kelsea Ballerini, Dierks Bentley, Luke Bryan, Florida Georgia Line, Blake Shelton, Chris Stapleton, Carrie Underwood, Lee Ann Womack and many more established and up-



DAMON WHITESIDE
chief marketing officer, Country Music Association



COUNTRY MUSIC

and-coming performers. The event also includes other activities, activations and fun that all benefits the CMA Foundation, CMA's charitable arm that works to sustain music educational initiatives across the U.S.

"CMA Foundation is a cool thing. It's an altruistic component of our organization that supports youth programs and music education, not only for the country music community, but virtually every market around the country," says Whiteside.

According to CMA and its in-house and on-the-ground research, the country audience is prime for product extensions.

Some facts:

- Millennials account for a 40 percent market share of country music.
- Country music consumers make an average annual salary of \$82,000.
- Eighty-three percent of country music fans shop weekly, and 60 percent of those fans shop in-home or online at least monthly, which over-indexes against other genres of music.
- Fifty-two percent of country music fans consider themselves early tech adopters.
- Almost half of the country music fanbase follows a regular fitness plan at least twice a week and spends \$8 billion annually on sports equipment and sports-related clothing.
- The country music consumer spends \$18 billion annually within the health and beauty industry.

These facts, along with the deep awareness that the artists themselves bring, make country music perfect for the licensed consumer product model and this is the perfect time for CMA to debut at Licensing Expo, taking place May 22-24 in Las Vegas, Nev., at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center.

"There is a very unique relationship between our fans and our artists. Our fans, maybe more than any other music genre, have a strong relationship with the artists and vice versa," says Whiteside. "Our fanbase is very engaged and is likely to purchase something from artists.

It should be very appealing for licensees to tap into.

"We're debuting at Licensing Expo to reach into the licensing arena and showcase to licensees, retailers, manufacturers and brand owners, as well as make a statement about how rich the country music industry is in terms of our great artists and the popularity of the genre," continues Whiteside. "It's important that we have a presence at Expo to keep country music top-of-mind and to ensure that, as people do deals there, they should think of our artists, our work within the industry and how they can reach country's valuable fanbase."

CMA will not be presenting its own trademark for licensing at Licensing Expo, but rather provide a one-stop-shop for member organizations to highlight the IP they have on offer.

"We're less about licensing the CMA name and more about us representing the industry as a whole, letting everyone know that country is very much open for business," says Whiteside.

CMA's booth at Expo will bring together key organizations from the industry including talent agencies and management companies like CAA, WME, APA, Red Light Management and Maverick, each of which represent the top-most performers within the industry.

"It's going to be a very interesting mix, and that way any of the licensees or retailers will be able to make deals on-site with the artists," says Whiteside. "There's a huge roster of artist potential out there. It's an open book from young, brand-new artists, all the way to true legends—they'll all be represented."

He continues: "What I love about working in the country music industry and at CMA is that we're just so unique. You don't often see other genres of music like rock, pop or hip hop come together, especially as competitors, and make a statement at Licensing Expo. That's just not something that is possible. Country is such a community, and CMA is able to pull the whole genre together and make a statement. We're just facilitating more opportunities out there." ©

MAKING A

MARK

What started out as a note in a Parisian newspaper has grown to become so much more. The Smiley Company has made the transition from print to digital and proves to be unstoppable.

by **BARBARA SAX**

The Smiley Company has a lot to be happy about. Sales were up a whopping 59 percent last year to \$419.9 million, the company has added a number of new licensees and its joint venture with Rubik's is taking off. Blockbuster promotions with partners such as Nestlé Waters/Vittel and Zara helped make 2017 a standout year for the company. Over the past 20 years, chief executive officer Nicolas Loufrani has completely revolutionized The Smiley Company portfolio into an evergreen lifestyle brand.

"We set out to grow our existing partners business through best-in-class licensee support and that strategy has helped us to ensure that the right products were going into the right stores at the right times," says Loufrani. "We also properly

leveraged our anniversary year in 2017, launching a series of stellar limited edition promotions, collaborations and events that not only amplified the brand's heritage, but also its inherent creativity."

The original Smiley icon was created by Loufrani's father, Franklin, in 1972 as part of *France Soir* newspaper's Take Time to Smile campaign, to remind people to smile during a time when bad news seemed to prevail. Franklin first developed the logo to note good news items in the paper, then trademarked the logo to license the image for mass consumer goods.

The younger Loufrani joined the business in 1997. With a background in marketing for luxury goods and an eye on the technological revolution, he helped grow the company by leaps and bounds. Loufrani kept the original Smiley logo intact for collaborations that ranged from haute couture to mass market collections across an array of categories.

Loufrani then updated the original Smiley logo to



NICOLAS LOUFRANI
chief executive officer,
The Smiley Company



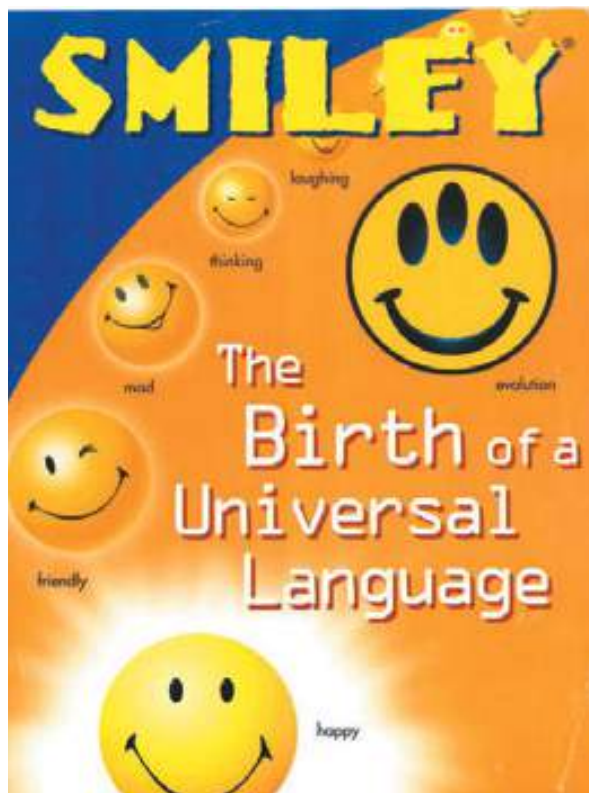
create thousands of copyrighted, expressive emoticons for a new SmileyWorld brand that was commercial, on trend and culturally relevant.

Over the past 20 years, the Smileys Loufrani created have been featured on tens of thousands of products produced by more than 800 licensees and have generated more than \$1 billion dollars in retail sales. As a licensor, The Smiley Company is also faring well. It ranked at No. 80 on *License Global's* annual Top 150 Global Licensors report, released last month.

“Smiley has a completely unique brand message—to make the world a happier place—and that’s the starting point for everything we do as a business,” says Loufrani. “The Smiley Company leverages not just Smiley’s brand equity, but our collaborative design and commercial expertise as well to ensure we create best-selling collections, driven by market insight and supported by marketing best practice. When our partners work with Smiley, they enter into successful long-term partnerships that will grow over the course of time.”

A dedicated team of 40 people and specialist brand teams within licensee-specific industries allows the company to understand the needs of each partner and offer them professional advice and guidance.

“Smiley also adopts a global outlook but takes a



local approach, with national sales teams speaking a wide range of languages so we can guide partners towards the best products for them and their markets in order to drive more sales,” says Loufrani.

The separate SmileyWorld brand, with sales of \$281.50 million and representing 67 percent of the company’s total retail sales, also had strong growth in 2017, says the company.

“It was a massive year for the emoticon trend,” says Matt Winton, marketing director, SmileyWorld. “We had high-profile coverage and were able to leverage that into some really interesting deals.”

In the food category, SmileyWorld saw double-digit sales growth with exclusive launches of new snack products for private label with retailer Lidl through partner Intersnack, which included 3D Smiley-shaped stacked chips. A partnership with Zaini led to the sale of more than 1 million chocolate surprise-filled eggs, and Beverages L’Abeille’s Smiley Fruity juice drinks sold more than 3 million pieces. Smiley Candy Shops launched at Carrefour, and in a huge promotion with Nestlé Waters, more than 130 million bottles of SmileyWorld-branded water bottles were sold across multiple formats for Vittel in Central and Eastern Europe.

The brand also partnered with Unilever in France for a gift-with-purchase mug set.

In publishing, Dragon d’Or, Scholastic and Baeckens Books drove sales.

Toys, apparel, footwear and accessories also remain strong segments.

Smiley’s brand collaborations drove high-value sales in 2017, says the company. The brand partnered with VF Corporation’s Lee Jeans for Smiley’s first complete



denim collection since the 1970s, and had continued success at retail with luxury accessory designer Anya Hindmarch. The brand also enjoyed growth in the footwear category, with prestigious and successful collaborations with Chaussure Eram and Palladium, says Smiley. The brand's sales reached \$138.4 million and represent 33 percent of total retail sales for the company.

Loufrani noticed the resurgence of the Rubik's trend and saw the potential to grow out the Rubik's brand. In 2016, The Smiley Company entered into a joint venture with Rubik's to expand the Rubik's Cube brand into new categories and develop the business globally.

"Rubik's was good at making toys but they didn't have experience with brand extension," says Winton. "Where at Smiley, our business is brand extension. It's what we do best."

"With its dynamic resources and decades of experience, along with industry knowledge and the network to really leverage the Rubik's brand, The Smiley Company is re-inventing Rubik's as a global brand of the future," says Loufrani. "The partnership focuses on building Rubik's amazing DNA and heritage, tapping into its roots in art and intelligence to develop a wide range of lifestyle products to support the brand extension."

NPD data shows that Rubik's Cube was the No. 1 best-selling game in France in 2017 and the seventh best selling game in the U.S. last year. Google's Year in Search for 2017 revealed that "How to Solve the Rubik's Cube" was the seventh most-searched term on the platform in the U.S.

"Rubik's is really hot. It has amazing traction and has diversified into some interesting new categories," says Winton.

Rubik's continues to enjoy stand-out coverage across the world's most influential pop culture channels and has had 50 high-profile appearances in film, music, advertising and on TV, says Smiley. The iconic puzzle appeared in the blockbuster summer kids' movie *Despicable Me 3* and a PopBuzz video featuring actor Chris Pratt solving the Cube in an impressive three minutes was a huge hit.

As the demand for Rubik's products outside of traditional channels grows and new partners continue to sign on, the future looks increasingly bright for the world-famous toy brand. The Smiley Company is finalizing a partnership with a major food brand for a promotion across 34 countries, it says.

Red Bull recently signed on to sponsor more than 1,000 global Speedcubing event competitions this year.

Speedcubing events, in which contestants vie to solve the Rubik's Cube, are held across five continents and attract huge media exposure. Red Bull's involvement will add to the budgets, visibility and reach and take the sport to a new level of professionalism and recognition.

"There's a real intelligence market with the resurgence of geek culture," says Winton.

Uniqlo launched a range of Rubik's t-shirts early this year across the chain's global distribution network of more than 1,500 stores. JCorp and Jammers are also on board for apparel lines.

Sakar will launch a line of technical accessories for Rubik's including speakers, headphones and power banks, Brand Partners Group will launch fidget spinners, fidget cubes, fidget with speakers, fidget tops, Bluetooth sound cube, flash drives, keychains, watches, clocks, pet products and batteries; Calendar Holdings will create calendars; and Prime 3D will produce 3D lenticular stationery.

In the toy category, Strictly Cubes introduced an innovative new three-in-one, cube-shaped brick construction toy in Rubik's iconic colors to encourage consumers to solve challenging puzzles and use their imaginations to build creative objects and design pixel art.

U.K. licensee Gibsons' Rubik's Cube jigsaw puzzle was also named a Hero Toy winner at Toy Fair 2018.

A host of brainbusting publishing titles are scheduled for launch this year, including titles from U.K.-based Carlton Books and Egmont and French publisher Place des Editeurs (SOLAR). Hemma (part of Planeta Group's publishing arm) has already debuted a range of children's titles.

Going forward, the goal is to expand both Smiley's and Rubik's reach in the toy, videogaming and publishing categories.

"We intend to grow this division rapidly and we hope these could account for 20 percent of our global business within three years," says Loufrani. ©



MATTEL

REVS UP CLASSIC BRANDS

To mark the milestones of two evergreen brands, Mattel is taking a fresh approach to classic toys. **by BARBARA SAX**

This year, Mattel returns to Licensing Expo in a big way. The company's evergreen brands including Barbie, Hot Wheels, Fisher-Price and Thomas continue to create buzz through fresh and resonant stories, strategic retail programming, live events, social engagement and consumer products.

"Licensing Expo is an incredible opportunity for us to showcase our brands and demonstrate the tremendous potential they represent for our partners," says Richard Dickson, president and chief operating officer, Mattel. "This year, we'll be focusing on the

momentum we're seeing from category leaders like Barbie and Hot Wheels, and preview what's to come in 2019."

Mattel has some of the richest legacies in the marketplace. This year, Hot Wheels marks its 50th anniversary and Barbie turns 60 in 2019. Both milestones will create many new opportunities for the brands to partner with new licensees across all consumer categories.

"We're looking for partners with the expertise, items and programs to take the power of these already remarkable, evergreen brands to even greater heights, and bring to life the very special



THIS YEAR, HOT WHEELS MARKS ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AND BARBIE TURNS 60 IN 2019. BOTH MILESTONES WILL CREATE MANY NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BRANDS TO PARTNER WITH NEW LICENSEES ACROSS ALL CONSUMER CATEGORIES.

emotional connections consumers have with our brands,” says Dickson.

Dickson believes the brands have limitless potential for Mattel and its partners. To help unlock that potential, the company has been building a best-in-class-consumer products team. The company recently named Lisa Weger as head of licensing in Europe, and continues to build its U.S. licensing team.

“We are looking to leverage our broad, global brand equity in traditional licensing categories, as well as in unexpected brand-right categories,” says Dickson. “Some recent examples include fast fashion, hard lines and publishing.”

When developing new partnerships, Dickson says Mattel carefully considers the most strategic aspects of its brands and what consumers find most compelling about them.

“Right now, we’re partnering in apparel with companies like Illest for Hot Wheels and in beauty with Sephora for Barbie,” says Dickson.

The Hot Wheels 50th anniversary will be an epic celebration packed with incredible product, new content and live experiences. Mattel is also developing programs targeting both boys and adults with exclusive programs and partnerships at several retailers. Consumer product categories will feature a broad range

of partners from apparel to sporting goods and car care.

“We also have an exciting line-up of new partners this year including MOMO and Pirelli,” says Dickson.

Mattel’s Hot Wheels Legends Tour, a partnership with Walmart, has hit the road in search of custom cars to become a Hot Wheels die-cast car. The tour—the largest Hot Wheels traveling car show—launched in April at the Hot Wheels Headquarters in Southern California and will make 14 stops at Walmart stores across the U.S.

“The power of Hot Wheels and the love for this brand is just remarkable,” says Dickson. “At 50, we know Hot Wheels is just getting started.”

With an updated look and the addition of girl characters, the beloved Thomas & Friends brand is poised for even wider global appeal.

“There is a lot of potential in the Thomas brand, and to take advantage of this, we’re expanding the franchise in lots of new ways,” says Dickson.

Mattel recently launched infant programs in the U.K. and Japan and will launch the program in the U.S. soon.

Through a new partnership with Nick Jr., new content will launch this fall featuring a more gender-balanced “Steam Team” comprised of three girls and three boys who join Thomas in his adventures. The broader appeal inherent in the expanded content will create a larger platform for the brand going forward.

“Girls are a big opportunity for this brand, especially in apparel and accessories, and we’re eager to pursue opportunities in that space,” says Dickson.

The brand is also teaming up with new partners to make content even more relevant to a new generation of viewers. In a collaboration with the United Nations, Thomas & Friends will incorporate five of the U.N.’s 17 Sustainability Development Goals into its content

targeting preschoolers.

“These goals, coupled with the life lessons ‘Thomas & Friends’ teaches, will inspire the next generation of global citizens and motivate conversations and learning between children and parents,” says Dickson. “To supplement this content, we’re partnering



to create branded parenting tips and activity sheets that will be available this fall.”

Mattel is also re-interpreting Fisher-Price, focusing on building new consumer products programs tied to the classic preschool brand. Chuck Scotton, a toy industry veteran with more than 18 years at Mattel, is leading the revitalization of Fisher-Price to unlock the brand’s full potential—licensing will be a critical component of that strategy.

“Fisher-Price is dedicated to being the best possible partner to parents and families during the first years of a child’s life, an incredibly motivating promise with global resonance,” says Dickson.

The Barbie brand has also been evolving to meet the needs of new generations. The Barbie Fashionistas doll line continues to add body types, skin tones, eye colors, hairstyles and countless on-trend fashions and accessories for Barbie and Ken, adding more diversity into the line.

“Barbie’s dramatic and most recent evolution, which began with the introduction of new body types, has continued,” says Dickson. “Barbie inspires the limitless potential in every girl. A truly timeless and now even more highly relevant promise to girls everywhere, Barbie

is the most diverse doll line in the marketplace, which has influenced asset creation in a variety of constructive ways, from imagery that reflects the real-world girls see around them every day, to even more empowering messaging.”

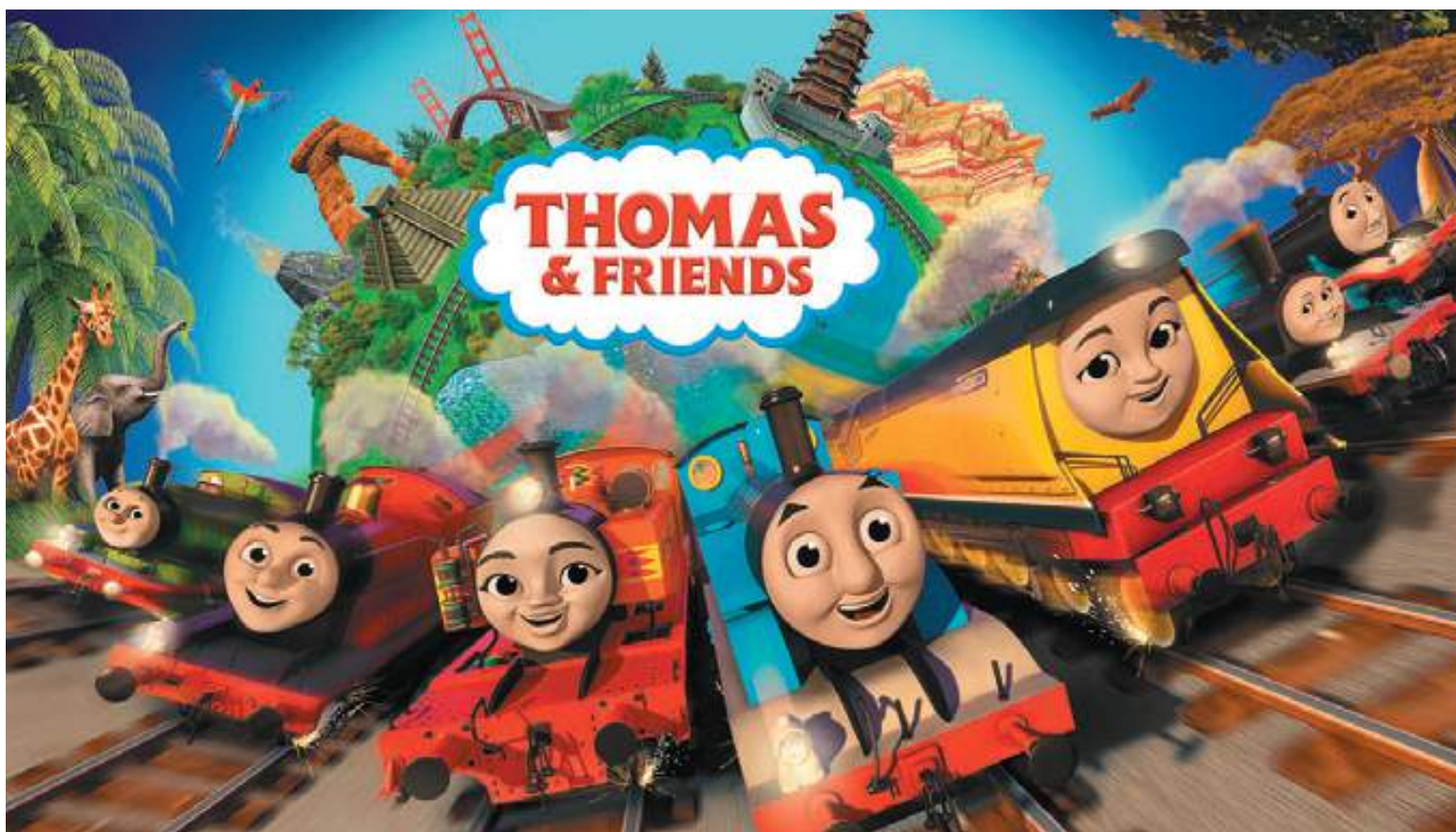
Barbie’s inspiring Heroines program, now in its third year, honors real-life role models who break boundaries to inspire the next generation of girls. Past Heroines featured ballerina Misty Copeland and Olympic gymnast Gabby Douglas.

“Every honoree receives a one-of-a-kind doll made in their likeness, the highest honor the brand bestows,” says Dickson.

To mark this year’s International Women’s Day, the brand honored 14 new Heroines from around the world who are not only breaking barriers, but are highly relevant to Barbie’s core audience of girls, ages 10 and younger. (2018’s inductees included aviator Amelia Earhart and mathematician Katherine Johnson.)

“Heroines is just one of several dynamic initiatives from Barbie,” says Dickson. “We have some very big plans for Barbie’s 60th anniversary.”

While Barbie continues to make strides this year, birthday celebrations have yet to be announced. ©





DIVING INTO LICENSING

From Shark Week to “Say Yes to the Dress,” Discovery’s consumer products roster is as vast as its programming

by BARBARA SAX

With programming that reaches 3 billion viewers in more than 220 countries, the Discovery name has a broad reach ranging from content to consumer products. Discovery’s portfolio of premium nonfiction, lifestyle, sports and kids’ content brands has long been a draw for licensing partners, with new collaborations and alliances announced continually.

“Discovery is the No. 1 cable provider in the world,” says Leigh Anne Brodsky, executive vice president, Discovery Global Enterprises, Discovery Communications. “The brand is authentic, relatable and informative and our content stretches across every consumer product category.”

Brodsky’s team at Discovery Consumer Products, the licensing arm of Discovery Communications, recently debuted an exciting new global brand, Discovery #Mindblown, to fill a niche for exploration, curiosity and STEM-based edutainment.

Created with its long-time global toy partner Merchsource, the Discovery #Mindblown program is a global initiative with multiple consumer touchpoints including toys and games, publishing apps, apparel, digital products and live events. Products will be gender neutral and targeted to kids 6 and older to promote a fun, positive image of STEM.

The new brand draws inspiration from Discovery’s STEM programming airing on the Discovery Channel and Science

Channel and new shows like “Street Science,” and will be supported by Discovery Education’s in-school digital curriculum.

“The products will be designed to be ‘mind-blowing’ because learning by doing is exciting,” says Brodsky. “STEM toys are the fastest growing segment in the category, and Millennials are driving this interest since they want their kids to watch and play with brands that have value and are fun too.”

Millennials also demand authenticity from brands, an expectation that won’t be a problem for Discovery’s newest brand.

“Discovery was founded as a company to satisfy people’s curiosity, sense of adventure and exploration, so it’s in our DNA,” says Brodsky. “We’ve been producing STEM content since our inception and are the No. 1 STEM content provider in the world.”

Over the past decade, Discovery and MerchSource have collaborated on high-quality, high-visibility, high-velocity programs at the nation’s leading retailers.

“They will continue with our Discovery legacy toy program while they expand into STEM,” says Brodsky.

Shark Week’s Foray into Fashion

Discovery recently announced a new collaboration for its Shark Week franchise, which celebrates its landmark 30th season on July 22.

“Shark Week is a pop culture phenomenon,” says Brodsky.

Each year Shark Week takes viewers

on a journey to the depths of the sea to uncover the secrets of the ocean's top predator. This year, Shark Week has evolved to integrate star-studded entertainment with new science and technology, bringing viewers closer than ever to sharks in their natural habitat than ever.

This year, Discovery Consumer Products has teamed with British pop artist and fashion designer Philip Colbert of The Rodnik Band for a Discovery shark collection, which fuses Colbert's bold pop art aesthetic with Discovery's educational and philanthropic initiatives around ocean conservation.

"The partnership with Philip Colbert came about partly due to Colbert's storied fascination with sharks—his previous work featured multiple shark and oceanic designs prior to the creation of the Discovery Shark line," says Brodsky. "Discovery commissioned Philip to create a shark emblem—which we named Phin—to represent ocean conservation."

The fashion collection "with a bite" prominently features a designed shark head on all the designs across men's and women's apparel and accessories, and includes bomber jackets, sweatshirts, dresses, baseball caps, bags and mobile phone cases. Product prices range from \$29 to \$1,500, and the line will be available at select high-end fashion retailers prior to Shark Week 2018.

"We will be announcing soon that the line will be

partnering with a luxury e-commerce partner and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to organizations dedicated to ocean conservation," says Brodsky.

"Say Yes to Prom" Expands Macy's Alliance

Discovery's "Say Yes to the Dress" and "Say Yes to the Prom" TV franchises recently expanded their apparel partnership with Macy's for a bigger and better "Say Yes to the Prom" collection.

Originally conceived in 2011 as a company-wide prom dress drive, "Say Yes to the Prom" has transformed into a nationwide philanthropic initiative, helping to make prom dreams come true for more than 7,000 underserved and academically high-achieving students.

Last year, Macy's created a "Say Yes to the Prom" dress and jewelry line for prom season and featured the collection in 200 Macy's doors and online. This year, the collection will be available in all Macy's locations and will include 28 different dress styles, up from 22 last year. Dresses retail from \$129 to \$199, while the fashion jewelry and accessories range from \$25 to \$45. Other services available via the initiative include one-on-one style sessions with Monte Durham of TLC's "Say Yes to the Dress: Atlanta." TLC has teamed up with *Seventeen* as well to provide a prom for one deserving high school as part of the initiative's inaugural "Win a Dream Prom for Your School" contest.

TLC kicked off the 2018 "Say Yes to the Prom" tour with an all-expenses paid prom in February for the students of New York City's Inwood Academy for Leadership Charter School, winner of the 2018 prom contest. Prior to the event students were treated to a day of shopping with Durham, and free prom dresses and accessories by Macy's. Discovery will follow up the event with a 60-minute "Say Yes to the Prom" special focusing on the students.

"Say Yes to the Prom" is the best example of a 360-degree consumer activation with programming, product, advertising, a causal component and lots of social buzz, which drives this beloved franchise to new levels," says Brodsky. ©



LEIGH ANNE BRODSKY,
executive vice president
Discovery Global Enterprises,
Discovery Communications

THE LICENSING INDUSTRY'S LATEST DISRUPTOR? NEW TECH

From Amazon's Alexa to "Snapchat," video game consoles and more, a breadth of new technology is beginning to dominate consumers' lives. *License Global* takes a look at how artificial intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality are shaping the licensing industry with entirely new consumer experiences.

by ERICA GARBER

Let's face it. Technology is constantly changing and advancing in ways like never before, and with it comes a gamut of options including artificial intelligence, augmented reality and, of course, virtual reality that licensors can utilize to showcase their IP.

The home automation category, for example, is seeing significant growth due to popular AI products like Amazon's Alexa and Google Home. According to the 2017 *The Future of Tech* report from The NPD Group, home automation products will add \$1.8 billion in new consumer electronics sales through 2018. The report also forecasts

74 percent growth in the category, from 2016 to 2018.

"Awareness and interest are starting to build significantly for smart home products, with Alexa and Google Home catalyzing growth," says Stephen Baker, vice president and industry analyst, The NPD Group. "Digital assistants will claim a major piece of the consumer market in 2018, and in doing so will drive adoption of compatible devices and solutions."

Fortunately, brand owners have identified the technological shift and are starting to tap into the world of artificial intelligence.



STAR TREK™
BRIDGE CREW

Late last year, Warner Bros. Consumer Products partnered with digital innovator Rain to launch an immersive, voice-enabled storytelling program called “Scooby-Doo! Mystery Inc. Theater” for Alexa-enabled devices. The new program, dubbed a “skill” within the Alexa platform, allows kids and families to follow and work alongside Scooby-Doo and the gang to unravel the secrets behind their latest escapade by simply saying “Alexa, open Scooby-Doo.” Throughout the story, the narrator will ask what the characters should do next—such as go down the hallway or stay outside—and it is up to listeners to make the choice.

Activision has also jumped on the AI bandwagon with its video game franchise “Call of Duty.” Most recently, the gaming company launched the “Call of Duty” Alexa skill, which features an array of support options to improve players’ experience including personalized player recommendations, updates on in-game achievements and the ability to stay connected and compare play with other users.

“The ‘Call of Duty’ Alexa skill gives every player a personal ‘Call of Duty’ coach for the first time, using AI and machine learning to analyze how you play and providing tips on how to improve our gameplay based on your individual strengths, weaknesses and play style,” says Time Ellis, chief marketing officer, Activision. “We know that people play more ‘Call of Duty’ as their skills improve and the more often they play with their friends. The ‘Call of Duty’ Alexa skill is designed to help players improve their ‘Call of Duty’ skills, connect more easily with their friends and get to the fun faster in ‘Call of Duty: WWII.’”

And artificial intelligence doesn’t stop there. The technology is also being used for marketing and social media campaigns. In April, Getty Images partnered with Cortex, an AI platform that recommends the best Getty Images content for social media campaigns. Through the agreement, Cortex’s AI platform will analyze several years’ worth of data from more than 33,000 brands to predict and recommend which color schemes, imagery and keywords will perform best on social media, which can then be automated by time, frequency and subject.

Retailers are also starting to utilize the new technology. At the Appliance & Electronics World Expo, which took place March 8-11 in Shanghai, China, the Midea Group unveiled its new “Smart New Retail” AI platform, which includes a voice AI assistant to enquire about customers’ needs, wants and shopping preferences; facial recognition with gender, age and fashion style; big-data integration of past purchase history; and more, which will allow for highly individualized and customized shopping experiences.

So what is on deck for the future of AI? It appears Sony already has the answer. The company recently entered into an agreement with Carnegie Mellon University to

collaborate on AI and robotics research.

The initial research and development efforts will focus on optimizing food preparation, cooking and delivery, which was selected because the technology necessary for the robot to handle the varied tasks of food preparation can be applied to a broader set of skills.

“This project has the potential to make the vast possibilities of AI and robotics more familiar and accessible to the general public,” says Dr. Hiroaki Kitano, corporate executive, Sony Corporation. “Additionally, it could also assist those for whom daily tasks, such as food preparation, are challenging.”

While AI continues to gain traction among brand owners, augmented reality is another hot-button area of new technology that licensors are clamoring to be a part of—especially following the success of Pokémon Company International’s “Pokémon Go” in July 2016.

One of the biggest purveyors in the AR space is “Snapchat,” which has partnered with a multitude of brands—including Ghostbusters, Pokémon, Hello Kitty, Harry Potter and many others—to debut in-app lenses. Most recently, Snap Inc.’s camera platform for AR, Lens Studio, collaborated with StudioMDHR, creator of “Cuphead,” to showcase how game development can bring users’ favorite characters and worlds to life in AR on “Snapchat.” King Features, which represents “Cuphead” for licensing, assisted in the deal. Through the collaboration, Snap and StudioMDHR created a “Cuphead” lens that invites users to jump into the classic “run-and-gun” game alongside their favorite characters.

Meanwhile, in collaboration with Klei Entertainment, Snap introduced a new “interactive path” template to its Lens Studio, which allows developers to bring their characters to life via user-controlled “triggers.” To illustrate the new template, Klei Entertainment used Lens Studio with its existing character Chester from the video game “Don’t Starve.” To utilize the AR technology, users can tap to place the character, drag their finger along a surface within the camera preview and then watch the character follow the path they’ve created.

Although “Snapchat” boasts an extensive range of AR opportunities for brands, the platform has unveiled a new way to broaden its ad options via AR-shoppable lenses.

The new shoppable AR lens will allow advertisers to add a “Buy Now,” “Watch” or “Install Now” button



on branded lenses, turning every branded selfie into a potential purchase, view or download—and big brands are already on board. STX Entertainment, a film production company, has already utilized the lens to promote its new movie *I Feel Pretty*. Adidas, Clairol and King, the company behind “Candy Crush,” are also on board.

“Shoppable AR lenses give brands a new way to leverage our unique scale—more than half of the 13- to 24-year-old population of the U.S. plays with our AR lenses each week on average—to drive real and measurable ROI, whether that’s through sales, downloads, lead gen or video views,” says Peter Sellis, director, revenue product, Snap, Inc.

“Snapchat” isn’t the only platform that’s trying to disrupt the AR space for brands and retailers. Perfect Corp., for example, has partnered with the marketing health and beauty company Amway to launch a mobile application aimed at redefining the consumer shopping experience for the Artistry beauty brand. The partnership will see Perfect Corp. utilize its “YouCam Makeup” AR app to allow users access to personalized skincare product recommendations as well as the opportunity to test, discover and purchase more than 150 makeup SKUs. The “Artistry Visual Beauty App” experience launched in Korea last month, and will roll out to Japan, Thailand, the U.S. this year.

Zara, the fashion chain owned by Inditex, also unveiled AR displays last month in an effort to attract Millennials. The AR displays showcase models wearing select looks from the retailer’s collections when a mobile phone is held up to a sensor within the store or designated shop windows. Customers are also able to click through to buy the highlighted clothes.

Perhaps the pinnacle of new technology is virtual reality, which is expected to generate \$1.8 billion in the retail and marketing sectors in 2022, according to market foresight advisory firm ABI Research.

At the forefront of the VR field is Sony, which has expanded its popular PlayStation video game console into the space with the launch of the PlayStation VR system. The console, which was introduced in October 2016, features games from a variety of brands including “DreamWorks’ Voltron VR Chronicles,” “Batman: Arkham VR,” “Star Wars Battlefront Rogue One: X-Wing VR Mission,” “Star Trek: Bridge Crew” and “Skryim,” among many others.

Sony has even unveiled a host of VR experiences for the PlayStation VR including “Stranger Things the VR Experience,” allowing users to discover the truth behind

the disappearance of Will Byers; “Spider-Man Homecoming VR Experience,” which will see users complete targeting trials to defeat The Vulture; and “Justice League VR: The Complete Experience,” which goes behind the mask of some of DC Comic’s most iconic superheroes. Moving forward, Sony plans to further expand the PlayStation VR platform with additional games and experiences.

The world of VR can also be found beyond normal gaming platforms. Look at Six Flags, which has a long-term partnership with Warner Bros. Consumer Products for in-park VR experiences. The collaboration has seen the launch of multiple VR rides including the recently launched DC Super Heroes Drop of Doom VR at Six Flags Magic Mountain in California, which equips passengers with a VR headset to follow Superman and Wonder Woman as they battle Lex Luthor and his anti-gravity gun.

Another VR experience that is available to consumers beyond gaming platforms is the “Cirque du Soleil Virtual Reality Experience,” which is co-produced by Cirque du Soleil Images and Felix & Paul Studios. The experience

includes four different iterations—“Inside the Box of Kurios,” “KÀ The Battle Within,” “Dreams of ‘O’” and “Through the Masks of Luzia”—and has recently been picked up by Paris-based mk2, which will release the experiences at its VR cinema locations throughout the French capital. The company also has plans to broker distribution licenses to other third-party VR cinemas and location-based

entertainment centers across the globe.

The Circuit of Wales also partnered with The Extreme Sports Company, owner of the Extreme lifestyle brand, to develop an Extreme-branded sports, leisure and entertainment destination, which will include a virtual reality zone.

Finally, Nickelodeon is entering the world of VR through a new partnership with IMAX, which will bring the network’s first multi-player social VR experience, SlimeZone, to IMAX VR Centres globally. The new SlimeZone will see up to six players select an avatar to step inside the Nickelodeon virtual world, play games, watch cartoons and slime their friends. Non-VR players will also be able to participate as they explore the Nickelodeon world in spectator mode, which allows them to fly a virtual drone from a device to slime players.

The Nickelodeon SlimeZone is currently open at IMAX VR Centres in Los Angeles, New York City and Toronto, with additional locations set to open in Shanghai, Bangkok and Manchester. ©






IS STILL THE WORD

Grease turns 40 this summer, and Paramount is pulling out all the stops to celebrate the classic film by supplying a line of consumer products for “Hopelessly Devoted” fans of all ages.

by PATRICIA DELUCA

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Grease*, Paramount is teaming up with a number of licensees for commemorative products that are sure to get the thumbs up from honorary members of the Pink Ladies and T-Birds around the world. Bil Bertini, executive vice president, worldwide licensing, Paramount, spoke to *License Global* about how the company plans to celebrate the film’s milestone that will embrace generations of fans.

What is Paramount’s goal with the *Grease* 40th anniversary program?

Grease has always been a timeless classic and in celebration of the anniversary, the studio has re-mastered the film in 4K Ultra HD and is re-releasing the film in theaters for a limited time. To complement these efforts, the Paramount licensing team has put together a distinctive, fun and creative line of products that celebrate the essence of *Grease* with both modern and retro styles.

What is it about *Grease* that has established itself as a part of pop culture for the past 40 years?

The magical combination of young love, the spirit of

friendship and of course the iconic music makes this high school story a classic that transcends time. *Grease* truly is the word!

Does the anniversary collection target casual or passionate fans?

All fans! It doesn’t matter the age, everyone loves *Grease*. With so many different category offerings, we really do have something for everyone.

What consumer product categories or partners will we see this year?

Grease has been one of our top properties year-in and year-out in the areas of fashion and accessories, gift and novelties, costumes and dress up, collectibles and interactive. In



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25TH ANNIVERSARY

White
Christmas

65TH ANNIVERSARY

2020

Clueless

25TH ANNIVERSARY

GLADIATOR

20TH ANNIVERSARY

SUNSET
BOULEVARD

70TH ANNIVERSARY

2021



35TH ANNIVERSARY

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

25TH ANNIVERSARY

FERRIS
BUELLER'S
DAY OFF

35TH ANNIVERSARY



BIL BERTINI
executive vice president,
worldwide licensing,
Paramount

addition to these core categories which are expanding for the anniversary year, we are also excited to announce new partners and categories for *Grease*.

We have a global partnership with OPI, who is launching a *Grease*-themed summer nail color collection. We have new collectibles from Funko, and will be expanding our costumes and party offerings from Party City. We also have a new candy line from Dylan's Candy Bar. In the fall, the Milwaukee Brewers will celebrate the anniversary with licensed giveaways for fans.

And let's not forget the line of commemorative stamps from the Australian Postal Corporation. We're thrilled to offer fans so many different ways to engage with the property and to celebrate this milestone.

While the demographic lean toward young women, there are items for men in this program. How did you curate your collection for *Grease's* male fans?

The T-Birds have a very distinct image and representation in the film. At the heart of the movie, there is something every kid, teenager and adult can relate to growing up in America. Our male fans love the edgy, effortlessly cool look of the T-Birds, and we wanted to curate a collection that hit upon those themes in a modern, accessible way.

Since the film's release, there have been multiple adaptations of *Grease* like the Broadway revival in the '90s, or the broadcast of "*Grease Live!*" on Fox in 2016. Have these newer versions shaped the franchise?

The various adaptations have been tremendously successful in providing new, refreshed content for



fans. They enhance engagement and allow *Grease* to be widely celebrated across various platforms, and ultimately drive renewed interest in the classic film.

In what ways do the consumer products keep the current fan base, who first saw the film in the '70s, while embracing newer fans?

As part of *Grease's* 40th anniversary celebration, we developed new artwork that adds a modern creative sensibility to the property. Our product launches leverage both for the modern look and creative aesthetic along with the classic looks in order to have products that appeal to new and old fans alike.

While there are traditional consumer products launches like apparel, Paramount is also planning social and digital activations for the anniversary. How do you market a brand so steeped in nostalgia to fans who may (or may not) be digitally savvy?

Fans of *Grease* span all ages from kids and teens to multiple generations of adults. It's important to provide ways for fans of all ages to engage with such a fun property. It's one of the most preformed high school musicals of all time, and with a younger audience now a large part of the franchise, the marketing strategy has been aligned to a multiple-generation approach so that fans of all ages have numerous touch points, both physical and digital. This strategy will help define our messaging, social media marketing, publicity and creative efforts.

Every generation discovers *Grease* for the first time and expands our fan base.

We look forward to electrifying generations of fans with compelling products in this celebrated 40th anniversary year and beyond. ©





Put a LEASH on It

The pet industry is booming and taking the licensing world by storm. Licensors are coming up with a number of ways to get branded products for your pet into your home.

by **PATRICIA DELUCA**

Americans love their pets. According to the American Pet Products Association, there is a pet in 84.6 million homes across the U.S. (That's 68 percent of all households from coast to coast.)

When you're shopping, whether it's online or at a brick-and-mortar, there's a strong chance you're buying something for your pet. And Americans are buying a lot for Fido and Fluffy. In a recent study by the American Pet Products Association, consumers spent \$69.51 billion on pet products in 2017, up 4 percent over 2016, which came in at \$66.75 billion.

The licensed pet product sector has also grown by leaps and bounds. Last year, the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association reported that one of the fastest growing categories was pet products, with more licensors looking to gain a bigger presence in the sector.

In short, sales are skyrocketing. According to the Packaged Facts report *Dog and Cat Toys: U.S. Pet Market Trends and Opportunities*, pet toy sales passed \$1 billion in the U.S. in 2016, up from \$851 million in 2011.

Not surprisingly, licensors want a part of those sales. A number of brands have extended into the pet aisle, with products ranging from toys to beds, leashes, bowls, pet carriers and even fashion. Major brands, too, such as Dr. Seuss, *The Secret Life of Pets*, *Star Wars* and WWE, among many others, have pet licensing deals.

When it comes to a particular pet, most purchases are for man's best friend—dogs. According to Packaged Facts, dogs accounted for 75 percent of pet toy sales

in 2016, with cats accounting for the remaining 25 percent. Packaged Facts also found that dog toys



continue to see steady growth and are one of the faster growing segments within the pet toy category, an indicator that spending could continue to increase.

The “pets as family” way of life is essential to the pet toy industry’s growing presence and the opportunity it presents for licensors. The percentage of households that purchased toys for either cats or dogs has stayed above 53 percent over the past six years; however, there has been a downward shift in the percentage of households that own only cats or only dogs buying toys. For households with both species, toy purchasing has increased from 57 percent in 2011 to 67 percent in 2016.

Online sales of pet products accounted for roughly 9 percent of the pet licensing industry in 2016 with Amazon in the lead, according to Packaged Facts. The report, U.S. Pet Market Focus: The Amazon Pet Food and Supplies Shopper, revealed that pet products are among the fastest-growing online retail categories, reporting a 45 percent growth in the number of adults purchasing pet products via e-commerce in the past three months. This trend is also reflected in Amazon’s pet product sales, which were up 40 percent from 2015, says Packaged Facts.

Given this information, there are many new licensing deals with pets in mind.

Sequential Brands Group recently partnered with Design Lab and Fetch for Pets for a new line of pet products under the Martha Stewart brand. The Martha Stewart and Design Lab pet line will feature apparel, bedding, restraints, toys and feeding with plans to expand into travel, special occasion, steps and strollers. The line is currently available on QVC and Amazon. Fetch for Pets

will also help produce a line of natural pet grooming solutions, available on Amazon with plans to expand into grooming tools, pet dental care and waste management later in the year.

Ellen DeGeneres and PetSmart have teamed for a line of apparel for pets; while Worldwise designed and developed the Kathy Ireland Loved Ones collection, a line of solution-based home décor-friendly pet products.

And while Christmas is usually the holiday when consumers buy most for pets, Halloween is not that

far behind. There are now licensed pet costumes for pets big and small on retail shelves. This year, Rubie’s Pet Shop Boutique will have Disney-licensed pet costumes and accessories including Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy; Disney Princess pet costumes with wigs for Cinderella, Ariel, Belle, and Snow White; Winnie the Pooh character pet costumes and accessories; Pixar’s *Toy Story* pet costumes and accessories; and pet costumes from the film *Disney Tim Burton’s Nightmare Before Christmas*.

Pet licensing is not just in the apparel or toy industries, either. More licensors are working with pet food companies, which generated more than \$250 million in net revenues in 2017, up more than 75 percent from 2016. Rachael Ray has her long-standing pet food line, Nutrish, for cats and dogs, a brand that’s stayed on shelves for close to 10 years; and Chewy.com now offers a subscription box filled with food and toys for your cat, dog or puppy.

Pet health is also a concern for licensors, and one they are addressing via branded products. Discovery Communications has a partnership with FoodScience for a line of Animal Planet-branded nutritional supplements for dogs and cats in the U.S. to target specific conditions such hip and joint or skin and coat health. The range of supplements will be sold at grocery, mass and drug retailers in the U.S., as well as online, with a portion of the proceeds going to Animal Planet’s national charity campaign R.O.A.R. (Reach Out. Act. Respond.). The Joester Loria Group, the brand’s North American licensing agent, brokered the deal.

And now pet licensing pitches are being crowdsourced. The Doggy Dental Invention Challenge, launched this month, is a collaboration between Fetch for Pets and Quirky who are asking the public for product submissions for its dog dental care line to be presented to Arm & Hammer. Once a winning product or products is selected, Fetch will work with Quirky to speed up product design and development, and bring the product to market in record time, an estimated six months. Quirky will also logistics and inventor agreements like royalty payments, usually an obstacle for many companies.

Internet-famous animals are also a part of the pet licensing world. Grumpy Cat has turned her popularity into a licensing business, and is the No. 1 pet influencer of 2017, according to *Forbes*. Grumpy Cat’s licensing deals include cat toys from PetSmart, comic books from Dynamite Entertainment and co-branded licensing opportunities with Garfield.

With our pets becoming more a part of the household, there are a number of products in the works created with them in mind. And that is ripe for licensing opportunities. Expect the sector to only grow year after year, much like your loyal friend. ©



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