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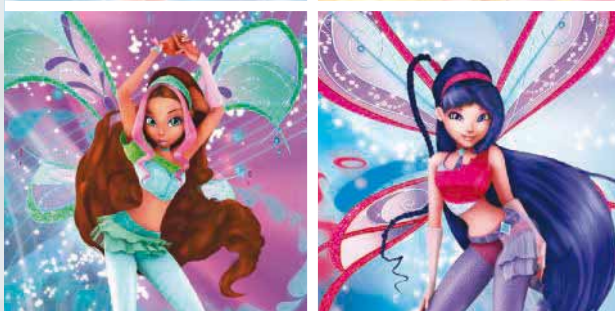
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- International Consumer Products program launches in 2013.



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- Hot Toys Around the Globe
- Celebrity Glitter Still Shines
- Nelvana's New Brand Leader

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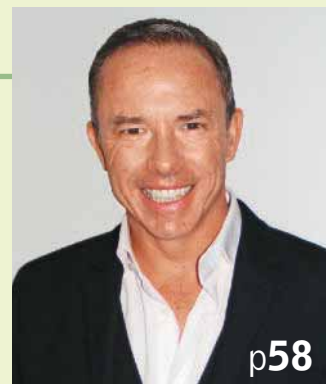


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Brand Licensing Europe's Retail Mentoring Programme

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Optimism Equals Opportunities

With former President Bill Clinton headlining the keynote, an exhibit hall packed with new mobile commerce tech solutions and a positive outlook for retail sales in 2012, it was an upbeat record crowd that attended the National Retail Federation's annual conference held Jan. 15-18 in New York City.

The NRF's expo lived up to its theme—Retail's New Rules—as it focused on innovating and reinventing rules for a changing customer, which is one that is clearly focused on the importance of mobile technology, service and brands.

Consider the following from NRF to offer insight into retail trends and growth:

■ **Retail sales forecast**—Following a strong holiday in which retail sales increased 4.1 percent to \$471.5 billion, the NRF projects that retail industry sales will rise 3.4 percent to \$2.53 trillion, slightly lower than the 4.7 percent increase in 2011. NRF, however, warns that “stubbornly high unemployment and continued uncertainty over the prospects for job growth will continue to dampen the outlook for retail sales growth in 2012.”

NRF has been touting the value of retail to the U.S. economy with a campaign to educate lawmakers, consumers and the public. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, retail is one of the largest private employers in the U.S., supporting one in four jobs; it accounts for nearly 20 percent of the U.S. GDP (\$2.48 trillion in 2009); and retail accounts for nearly 12 percent of all business establishments in the U.S.

■ **President Clinton's message**—According to Clinton, the recent recession and challenging recovery has changed the way people think about jobs and the economy.

“I never doubted for a minute that I could make a living, and almost everyone in my generation felt the same way,” says Clinton. “The recent economic crisis has changed and shattered that... If you are leading the country out of the recession, you are doing something far more important than putting people back to work and putting money in their pockets. This economic crisis is about more than economics. It has gone to the core of people's sense

of who they are and what they're worth.”

Clinton was bullish about Brazil as a “thriving democracy,” noting its strong growth potential and that it has one of the world's top environmental policies. Clinton also pointed out how government and business executives work together for the common good.

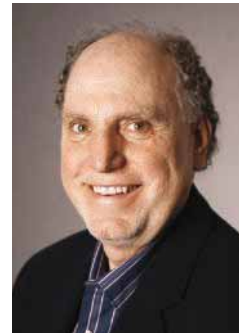
■ **Power of brands**—David Lauren, executive vice president of advertising, marketing and corporate communications for Ralph Lauren, reinforced the importance of brands among consumers and discussed how this brand has stayed relevant. Lauren described “merchandainment,” and how Ralph Lauren blends merchandising and entertainment to create a lifestyle brand and generate excitement among consumers.

■ **International expansion**—A retail panel, which included Henry Stupp, chief executive officer of Cherokee, and Jim Fielding, president of Disney Stores, reiterated how American brands have found success through global expansion. As part of its growth strategy, Cherokee debuted its brand in Japan in December with Nishimatsuya, a specialty kids' retailer. Disney Stores will open in Shanghai, China this fall, the 12th country it has entered.

■ **Customer service**—According to an annual survey of shoppers conducted by the NRF Foundation/American Express and BIGinsight, the top 10 retailers that have the best customer service are: Amazon.com, L.L.Bean, Zappos.com, Overstock.com, QVC, Kohl's, Lands' End, JCPenney, Newegg and Nordstrom.

■ **Technology**—Retailers are testing ways to integrate technology and better understand how consumers are utilizing smartphones and tablets. Research from Cisco says that shoppers prefer to shop in stores that combine online and in-store experience.

■ **Retailers of the year**—At the Big Show, Whole Foods Market was named Innovator of the Year. Burberry was recognized as the International Retailer of the Year. Among its accomplishments, Burberry has embraced social media, establishing a strong following on Facebook and Twitter. ©



By **Tony Lisanti**
Editor-in-Chief

What's Next for Girls?



By Sam Phillips

Hello Kitty is a hard act to follow. She's been sitting pretty for 38 years without a wobble of confidence. In the last five years in particular, she's made her way into the European mass market, appealing to several generations of women and girls.

Hello Kitty was ranked the top licensed property across Europe (source: The NPD Group) in 2010, with data still to be released for 2011. Which begs the inevitable questions: when will Kitty's star wane and what will be the next big property for girls?

The first question is irrelevant—Hello Kitty's star may never wane. But the second question has been on everyone's lips for some time now. What is going to be big for girls? As a retailer, what properties should you choose with the sure knowledge that girls will like it?

The question is as relevant in the preschool segment as it is for older girls. Peppa Pig and Disney Princess still dominate the preschool market in the U.K., and some retailers are backing Everything's Rosie, while others still are selecting Poppy Cat or Minnie Mouse. This year, Barbie will be challenged by Lalaloopsy, unicorns (Mia and Me), Moshi Monsters and the Winx Club fairies.

It's worth remembering two factors: Hello Kitty was in the market for decades before it experienced the splash it's currently enjoying. It goes without saying that you can't achieve a slow build, a steady international creep and a cross-generational appeal overnight.

The second factor is that little girls are hard to please. One licensee recently described little girls to me as like little sheep. She explained that, on the whole, they don't know what's cool until they've checked it out with their friends. Trinkets, pocket money items, collectibles and stationery all make their way into girls' lives, but before the brand progresses into apparel or such, it has to bubble in the cauldron of the school bag or on the bedroom floor until it achieves a certain kudos.

Getting it right for girls is a challenge for brand owners large and small. LEGO has been under

fire for LEGO Friends, the new range marketed specifically to girls and, apparently, simpler than traditional boys'-centric LEGOs. U.S. "mom" bloggers are ranting and the rage is spreading across the Atlantic. But it's not the opinion of the parent that matters. One blog reports LEGO's claim to have researched the new line with thousands of mothers and children. Perhaps that's the problem. I don't suppose Ole Kirk Kristiansen, creator of the first LEGO bricks, canvassed anyone any more than Yuko Shimizu did when she drew the first face of Hello Kitty.

A singular creative vision has a lot going for it. When you realize you have something good on your hands, it's important to run with it, as Marianthi O'Dwyer, vice president of merchandise licensing for the U.K. and Ireland, Disney Consumer Products, explains in this issue (see page 54). When Disney's Cars was released in 2006, there was a strong Mattel toy line in place, yet only after the DVD was released did sales soar for Cars toys. Quickly, DCP and Mattel realized what an opportunity they had and responded accordingly.

Not everyone has the scale of DCP on their side, of course. Top Drawer, the design-led gifts and interiors expo which opens the European show season, has just finished. It is packed full of fresh designers, tiny companies, first time exhibitors and new concepts—the sort of companies that are the lifeblood of retail. The small scale of many of these companies means that licensing isn't dominant yet but the lure of brands and characters never seems far away. It's a great opportunity for smaller brands to make it onto products (Roald Dahl lamp shades for example) or to cross national boundaries (as with Finnish tableware company Iittala importing The Moomins). Passing an importer of Danish products I overheard a salesman taking an order for Plasteam's exquisitely made LEGO storage boxes and say: "Start with the boy colors, they are selling much better than the girl colors." Oh, girls! ©

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Disney Store Expands Globally

The Disney Store is gearing up for global expansion throughout 2012. The retailer announced plans at the National Retail Federation's Big Show in January to debut its new interactive stores in 12 countries. The debut store design also marks the retail outlet's 25th anniversary.

"We take great pride in bringing the magic of Disney to families around the world through Disney Store destinations," says Jim Fielding, president of Disney Stores Worldwide.

Locations will debut internationally in Milan, Italy this month and an inaugural location in Shanghai, China. A Disney Store opened in December 2011 in Sendai, Japan as well.

The immersive shopping experience will also launch in the U.S. throughout 2012. Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Utah and Virginia are each slated to open concept stores. Orlando, Fla. will open its second newly designed store at the Mall at Millenia.

"We have laid a solid foundation and set a new standard for specialty retailers since launching our new store design in 2010," says Paul Gainer, senior vice president of Disney Store North America. "Our momentum continues to grow, and with the partnerships we have built with our landlords we have our best store opening slate to date, opening in premiere locations across the U.S. and Canada."



The first Disney Store launched in 1987 in Glendale, Calif. and featured exclusive product inspired by Disney characters and stories. That original location is slated for its own re-opening this year under the new design aesthetic. Other Disney Store remodels underway include locations in Honolulu, Hawaii, which will also get the new interactive store model, as well as more traditional remodels for stores in Virginia, Delaware, California and New York. Additionally, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada will launch a new Disney Store this summer.

A Farewell to Longtime Fisher-Price Executives

Mattel's Fisher-Price lost two well-known toy executives over the holiday season.

Stanley T. Clutton, senior vice president of inventor relations, Mattel/Fisher-Price, died Dec. 23, 2011 after a battle with cancer. He was 66.

Diana C. Dunn-Graves, vice president of marketing, Fisher-Price Friends, died Jan. 1 of complications from breast cancer. She was 49.

"Stan" Clutton, who served Mattel and Fisher-Price for nearly 40 years, was a toy and licensing industry icon. He was often described by colleagues as a "funny, loyal and honorable person that they were proud to call a friend." Clutton was a regular attendee and familiar, smiling face at all major global toy and licensing industry gatherings, constantly searching for the latest and best entertainment properties.

"Stan devoted his entire professional life to traveling the world to meet with inventors and licensors that might offer that next great toy idea for Fisher-Price and secure best-in-class licenses for the

Fisher-Price portfolio. Most notably, it was Stan who tapped into the inventor technology that became the Tickle Me Elmo phenomenon in 1996," says a Fisher-Price spokesperson.

Clutton joined Tyco Preschool in 1993 as vice president of marketing and was promoted to senior vice president of marketing and design in 1997. In 2000, he assumed the role of senior vice president of inventor relations for Fisher-Price, and in 2009 he added Mattel inventor relations to his area of responsibility.

Clutton was a former LIMA board member, an active participant on its charity committee and a graduate of Drake University. Clutton is survived by his wife Dorothy (Dottie) and daughter Jackie.

Dunn-Graves, a 20-year veteran of the toy industry, started her career in the New York City area with Eden Toys. She then joined Gund as vice president of marketing. She joined Fisher-Price in 2001 as director of marketing in the girls division, later moving to manage the company's newborn

line. Some of her outstanding achievements include the launch of such product lines as Laugh & Learn, Peek-a-Blocks and Amazing Animals.

In 2010, Dunn-Graves was promoted to her "dream job" as vice president of marketing at Fisher-Price Friends, which brought her back to New York City, where she began her career.

Many industry colleagues will remember her three trips to the TOTY awards stage during Toy Fair 2011 in New York City.

She was a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Dunn-Graves is survived by her husband Andre Graves and their two children Carson and Victoria.

"There is much to admire about their storied careers and the tenacity and vivaciousness with which they approached their work and their lives. Our sympathies go out to the families they left behind. We are proud to have had them with us and they will both be greatly missed," says a Fisher-Price spokesperson.

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More New Executive Faces in 2012

As 2012 gets underway, several key appointments have been made since *License! Global's* published its November/December 2011 issue cover story, "New Faces in Brand Licensing." Recent hirings include Nelvana's appointment of Andrew Kerr as head of consumer products for the Americas and Australasia (see Last Word, page 58).

Lucas Licensing saw major changes this year as Howard Roffman passed the baton to Paul Southern, now head of licensing. Roffman will remain with the company as a senior advisor.

Rainbow has named Bettina Koeckler senior vice president and general manager of global consumer products. Koeckler will oversee the global consumer product business across all brands.

On the agency side, Beanstalk named Allison Ames president, North America. Ames, who has been with Beanstalk since 1995, will oversee the company's operations in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and South America and assume all responsibility for clients in North America.

Russell Brown, formerly of Iconix Brand Group and Marvel Entertainment, will now serve as senior vice president, consumer products licensing, for Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. Other appointments at MSLO include Charlie Tiersch as vice president, business development; Colleen Nowers, associate vice president, business development; and Claudio Goldberg, senior vice president, publishing and digital media operations.

Pamela Harris has taken the reigns as director of licensing for SMC Entertainment. A new licensing and entertainment company,



Paul Southern,
head of licensing,
Luas Licensing



Bettina Koeckler, se-
nior vice president and
gen. manager, Rainbow



Allison Ames, presi-
dent, North America,
Beanstalk

SMC is the brand owner for "The Jungle Book" series produced by DQ Entertainment.

The Joester Loria Group promoted James Silfer to senior vice president, business development. Silfer has been with JLG for 10 years and currently serves on the Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association (LIMA) board of directors.

Zodiak Rights, the international division of Zodiak Media, has named two new hires for its re-structured and expanded consumer products team. Nicola Herrmann has been named the head of brand marketing, reporting to Jennifer Lawlor, senior vice president of strategy and planning, consumer products, Zodiak Rights; and Gabrielle Langdorf has been named international agents manager. Langdorf will report into Jane Kennedy, head of sales, consumer products, Zodiak Rights.

NPD: Retailers Need to Capitalize on Online Shopping

Retailers better maximize and innovate the online presence of their companies, says The NPD Group in its "E-Commerce Hot Topic" report. The report examines consumers' attitudes toward online shopping across all retail categories.

Categories showing the most online purchase frequency and/or consumer browsing include books, stationery and office supplies, which comprises 48 percent of sales. Apparel and consumer electronics trail immediately behind with 46 percent. Rounding out the fashion categories, 34 percent of consumers say they shop for footwear online and 25 percent shop for fashion accessories.

Of those shoppers just browsing, 73 percent of consumers say they shop and buy apparel online, while 62 percent of footwear shoppers purchased. Fifty-six percent of fashion accessories browsers convert to buyers.

"As we enter the second decade of e-commerce, it becomes more important for retailers, and perhaps even more so for fashion retailers, to use their online properties to offer an evolved shopping experience—a three-dimensional shopping experience," says Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst, The NPD Group.

According to the report, 54 percent of shoppers have purchased online within

the last month, while only 33 percent of footwear and 28 percent of accessories shoppers use the medium. Of that, 25 percent of online shoppers say they found the retailer via a social networking site, with females more likely than males to do so.

"Apparel has come a long way in getting consumers to engage online," says Cohen. "Converting the sale online should be the very next focus for fashion sales. Getting the consumer to go from browsing to purchasing takes new information beyond just product photos and price. It takes convincing the consumer to push the purchase button."

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Star Wars Burgers Hit French Quick Chain

The force is strong in France, at least at fast food restaurant Quick.

Through March 5, the French chain is immersing itself and its customers in all things Star Wars to coincide with the February release of *Star Wars: Episode 1* in 3D.

Quick, which has locations in Belgium and Luxembourg in addition to France, will offer three burgers, snacks and an ice cream flavor, each inspired by the film. To accompany premium meals, collections of Star Wars toys and accessories will also be offered for children.

The promotion is a first for the chain and is rolling out in two phases. The first began Jan. 31 with two burgers based on characters Yoda and Darth Maul: the Jedi burger and the Dark burger. The third burger, the spicy Dark Vader burger complete with vegetable-colored black bread, will roll out March 2-5.

Included in the premium Magic Box meals are five prizes for

both boys and girls based on characters Amidala, Anakin and the Jedi. Children are further encouraged to “choose a side” by adopting a complete Jedi or Sith look with accessories available for collection from the Menu Top meal.

Other Star Wars themed menu items include Quick’s cheesy stars and the Fizzy Mix Mania ice cream dessert.



Redakai’s Innovative TCG Unleashed on Europe

A new trading card game for the Redakai property is about to hit retail shelves in Europe, promising to take trading cards to a new level and bring innovation to the toy category.

The TCG innovation lies in new Blast3D technology and stackable game play.

Players stack attack cards to damage the opponent, and stack monster cards to power up their defenses. A new “stack to battle” gaming advancement automatically tracks progress and allows players to see the damaging effects of their attacks.



Packs, tins and decks will be available with the first products launching in the second quarter in the U.K. and France, and across the rest of Europe in September. A limited number of action figures will also hit market in September. The TCG was launched to the hobby store market in the U.S. and Canada in June 2011 and was received well by gamers, who described it as “original and innovative; quick to learn and fast to play.”

“Redakai,” aimed at boys ages 6-12, is a co-production between Marathon Media Studios and Spin Master. The television series launched on Cartoon Network earlier this year.

Marathon Media has all consumer products rights for Redakai, excluding North America, where Spin Master holds the consumer products rights as well as worldwide toy rights. The series has also been sold to Cartoon Network (U.S., EMEA, LatAm); YTV Canada; Canal J and Gulli in France, where it debuts this month; Clan TV Spain; Panda Portugal; and Network Ten Australia. Further deals



will be announced soon.

“We are very excited and optimistic about the launch of Redakai in Europe,” says Patricia de Wilde, senior vice president consumer products for Marathon Media. “Spin Master created such an original and impactful launch in North America, so we can’t wait to see that success repeated in Europe.”

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FALL 2012

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The Royal Touch Launches in Tokyo

The British Embassy in Tokyo, Japan hosted the launch event of the Carolyn Robb: The Royal Touch culinary and lifestyle brand on Jan. 18.

Carolyn Robb, brand co-founder, served as personal chef to the U.K.'s Prince Charles, Princess Diana, Prince William and Prince Harry for over a decade.

The Royal Touch brand spans across several categories including food related advertising, marketing and culinary products. The brand has recently signed several new agents worldwide.

Foron will represent the brand exclusively in Hong Kong and mainland China; Wild Pumpkin Licensing International will represent the brand in Australia and New Zealand; VIP Entertainment and Merchandising will represent the brand in Germany; and Segal Entertainment came aboard as an exclusive partner for Canada.

JCPenney Undergoes Brand Overhaul

JCPenney is getting a whole new look. The retailer unveiled its fresh brand identity at a star-studded launch event Jan. 25 in New York City.

JCPenney chief executive officer Ron Johnson premiered the store's new brand re-imagining and initiatives that include an overhaul of its pricing strategy, a system called "fair and square" which forgoes traditional sales for more steady lower price values; the debut of Main Street, a collection of boutique brand shop-in-shops; a new logo and brand marketing; and a new celebrity spokesperson, Ellen DeGeneres. The company transformation was implemented Feb. 1.

Additionally, JCP has partnered with fashion designer Nanette Lepore for an exclusive teen-focused line, l'amour nanette lepore. The line will get its own distinct shop in February 2013.

JCP has also partnered with Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia for in-store retail environments, also beginning in February 2013. The in-stores will feature MSLO product and its own dedicated staff, as well as an e-commerce site. The partnership marks JCP's 16.6 percent stake in MSLO as well.



America's Legacy, LAPD to Get Product Programs

Several deals have been signed by The Licensing Group.

TLG will represent the Los Angeles Police Revolver & Athletic Club as the official agent of the Los Angeles Police Department, including LAPD badges, the term "LAPD," vehicle images and uniforms. All profits will benefit LAPD officers and their families.

The America's Legacy licensing program was created by the United States Secret Service Uniform Division benefit fund and offers support to the families of White House police officers killed on duty. The cornerstone of the program will include the use of symbols such as the U.S. Great Seal, the official U.S. banner, the Air Force One insignia and other such logos, emblems, seals and images of government agencies. The program is already in place at several department stores and mass market retailers such as Macy's, Dillards, Kohl's, JCPenney and Walmart.



Mattel/HIT Deal Closes, New Brand Heads Named

Mattel has completed its acquisition of HIT Entertainment, Mattel announced Feb. 1. David Allmark, executive vice president, Fisher-Price, will oversee the HIT portfolio of brands.

"Mattel is thrilled to welcome HIT Entertainment talent to our family under the direction of Fisher-Price executive vice president David Allmark," says Bryan Stockton, chief executive officer, Mattel. "This acquisition supports our strategy to own, develop and grow world-class brands, further igniting the momentum behind our innovative toys and consumer products in the marketplace."

Edward Catchpole has been named senior vice president, HIT Brands. Catchpole will head the U.K. office and orchestrate marketing strategy for HIT's worldwide portfolio.

HIT's executives will not follow the properties to Mattel. Jeffrey Dunn, president and chief executive officer, has exited, while Sangeeta Desai, chief operating officer, will help transition brands.

Mattel acquired HIT for \$680 million in October 2011. The deal gives Mattel access to HIT's global portfolio including Thomas & Friends, Barney, Bob the Builder, Fireman Sam and Angelina Ballerina, but not HIT's interest in the Sprout cable network. ©

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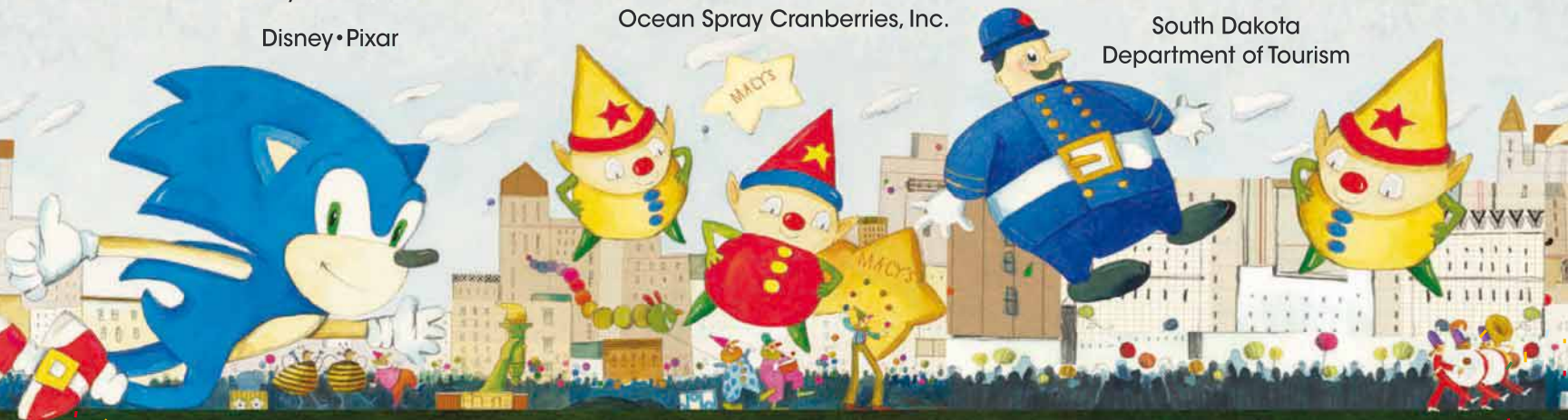
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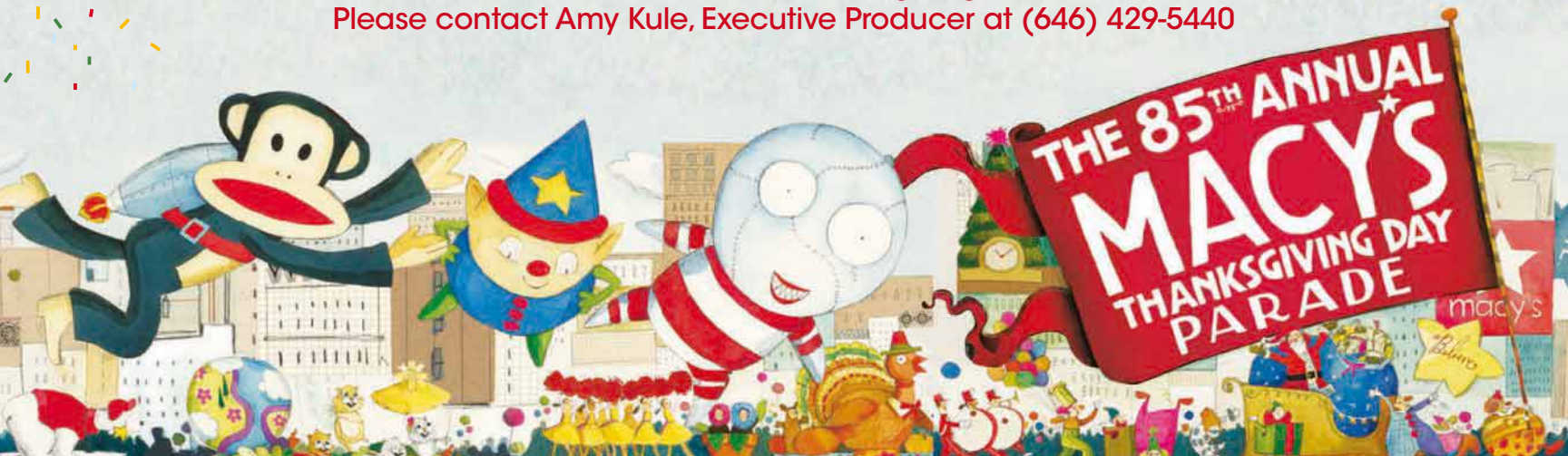
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Kids Love Their Products

The NPD Group has released its exclusive KIDS report that indicates which sectors children continued to favor with their designated retail dollars last year.

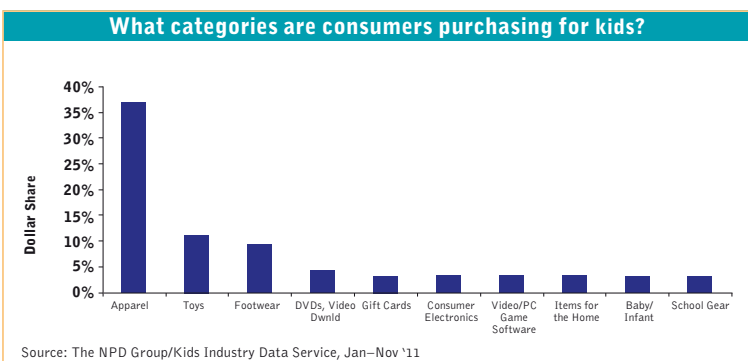
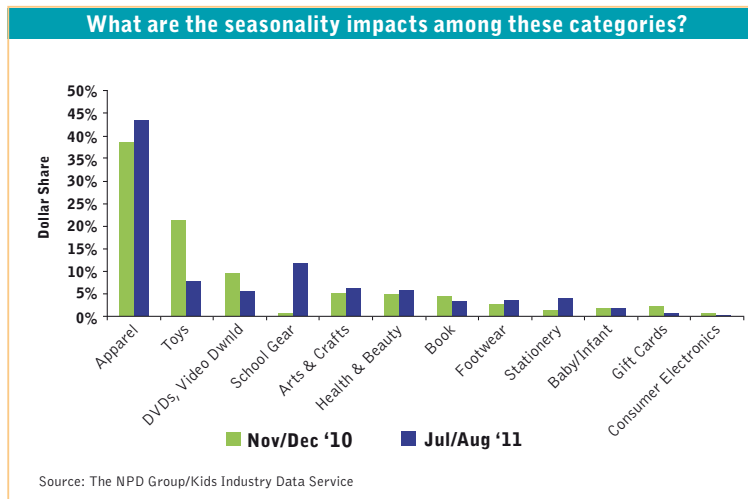
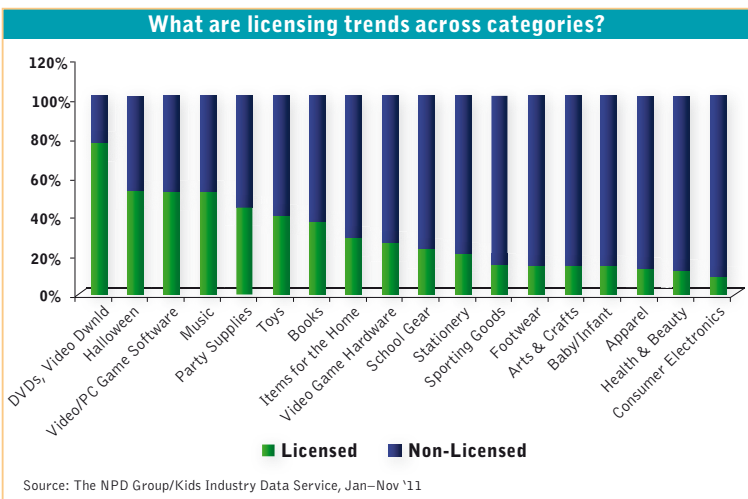


According to the latest Kids Industry Data Service (KIDS) report from The NPD Group, which as of publication deadline covered January–November 2011, the categories that experienced the most purchases for kids up to age 14 were apparel, toys, footwear, DVD's/video downloads, gift cards and consumer electronics.

In spite of tougher economic times, children continue to be very vocal about purchases made for them with 40 percent of overall dollar sales across 19 categories made at the request of the child. This is especially true with older children who



In spite of tougher economic times, children continue to be very vocal about purchases made for them with 40 percent of overall dollar sales across 19 categories made at the request of the child.

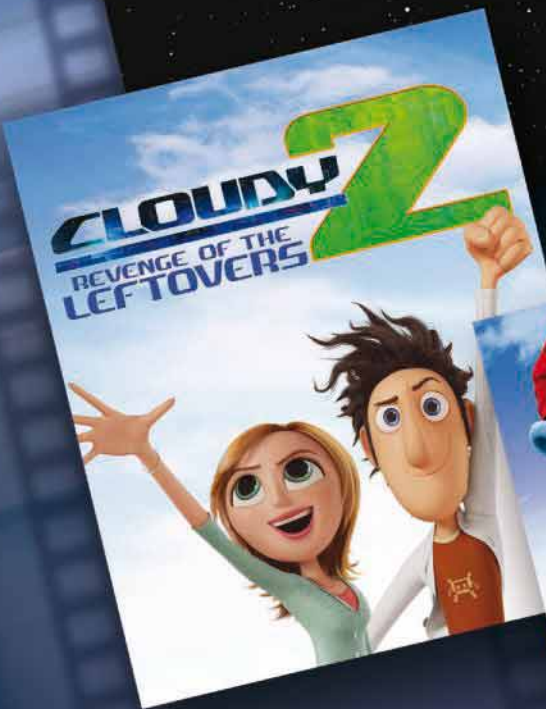


seem to be having more of an influence over purchases. Over 60 percent of purchases made for children ages 9-14 are requested by the child.

Some of the categories that score the highest on the request list throughout 2011 for children ages 0-14 fell within the Halloween (costume and accessory), video/PC game software and video game system hardware categories.

Licensed products continue to be extremely popular among children. The above charts illustrates how licensing fared within the aforementioned categories. ©

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Toy Fair 2012

Technology and traditional merge

The American International Toy Fair kicks off with a host of innovative products and more traditional categories.

By **Amanda Peabody**

In a year forecasted to fair slightly better than the last, technology and product innovations are on the forefront of the toy trends emerging at the 109th American International Toy Fair, hosted by the Toy Industry Association, in New York City.

Retail industry sales are expected to rise 3.4 percent to \$2.53 trillion in all segments this year, according to the National Retail Federation, slightly below pace of 2011, yet still pegged as a growth year. With this outlook fairly optimistic, toy companies are remaining cautious in the properties they back, but innovating products to match an ever-increasing demand to enrich children's lives through play.

Traditional toy companies and licensors are dipping into the technology pool more and more frequently, while non-traditional companies such as Mind Candy, creators of Moshi Monsters, are very much establishing itself on the retail shelf and online.

"We sit alongside two or three other brands that come from a digital space which hasn't



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traditionally driven retailers, but we are now entering an age where we are getting a really kind reception because of our content,” says Eric Karp, head of licensing, Americas, for Mind Candy.

Mind Candy is just beginning to emerge on U.S. retail shelves, having recently launched an exclusive in August 2011 with Toys ‘R’ Us. Its extension of plush and mini-figures based on the Moshi Monsters virtual world, in partnership with master toy partner Spin Master, is now found on shelves in Walmart and Target as well. At Toy Fair, Mind Candy has announced several new strategies for the brand, including a deal with Mega Bloks for a construction line blind bag, a series of iPad-related toys and games from Discovery Bay Games and a new robotic segment, called Bobble Bots, with partner Innovation First.

“We are not just looking to next generation figurines to drive our product, but also toys and collectibles that have a value beyond just the physical that enhance consumers online experience,” says

Karp. “We spend a lot of time and a great deal of effort to create a virtual world that is engaging and dynamic and we are finding that in the product space, kid’s and parents want something that is as respectful of their offline time as their online time.”

Apps and interactive play patterns are continuing to play a significant role in

product innovation and licensing initiatives moving forward.

In September 2011, Disney unveiled its new AppMATEs mobile application toys. The line, which is a joint venture with Spin Master, utilizes physical toys that come to life digitally when used in conjunction with an iPad. The line has first launched with the Cars property, but will likely see several more iterations as technology continually becomes integrated into children’s lives.

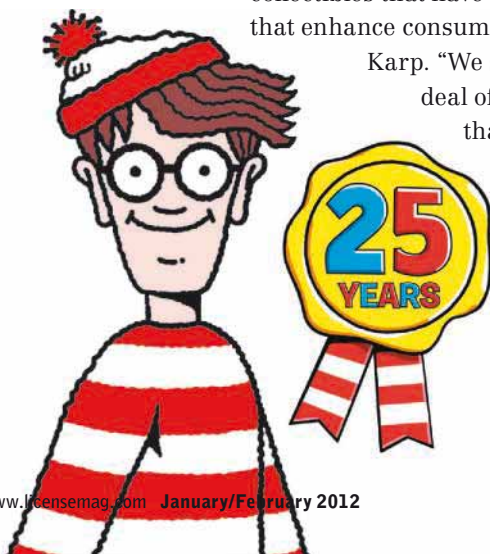
“Kids will always use toys to play out their favorite Disney stories, but Disney AppMATEs now allows them to include technology which has become a way of life for them through a beautifully rich app,” says Sunny Lauridsen, director of digital toys for Disney Consumer Products.

Mattel introduces its Hot Wheels RC iNitro Speeders to the iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch at Toy Fair as it unveils its first functionality app for the property. The app allows users to convert their compatible electronic device into a wireless controller. The assortment also has themed skins available for devices.

As companies begin to integrate technology usage into common household items, Jakks Pacific has launched and re-invented its Plug it in & Play line of video games for SpongeBob SquarePants, Spider-Man and Star Wars with the introduction of the TV Games Touch pad which allows gamers to touch, drag, point and tap television controls much like they would on a tablet or mobile gaming device. The device plugs straight into A/V jacks of any standard TV without any additional console or device required. Plug it in & Play TV Games are also now available for AMC’s “The Walking Dead” series.

Properties such as Where’s Waldo? from Classic Media are also continuing to utilize the online and mobile space to expand the brand. As the property gears up to celebrate its 25th anniversary this year, Classic Media will continue its partnership with Gameloft and Ludia for mobile games, and also incorporate virtual goods from Virtual Greats and Skinit for consumer personalization for electronic devices. Licensees have also been signed for traditional product categories including fashion accessories (Concept One Accessories); apparel (Jem Sportswear and Awake); board games, puzzles, card games and novelty (Techno Source); and dolls (Alexander Doll Company).

Other online properties continuing to transition





from the virtual world to physical product include Annoying Orange, represented by The Joester Loria Group, with a line of plush from The Bridge Direct, and Domo in partnership with Dark Horse for several lines including plush, vinyl figures, mugs and magnets.

Traditional toys, classic properties and entertainment franchises are also enjoying a large presence at Toy Fair, of course.

Nickelodeon Consumer Products has a host of products on the floor for its properties Dora the Explorer, Team Umizoomi and SpongeBob SquarePants (each in partnership with Fisher-Price), as well Victorious (master toy licensee is Spin Master), Winx Club (Jakks Pacific and Creative Designs International) and for the soon-to-be debuted "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" CG-animated series (Playmates Toys).

Saban Entertainment and Bandai will continue its master toy partnership for the Power Rangers property with the release of Power Rangers Armor Morphin and Megazord figures. Pressman Toy has also unveiled a range of games based on the series "Power Rangers Samurai." The games will be available at mass and specialty retailers nationwide in June.

Bandai will also unveil the Ben 10 Ultimate Ultimatrix, a Turner CN Enterprises property, and expand Zinkia Entertainment's multi-platform brand Pocoyo. Bandai will remain master toy partner for Pocoyo. Bandai's new line of toys will be available this fall at Toys 'R' Us, select Walmart

Apps are Here to Stay

Apps are the new frontier for brand extensions as adults and children alike consistently prove that the integration of technology into everyday life is essential to brand survival, and that they can be successfully monetized. According to Apple, as of July 2011 more than 15 billion apps have been downloaded from the App Store worldwide.

In most cases, the entertainment property or brand awareness is long in place before igniting a successful app launch, such as with Starbucks' iPhone app which allows users to pay by mobile phone for purchases with prepaid gift cards, however increasingly companies are finding apps to be a formidable launching pad for new properties.

Disney Mobile took this backward approach—launching the property as an app first with the goal for expansion later—with Where's my Water?, a puzzle game that debuted in September 2011. One can only assume we'll begin to see the app's star, Swampy, on products and on screen soon enough. Other app originated properties such as ZeptoLab's Cut the Rope, will see products actualized as the developer readies a range of plush and apparel. Fruit Ninja from Halfbrick Studios will launch product on the Toy Fair floor as Jazwares debuts

its first line of toys and electronics based on the app.

According to the editors of *License! Global*, here are some of the top licensed property or brand extension apps of 2011:

- Angry Birds (Rovio Entertainment)
- Talking Friends (Outfit7)
- Scrabble (Electronic Arts/Hasbro)
- Monopoly (Electronic Arts/Hasbro)
- Cut the Rope (ZeptoLab)
- Sonic the Hedgehog (SEGA)
- Where's Waldo? (Ludia/Classic Media)
- Super 8 (Paramount Digital Entertainment)
- Starbucks (Starbucks Coffee Company)
- Farmville/Cityville (Zynga)
- Tiger Woods: My Swing (Shotzoom Software)
- Fruit Ninja (Halfbrick Studios)

Facebook also released its list of popular social games for 2011, each with a potential for licensing. Zynga games heavily populate the list for yet another year following its debut initial public offering in December 2011 for its "Cityville," "Words with Friends," "Empires and Allies" and "Indiana Jones Adventure World" games. Other titles popular on the site include

- "Gardens of Time" (Playdom),
- "The Sims Social" (Electronic Arts),
- "DoubleDown Casino" (DoubleDown Entertainment),
- "Bingo Blitz" (Buffalo Studios),
- "Slotomania-Slot Machines" (Playtika)
- and "Diamond Dash" (Wooga).





stores and at Amazon.com.

For the Nelvana series “Beyblade,” Hasbro will debut in time for spring the Beyblade Extreme Top System Half Pipe battle set and the

Extreme Top System Stealth Battler top assortment. Hasbro is also launching several toys for its classics such as Nerf, Play-Doh and Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head, who are getting an official wedding this year.

Care Bears and American Greetings Properties celebrates the 30th anniversary of the property with the launch of a new CGI TV series and partnerships with Bendon for publishing and plush from Hasbro.

Mattel debuts its Create-a-Monster starter pack and core doll assortment for its Monster High

property, along with several new products for Barbie, Fijit Friends, WWE, Hot Wheels and Cars.

Disney has a raft of product ready for spring for boys, girls and preschool age children.

For girls, Mattel debuts wedding themed dolls for Disney Princess, Tolly Tots launches toddler dolls and CDI unveils a role play Disney Princess wedding dress.

Releasing in June, Disney/Pixar’s *Brave* is also getting the toy treatment with dolls and play sets from Mattel, role play and accessories from CDI and toddler dolls and fashion from Tolly Tots.

Disney Fairies also has deals in place with Jakks Pacific for dress up and role play and CDI for product based on the upcoming Disney Fairies film *Secret of the Wings*.

For boys, Disney’s Cars and Toy Story continue to be its hot properties, with toys from Mattel, Spin Master, LEGO, Fisher-Price and Thinkway on deck.

In the preschool segment, Minnie Mouse Bow-tique fashion themed role play from Just Play and figures and accessories from Fisher-Price have launched.

Series “Jake and the Neverland Pirates” is getting its first line of toys this year, and Fisher-Price has developed a new line of toys based on “Mickey Mouse Clubhouse.”

For the new series “Doc McStuffins” debuting in March, Just Play is set to produce a line of dolls, plush, role play and accessories inspired by the series.

Appealing across categories is a range featuring character Wreck-it Ralph, who will get a new film from Disney releasing in November. DCP has introduced a cross-category toy line for boys and girls including figures, vehicles, plush, dolls and role play.

Imperial Toy has a range of licensed toy properties on debut, including ranges for MGA

Entertainment’s Lalaloopsy.

The new line will feature a collection of rag dolls, novelty toys, bubble toys and beach toys. Imperial also has a range of Kidz Bop role play toys, the



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Kidz Bop Glamerati Party Like a Pop Star! product line on debut.

Scholastic has multiple properties on the Toy Fair floor including Clifford the Big Red Dog (games and puzzles, plush, accessories, toys and apparel), The

Magic School Bus and it's The Young Scientists Club (magnets, lab kits, group packs and mail away kits), Goosebumps (games), I Spy (games and puzzles), Wordgirl (comics) and for its Little Scholastic brand (educational toys).

2012 continues to be the year of the super hero as well as films such as Warner Bros.' *The Dark Knight Rises*, Marvel Entertainment's *The Avengers* and the Marvel/Sony Pictures co-production *The Amazing Spider-Man* each gear up for a theatrical release. Toys to capitalize on this trend include Briarpatch's Marvel Avengers and Spider-Man collectibles, along with its Wonder Tubes range.

Marvel also expands on its "Marvel Super Hero Squad" series, airing on Hasbro's The Hub, with a line of play sets, action figures, vehicles, toys, role play and plush under the Playskool banner. Thinkway Toys features two new Avengers items: The Avengers Quinjet and The Avengers transforming vehicles, each for boys ages 4 and up.

Also on the feature film licensed product front, Jakks Pacific debuts an expanded toy line for Sony's 2011 summer success *The Smurfs* and for spring's *Men in Black 3*. The Smurfs property finds several Grab Ems figure packs and assortments, as well as a range of plush and adventure gift packs. The *Men in Black 3* film releases May 25, and in preparation, Jakks has a figure and talking plush range in place on the Toy Fair floor. ©





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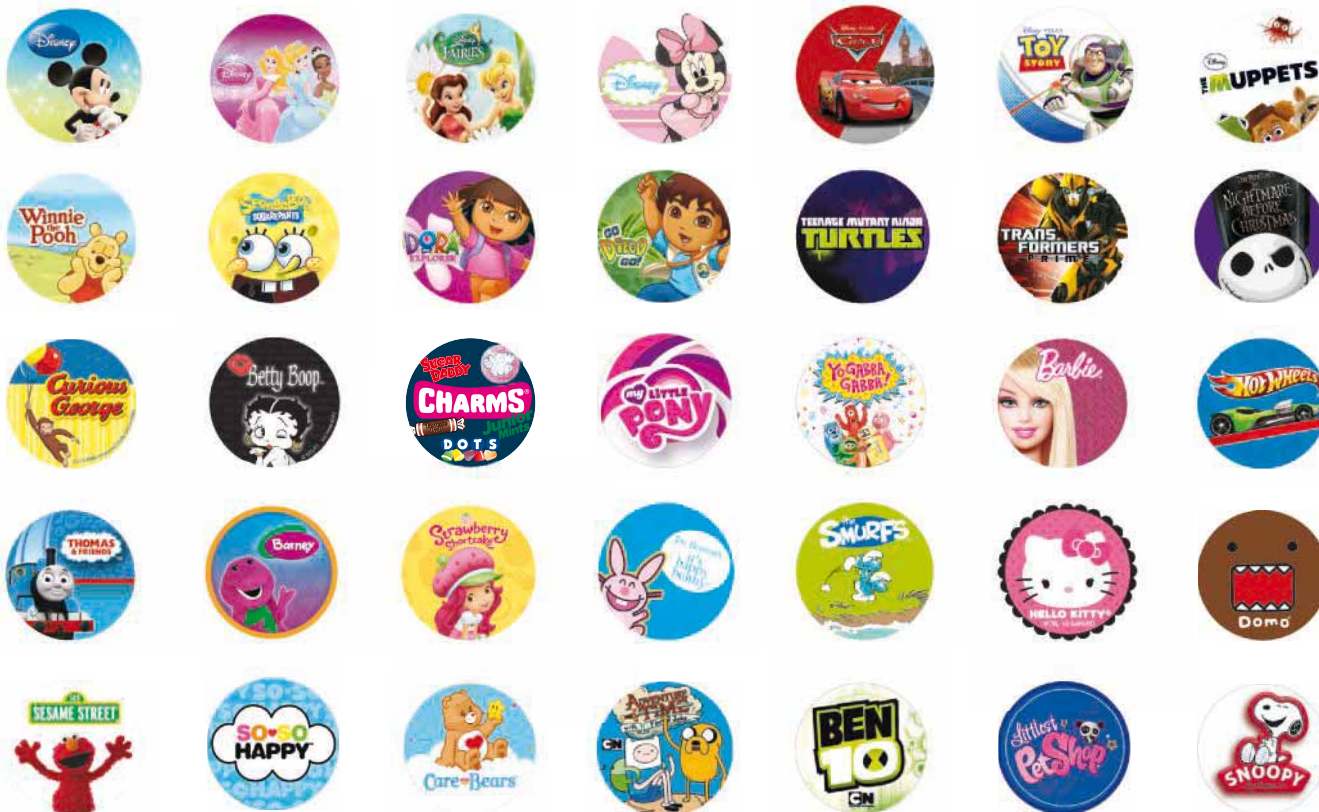
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LONDON'S Toy Fair GETS ACTIVE

By Sam Phillips

The mood at the London Toy Fair, held Jan. 24-26 and promoted by the British Toy & Hobby Association, was optimistic, having sold out in record time and with toys holding their own in a less than optimal economic climate.

“We’re remaining cautious because we expect the economic conditions to remain the same this year,” says Lucy Wynn-Jones, head of licensing for Worlds Apart. “But last year has shown us that good toys, especially ones that meet the trend for staying at home, maintain their appeal and can lead to new opportunities.”

The Year of Outdoor and Active Play

Also growing is the U.K.’s outdoor sports category, which includes active play items such as scooters, bikes and tents. Active play was a special focus at the London Toy Fair this year—this is London’s Olympic year and the British Toy & Hobby Association’s Make Time 2 Play campaign re-launches this spring with a focus on active play and its benefits. Outdoor toys, and more particularly preschool outdoor toys, represent an opportunity for licensing as the market is growing but not yet well penetrated by licenses.

The U.K. outdoor sports category was valued by The NPD Group at £350 million in 2010 and represents 12 percent of the toy market. It has grown 10 percent over the last year. It’s a market that is dominated by generic

brands and mid-age ranges such as Razor (the scooter brand grew 300 percent in 2011) and Hasbro’s Nerf (NPD’s No. 1 rated toy brand in sports and games in 2011, according to Hasbro). In the preschool segment, the dominant generic brand is Mookie Toys’ range of Smart Trikes. But, as some manufacturers are finding, there are benefits and opportunities to be had from working with a licence.

For preschool age children, licenses are driving the growth. Thomas the Train, Peppa Pig, Ben 10 and Star Wars all featured strongly in 2011.

“Key classic licences are providing the growth,” says Phil Ratcliffe, sales and marketing director of MV Sports. “When a licence ‘fires’ it tends to eclipse everything else and results in exponential turnover.”

Wynn-Jones says licensed products represent about 40 percent of the pop-up toy market.

“Licenses help to maintain margins and drive innovation, which is important with so many brands competing in the market,” she says. “Characters give us a reason to incorporate role play features into the products, extending the time spent playing with them and giving them longer-lasting appeal.”

The pop-up and play tent segment is dominated by preschool brands but the category is proving it has potential for wider appeal.

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from Hasbro has widened our target beyond preschool to include older boys,” says Wynn-Jones. “We designed a Nerf pop-up tunnel with holes you can shoot your Nerf blasters through and it’s been a huge success. It will be the No. 1 license for 2012.”

The key, she says, is understanding how children play and finding the right structure for the age profile and play pattern. For preschool and girls, Wynn-Jones suggests it is more important to build role play features into products that are an actual, physical place such as the Disney Princess castle. For boys, it is about creating an environment where they can act things out.

Producing three or four designs under each license for different retailers has helped licensees create differentiation and grow the outdoor market.

“So many categories can become commoditized and with generic product it is possible to get to lower price points,” says Wynn-Jones. “But with licensed products you have to focus even more on design because the item has to reflect the brand.”

Not every brand is suited to outdoor toys and there are very strong brands in the market to go up against.

“You need strong entertainment and a strong existing toy line,” says Ratcliffe. “Children must be able to be immersed in the property and for it to be their absolute favorite because while you may have a wide variety of toys, you tend to only have one scooter, one bike, etc.”

Looking ahead, Silvergate Media’s Octonauts is expected to grow within the segment this year, along with Disney’s Minnie Mouse and HIT’s Mike the Knight, each in the preschool market. Worlds

Apart predicts continuing success for Nerf and a strong year for Spider-Man.

The popularity of outdoor and active toys is hardly new. Worlds Apart started making pop-ups 14 years ago for Chad Valley, the Woolworths toy brand. But in the last few years active play has become a broad social concern and a consumer trend

echoed by Warner Bros.’ pan-European deal linking Looney Tunes Active to own-label food lines at Super U. Active toys have been supported and promoted by the British Toy & Hobby Association, the government and others which has helped increase consumer awareness and interest. But the arrival of the Olympics is a double-edged sword. Inspiring and sporty it might be, but it will also take valuable shelf space away in retail channels such as the grocers. With licenses helping, there will be plenty to tempt retail again when the games are over.

London Toy Fair Highlights

Brands created jointly between entertainment companies and toy companies continue to proliferate, predominantly in the boys’ action category. Monsuno from FremantleMedia Enterprises and Jakks Pacific and Redakai from Marathon Media and SpinMaster are just two examples. Elsewhere Hasbro, LEGO and others continue to blur the lines between toys and entertainment. It’s a trend NPD sees strengthening.

“More toy companies are taking the initiative to become entertainment companies adding different media to get their brands in front of children,” says Frederique Tutt, European analyst for the NPD Group.

LEGO is also expanding its Ninjago range and its LEGO Star Wars universe in 2012, and has unveiled the first results of its partnership with DC Comics.

Vivid will introduce 30 new Moshi Monsters products during 2012, hoping to double the business to £30 million in retail sales.

Character Building added Deadly 60, Ben 10 and Monsters vs. Zombies to its mini-figure based building line this year. It also unveiled the preschool toy line for HIT Entertainment’s Mike the Knight, while Sylvanian Families celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. ©

Spielwarenmesse: International Toy Fair Nuremberg

The Nuremberg Toy Fair, the world’s largest, opened a day earlier this year and ran Feb.1-6 in Nuremberg, Germany. The theme this year was Toys for Teens, and with the tagline “they really do play!,” the fair presented a special focus on products for the 13-17-year-old age group.

There were also tips about point of sale for teens and ideas for engaging consumers. The fair further commissioned a study on teens that was presented at the event.

The teen theme continued with the annual Global Toy Conference, held on the last day of the fair, with a seminar that looked at reversing age compression and winning back older children.

Nuremberg hosted more than 2,500 exhibitors with more than one million products on the show floor for the nearly 80,000 visitors who are estimated to have attended the event.

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Pictured above: WBCP executives Karen McTier, executive vice president of domestic licensing and worldwide marketing (left), and Kelly Gilmore, senior vice president, global toys and themed entertainment.

By **Tony Lisanti**

With the final installment of the Dark Knight franchise already stirring a strong buzz among fans in anticipation of its summer theatrical release coupled with the popularity of various other super hero driven content and properties, Warner Bros. Consumer Products is leveraging the synergy, power and portfolio of DC Entertainment, Cartoon Network and divisions across Warner Bros. to expand its penetration and strong position in the toy category worldwide.

The aggressive push in toys cuts across the extensive WBCP portfolio, which features both classic and new properties



including Tom and Jerry, Looney Tunes, Scooby-Doo, ThunderCats, DC Comics, the two upcoming films *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* and *The Hobbit: There And Back Again*, as well as Harry Potter, which has been a WBCP mainstay for the past decade.

An unprecedented line-up of new content, feature films and television programming, featuring iconic properties that continue to be re-imagined, is driving the toy strategy. They include:

- *The Dark Knight Rises*, scheduled for theatrical release July 20, is director Christopher Nolan's conclusion to the Batman trilogy.
- *Man of Steel*, set to hit theaters June 14, 2013, will be the sixth film in the iconic Superman franchise, which began in 1978. Directed by Zack Snyder, the film will revitalize the popular franchise.
- *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, scheduled for theatrical

release on Dec. 14, will be the first in a two part film series. Peter Jackson is directing both Hobbit films, which are being produced concurrently.

THE WBCP TOY CHEST

WB CONSUMER PRODUCTS

PROPERTIES + PARTNERS POWERFUL PORTFOLIO

■ *The Hobbit: There and Back Again, Part 2* is due on Dec. 13, 2013, and will be fifth film in The Lord of the Rings franchise.

On the television side, Cartoon Network will debut DC Nation, which was created last year as a multi-platform franchise exclusively for DC Comics animation properties. The CN DC Nation block will feature “Green Lantern: The Animated Series” and “Young Justice,” among other series being

developed. In addition, other animated shows aired on Cartoon Network (but not on the DC Nation block) include “ThunderCats,” “Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated” and “The Looney Tunes Show.”

“We enter the toy fair season in 2012 with one of the most diverse offerings for retailers we have seen in



years,” says Brad Globe, president of Warner Bros. Consumer Products. “From Batman to Bugs Bunny, we have significant content support across the board that has allowed us to expand our toy partner portfolio around the world.

“The toy category continues to be a keystone for WBCP,” he adds. “We are excited to be working with some of the biggest global partners while also

Mattel: Super Plans for Super Heroes

Master global toy partner Mattel, which renewed its agreement with WBCP for the entire DC Comics portfolio, has super big plans for the Dark Knight franchise.

“Batman is a toy makers dream come true,” says Doug Wadleigh, senior vice president, global brands marketing strategy, boys, Mattel. “The character looks cool, has great gadgets, gear and vehicles. We are continually excited when this franchise gets re-energized with a new film. We appreciate Warner Bros.’ commitment to continually invest in this franchise, whether its thru major theatrical release or a new animated series or a new video game,” he adds. “That generates cultural noise and always keeps Batman relevant for all ages.”

The scope of the new product line, according to Wadleigh, is broader, more innovative and appeals to all fans of all ages. Key products include:

- DC Super Friends developed by Fisher-Price for 1-4-year-olds.
- Power Attack, a new line of figures, vehicles and accessories targeted to 4-6-year-olds.
- The QuickTek line will allow boys to transform ordinary Batman figures and vehicles, such as a flying Batmobile, into battle mode.
- The Movie Masters line will offer passionate collectors very detailed sculptured figures based on characters from the film.
- Hot Wheels die cast cars, track sets and radio controlled vehicles.

“Products will begin to hit retail shelves at end of May with new figures, vehicles and accessories introduced every month thereafter to keep consumers going back to the store,” says Wadleigh. “We have received strong feedback from retail about the innovation and breadth of the collection.



“Batman is an evergreen brand that will be regularly be on retail shelves, not only during the theatrical release, but through 2013 and beyond,” he adds. “We will continue to invest in this brand long after the movie hype has come and gone.”

Beyond Batman, Mattel is already developing a new toy line for *Man of Steel*, which will be released in summer 2013.



creating regional and local market opportunities with toy companies around the world.”

The DC Comics library has been a very strong performer for WBCP historically, generating global sales of licensed merchandise of more than \$16 billion at retail. Last year, WBCP’s DC Super Friends licensing program generated more than \$115 million at retail.

Overall, WBCP has not only been a stable company but a consistent performer at retail, generating \$6 billion in global sales of licensed merchandise across its entire portfolio, ranking No. 5 according to the exclusive Top 125 Global Licensors report, published annually by *License! Global* magazine.

In part, it’s this stability along with its resources, synergy, employees and understanding of the marketplace that continues to drive growth in the post-Potter franchise era, not only in the toy category, but through various other new promotions and initiatives as well, such as expansion in themed entertainment.

The groundswell of interest and excitement among consumers for the upcoming summer release of *The Dark Knight Rises* is a positive indication for blockbuster status at the box office and for a strong performance for consumer products at retail. In 2008, *The Dark Knight* grossed \$1 billion at the box office worldwide. The new film could very well eclipse that number as well as the take from the finale of the Harry Potter franchise, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows–Part 2*, which grossed \$1.3 billion making it the No. 1 film in 2011, according to Box Office Mojo.

“With rich franchise films, DC Comics super hero animated shows and other character animation, now more than ever we have a really solid and diverse portfolio of content and we are excited about building the consumer products business,” says Karen McTier, executive vice president of

domestic licensing and worldwide marketing, WBCP. “The company is a well-oiled machine with a very stable executive staff and we are very much in sync across all divisions sharing the same goals and priorities. We are marching in the same direction and we recognize that when we work together and partner together we can be a lot stronger.”

Adds Kelly Gilmore, senior vice president, global toys and themed entertainment, WBCP: “We are working closely with other divisions, including Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment and Warner Bros. Home Video, to create brand extensions based on video game titles as well as other special promotions.”

Gilmore says that six licensee partners requested artwork to create toys, games and collectibles to build a consumer products program based on the video game franchise, “Batman: Arkham City,” which was released in October by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment.

“We will continue to replicate what’s going on in the video game area with various new products and collectibles,” she says.

Gilmore says WBCP is also partnering internally with the home video division, developing joint presentations to retail chains and various special promotions. For example, she says that to tie in with the DVD release in November for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows–Part 2* in 3D Blu-ray, the release of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows–Part 1* and the complete eight film collection, the Warner Bros. teams worked jointly with Walmart to establish additional retail space for both DVDs and consumer products tie-ins.

Another example, Gilmore says, is the The Looney





Tunes Show partnership and promotion with 1,500 Walmart stores. A special cartoon Saturday for kids was created in-store with costume characters and merchandise displays.

“It was a hugely successful way to introduce the new Looney Tunes franchise to kids,” says Gilmore.

The first launch of new toy lines and collectibles based on *The Dark Knight Rises* will begin to hit retail stores in May with a roll out of new products continuing strong throughout the year.

With the initial hype and hope for the summer film release, it’s not surprising that many of the world’s leading licensees are bullish on the WBCP toy program led by Mattel, which last November extended its agreement as master toy partner for the entire DC Comics portfolio. WBCP and Mattel have been partners for the past 10 years developing various toy lines for many properties, including the tent pole films *Batman Begins* (2005), *The Dark Knight* (2008) and last year’s extensive Green Lantern collection.

Other major licensees include Bandai, LEGO, Rubies, Thinkway Toys, Vivid, The Bridge Direct, Character Group, Fisher-Price, Sideshow Collectibles, Pressman Toy, Funko, Games Workshop,



The Noble Collection, Lansay, Hallmark and NECA, among others.

- Mattel will offer two different lines of products for the Batman property—one, based on *The Dark Knight Rises* film, is for collectors and older kids, and an evergreen line targeting kids ages 3-7 that, says Gilmore, features a friendlier Batman for the children that can’t go to the movie but can be part of the franchise based on its strong awareness. (See Mattel sidebar).
- Fisher-Price will continue to expand the DC Super Friends line featuring Imaginext, Trio, HeroWorld and Geotrax.
- Bandai, global master toy licensee for “ThunderCats,” the re-imagined action series on Cartoon Network based on the 1980s show, will extend its line of four-inch figures with 12-inch figures, vehicles and play sets.
- LEGO, in addition to a new Batcave product and a Batman collection including *The Dark Knight Rises*, is developing construction sets for *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* properties.
- Rubies is developing costumes across all properties.
- Thinkway Toys is developing vehicles inspired by *The Dark Knight Rises*.
- The Bridge Direct and Vivid Group, worldwide master toy and game partners for *The Hobbit*, will create a line of action figures, play sets and role play accessories (swords and battle axes).

- On the international front, Lansay is on board for *The Looney Tunes Show* and *Scooby-Doo* properties, and Ravensberger has signed on for deals for the two *The Hobbit* properties.

“We take pride in working with licensees and being very involved in the creative product development,” explains McTier. “The studio recognizes the importance of a strong consumer products program and is open to us having access to very sensitive and confidential information.”

Another key aspect to the toy strategy is global expansion not only for Batman but across the other franchises that are well known in many territories.

“We have a tremendous reach and



we are fortunate that our franchise properties are strong worldwide,” says McTier.

“The world of Batman is so rich with characters, villains, vehicles and locations which can all be used to target different audiences,” says Bruno Schwobthaler, senior vice president sales and business development EMEA, WBCP, adding that the toy program is as complete as it has ever been. “Batman is a true brand with a high level of awareness, values, distinctive style and high-tech appeal.”

While many of the licensing programs for *The Dark Knight Rises* and the two films based on *The Hobbit* are already well developed, the focus for next year will be all about *Man of Steel*, which perhaps offers even more potential than the Batman franchise.

For the first time in more than a decade, the new content portfolio does not include Harry Potter, however the franchise is still vital and remains a perennial licensed program. Much of the focus is on themed entertainment as The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando Resort undergoes expansion and a similar attraction is in development at Universal Studios Hollywood.

WBCP is leveraging the studio’s diverse new content, the assets of other divisions, and its strong relationships with licensees and retailers to create new magic worldwide, not only with an aggressive push in toys, but with a consistent message and expansion across all platforms and product categories. ©



APPAREL AWAKENS FOR

Spring

By **Faye Brookman**

As retailers and exhibitors head to MAGIC, the bi-annual Advanstar-produced event that brings together the international community of apparel, accessories and footwear buyers, brands and decision makers Feb. 14-16 in Las Vegas, Nev., they are optimistic. The Christmas 2011 season showed some renewed interest in apparel, and spring should keep the momentum going as people look to refresh wardrobes.

“The apparel market is starting to look good again,” says Marshal Cohen, chief industry

analyst for The NPD Group.

In its most recent apparel sales report, NPD, albeit modestly, found that revenue increased overall primarily driven by the men’s segment.

Howard Loevner, co-president of Trau & Loevner, a t-shirt supplier with numerous licenses, agrees

business is healthy and forecasts a trend towards nostalgic (Gumby or Lucky Charms, for example) and animal licensed themes or properties.

“The mood going into the show is good and cotton prices have come down some,” says Loevner.

A Retail Numbers Break Down

From January to June 2011, the total apparel market dollar volume grew just under 1 percent, with men’s up 4.6 percent. In particular, men’s tailored clothing jumped 11 percent, and dress shirts climbed 3 percent. Women’s apparel slid 0.8 percent. NPD’s second half results are still being calculated.

While the women’s segment declined, there were bright spots including dresses, suits and sheer hosiery.

“Women may continue to ‘shop their closets’ and make concessions in favor of their family members’ needs,” says Cohen.

But as indicated by the areas showing positive results, “they are picking and choosing from categories that might have a benefit in their professional lives,” notes Cohen.

Across the total apparel market, average retail prices rose 6 percent during the first half of 2011 versus the first half of 2010. Prices in the men’s apparel market rose almost 8 percent, while prices in the women’s apparel market rose 3 percent.

“Rising prices along with their impact on the consumer has gotten a lot of attention,” says Cohen, “The price pressures have come from throughout the supply chain and ultimately are passed on to consumers. But I think these results show that



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consumers have been accepting of those price increases.”

The National Retail Federation indicates a positive lift through the second half of 2011. Apparel sales during the key November and December holiday selling period rose too.

Citing Department of Commerce statistics, the NRF reported that sales at clothing and clothing accessories stores increased 0.7 percent seasonally adjusted over November, and a strong 7.9 percent unadjusted year-over-year.

While numbers are starting to seep into the black, Cohen cautions the industry still has a way to go. One of the biggest challenges for the apparel industry is keeping the dwindling core of true followers of fashion engaged.

“The consumer is not looking at fashion as a high priority purchase. Today they are saying, ‘I’m going to make do with what I have until I have to replace it,’” says Cohen. “There are still some of those passionate consumers left, but the number has gotten smaller and smaller.”

The industry, advises Cohen, “has to find a way to tell the consumer ‘you need to look good for these specific reasons.’”

For instance, poses Cohen: “Why isn’t the industry working on educating the consumer on how to dress for success? They did it three decades ago and they’ve never done it again.”

Candace Corlett, president of WSL Strategic Retail, agrees and says shoppers have learned how to get the best deals. They want to buy, but on their own terms. They are looking for more deals, carrying around receipts to get money back when mark downs occur and using reward programs more frequently.

Spring Trends

David Wolfe, creative director and trend forecaster for The Doneger Group, says the most important undercurrent in fashion now is simplification.

“There is a new minimalism, a simplicity but with color, softness and shape,” says Wolfe. “The trend of overdressing is closing.”

As color makes a comeback—both in bold shades and delicate pastel tones—black is expected to lose some of its dominance. Wolfe also anticipates white will play a bigger role in fashion and also be paired with black for a bolder statement.

“Zebra is the new leopard,” he says.

And as color comes back in greens, oranges, yellows and blues, Wolfe predicts women who are used to all black “and trying color for the first time” will probably buy blue first. Metallic materials are now worn year-round instead of just during the holiday season.

While technology has been driving newness in every other industry, Wolfe finds fashion falling behind. Even so, in the future designers will embrace more fabrics with benefits taking its cue from active wear, which has led in this segment. Still, says Wolfe, pointing to the advances in sneakers and watches, “accessories will beat apparel



Where are the Shoppers Shopping?

If you want to know where the world’s consumers are shopping for fashion these days, look no further than the Deloitte Global Retailing Report for 2012.

Of the top 10 purveyors of apparel, six are U.S.-based retailers.

Macy’s came out on top with total store sales of \$25 billion, followed by the TJX Company at

\$21.9 billion, which operates the TJMaxx and Marshalls discount chains, proving that bargain hunting is still driving many purchases.

Kohl’s was third with sales of \$18.4 billion, with JCPenney fourth with \$17.7 billion.

Spain’s Inditex was fifth with \$16.3 billion.

Luxury retailer LVMH was sixth with \$15.08 billion.

Fast fashion chain H&M came in seventh with \$15.03 billion, followed by The Gap, whose holdings include The Gap, Old Navy and Banana Republic, at \$16.6 billion.

Japan’s Isetan was ninth with \$13.9 billion.

Rounding out the list was The Limited Brands with \$9.6 billion, a newcomer to the top 10, displacing C&A of Europe.

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in the race to the future.”

Architecture is also having an influence on fashion as exemplified by this upcoming fall’s crop of coats and jackets.

“You will see dramatic, strong shapes,” says Wolfe.

Style details this year will include a focus on graceful draping necklines, dresses and tops with cut outs, along with sheer materials and modular pieces that can be mixed and matched.

In addition to functional synthetics, fabric and textiles to look for include wool and boiled wool, fur (both real and fake), snakeskin and geometric patterns, notes Wolfe.

Promising Categories

There are categories providing rays of hope for spring, buyers say.

Legwear, a category that has been drawing consumer interest, will be enlivened into the next season.

“Bright colors and textures will represent a lot of the business for spring,” says Alison Hessert, spokesperson for Kayser-Roth, maker of HUE and No Nonsense brands. “On the flip side, there will be pastels and lovely, girly things—but not cloyingly saccharine. Lacy trims and delicate weaves are other elements of the coming season.”

Hessert is also seeing a trend in patterned hosiery and “lots of anklets” worn with shoes and sandals.

“Leggings and footless tights have exploded in the past two years,” says Maureen Stabnau, senior vice president, merchandising for BareNecessities.com. “Since 2005, we have seen consistent double-digit growth each year in the category. One of the key factors driving the growth has been the economy. Legwear is a great way to update your wardrobe, without breaking the bank.”

Graphic T-shirts

“We’re starting to see more interest in Gumby, Where’s Waldo?, Popeye and now we have Pink Panther,” says Loevner.

He also predicts shoppers will be interested in other nostalgic looks such as those from old movies.

“And animals are coming back,” he adds.

Animal Planet departments did well in juniors, he says. Also delivering this year, he adds, are United States Postal Service licenses.

“We also have plans for the Olympics and have earmarked countries such as Jamaica for track and field,” he says.

Loevner believes the youth market is underserved in t-shirts and he’s bolstering his toddler business with novelty themes such as Wheaties and Peeps.

Fashion and Entertainment Licenses

Licenses will continue to grow, especially those that drive shoppers and have a solid track record.

Debra Joester, president of The Joester Loria Group, says that retailers remain eager to bring new and exciting licensed product into their stores but are rarely willing to commit to significant programs until they have test results.

“For Annoying Orange, retailers immediately understood the power of the property and its extraordinary reach,” she says. “The program is moving into children’s sizes in 2012 and will be in thousands of stores.”

Hybrid Apparel will debut a line of Annoying Orange boys’ t-shirts at MAGIC. The line will launch in spring at specialty, mid-tier and mass retailers including JCPenney, Walmart, Target, Kohl’s, Trans World, Rue 21, Shopko and Belk. Juniors and men’s t-shirts, which launched this past fall, will also be on display MAGIC. The line is currently available at JCPenney and other retailers across the country.

Discovery and Animal Planet are also seeing retail support for new product. Hybrid launched Shark Week t-shirts in 2011 and a bigger program will roll out in this year as Shark Week celebrates 25 years. Two Animal Planet series will be in-stores as well. Merlet is distributing Hillbilly Handfishing and River Monsters t-shirts in specialty and outdoor retailers. Dorfman Pacific will display a line of Discovery Expedition performance headwear.

SpongeBob SquarePants is still afloat as well. Nickelodeon has partnered with IMKING (Imaginary Kingdom Clothing) for a SpongeBob SquarePants co-brand, where IMKING for adult apparel, accessories and headwear product. There will be four releases of product throughout the year. Product will be released in boutiques, online stores and in IMKING’s flagship store in Santa Ana, Calif. The first collection launches in spring. ©



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The background features a white space with two large, curved, light-blue lines that sweep across the top and sides. Scattered throughout are various colorful stars and circles in shades of pink, yellow, green, blue, and red. Some stars have a white spark or glow effect.

Celebrity Glitter Still *Sparkles*

Celebrity driven brands and licenses are on target to perform well in a year expected to show some incremental growth at retail.

By **Faye Brookman**

Despite industry expert predictions that consumers would grow tired of purchasing products fronted by celebrities, licensed apparel and accessories promoted by the famous—from movie stars to celebrity designers—are flourishing.

Many celebrity licenses first got attention in fragrances or accessories. Emboldened by success, retailers hope to get people to buy more pieces curated by a favorite celebrity for the rest of their bodies.

That's not to say there aren't a few gambles when hinging a product line on a celebrity. Retailers dropped 6126, Lindsay Lohan's legging line, following several heavily publicized legal problems. Most public figures, however, ignite sales when their names are attached to products. Celebrities driving retail sales today aren't only the traditional movie or pop stars. Reality television personalities and characters based on television shows are also popular for licensing deals.

Madonna

Madonna's recent appearance scooping up Golden Globes proves there is still a lot of "material" left in the singer. She is launching her second lifestyle brand,



Truth or Dare by Madonna, aimed at a more mature consumer than her debut Macy's exclusive Material Girl collection. The architect of the brand is MG Icon—the joint venture between Iconix Brand Group, Madonna and Guy Oseary.

"The interest and excitement globally for brands developed by Madonna are significant," says Neil Cole, chief executive officer of Iconix Brand Group. "After the highly successful launch of the junior brand Material Girl, we knew there would be a tremendous demand for a brand that Madonna herself is the face of and that truly captures her essence."

For her part, Madonna says she has been approached many times to create her own brand and that the timing and partnership was right with Iconix.

Material Girl, which Macy's calls one of its top five junior brands, enjoys an exclusive distribution relationship. The retailer will continue to be the distribution point of the Truth or Dare by Madonna brand.

Beyond the new line, Material Girl will be extended with launches in beauty, intimates and sleepwear, and programs will be expanded for denim, outerwear and social dresses.

Avril Lavigne

Musician Avril Lavigne is bringing her edgy rock look to footwear for this spring.

Lavigne's Abbey Dawn brand, originally founded in 2008 and re-launched in December 2011 as a clothing line produced by San Diego-based Blank Generation, conveys a rock-star vibe with plaid,

animal prints and hardware.

"It started off with my favorite things to wear, and I wanted it to be rock 'n' roll," says Lavigne, who already makes women's and men's apparel and handbags. "I took (materials) that I love and added them to the shoes."

The line of roughly 39 footwear styles includes a mix of boots, sneakers, heels, ballet flats and flip-flops featuring a variety of hardware such as studs, spikes and skulls. The line is produced in China and will retail at select stores for \$50 to \$80. Her debut on the runway last fall featured a wide range of looks including a worn American flag motif and a flirty black party dress, among others.

Jessica Simpson

Under the savvy guidance of the Camuto Group, Jessica Simpson has strutted from strictly shoes into 23 categories totaling more than \$1 billion in annual sales.

At MAGIC this year, the collections shown will encompass footwear, dresses, jeanswear, sportswear, girls' apparel, swim, eyewear, handbags and jewelry. The tween line, produced by The Jones Group, hit stores late last year and has already achieved retail success.

In a recent interview, Simpson called the tween collection, which she worked on with sister Ashlee, "a combination of both of our styles. (Ashlee) is very rock 'n' roll, and I'm very American."

Simpson has signed a maternity line deal, and will

be working on girls' footwear. Simpson, like many celebrities with eponymous brands, has a hands-on approach that is credited with helping her success across several categories. Her latest sportswear looks, for example, are her effort to give young women a chance to look good at a reasonable price. The expansion is also a result of the popularity of the jeanswear collection.

Industry sources estimate footwear remains the lion's share of her business, followed by fragrance, jeanswear, handbags and jewelry. With Camuto's interest in vertical retailing, many wonder if a full Jessica Simpson store could be in the making. Simpson is a trusted figure, according to WSL Strategic Retail's Candace Corlett.

"She is approachable," she says.

Corlett praises her efforts for visiting stores when her merchandise debuted at Dillard's and Macy's, and points to the "American" look that is approachable and affordable as drivers of the brands success.

"In our research," says Corlett. "Those are two of the important factors driving consumers to buy apparel."

Tiësto

The world-renown club DJ Tiësto merged his love of electronic dance music and fashion in a collection, Club Life.

The first delivery unveiled in December 2011 at select retailers in North America with t-shirts for men and women at prices ranging between \$48 and \$56. U.S. retailers include Bloomingdale's, Kitson, Atrium, National Jeans and Nirvana. It is also available at Simons in Canada and online via ClubLifeClothing.com.

"The line was inspired by elements of light, color and symmetry that are pervasive in Tiësto's performances, as well as themes popular in the EDM (electronic dance music) culture," says Sam Hafif, chief executive officer of The Movement International, Tiësto's licensing partner.

The Movement International maintains this initial launch is only the beginning. A master apparel license will be announced in the

near future, with a second apparel collection making its debut at the Ultra Music Festival during Miami Music Week in March.

Fashion tied to music is a natural marriage for the brand.

"(The EDM community is a) unique culture with a massive following," says Hafif. "They are avid fans of the music, the lifestyle and the artists."

Hafif declared that Club Life "is the most relevant extension of music to fashion since hip hop emerged on the fashion scene 15 years ago."

Tiësto, who has been ranked the world's number one DJ three times by *DJ Magazine*, has been wearing the designs and promoting them heavily through social networking, tweeting and posting about the line on Facebook.

Gwen Stefani

Musician and mother Gwen Stefani has been among those to see opportunity in licensed children's clothing.

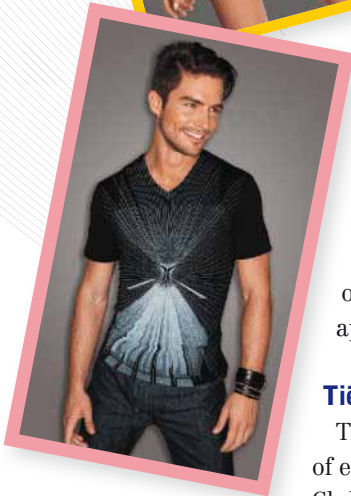
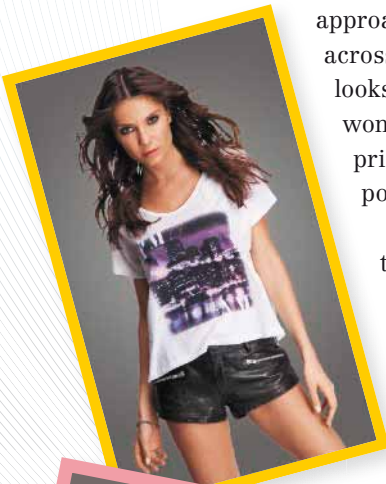
Launched last holiday season, Stefani's latest licensing deal is under her Harajuku brand and includes an exclusive boys and girls apparel and accessories collection with Target.

Called Harajuku Mini, the first rollout includes 80 apparel and accessories pieces—from plaid-print jumpers to fuzzy hoodies, faux-leather jackets and even tuxedo-style onesies for babies. The collection, designed for a wide range of children from ages six months to 16-years, is priced from \$3.99 to \$29.99. The second installment, set for launch in spring with an emphasis on nautical themes, shipped in January.

"I've always been inspired by the cool children's clothing in Japan, but it was always so hard for me to find it here," says Stefani. "That's why I am so excited to partner with Target because I'm able to create something inspired by that look but that's easy to find and affordable. Now all the moms can get their hands on it."

"Harajuku Mini is an affordable line of clothing and accessories that captures Gwen's vision as a preeminent fashion designer," says Trish Adams, senior vice president of apparel and accessories, Target.

Stefani's collection is one of many new licensing initiatives aimed



at the younger set—an untapped market according to many retailers.

RuPaul

Iron Fist Clothing, a Los Angeles based-footwear, apparel and accessory lifestyle brand, has teamed up with style personality RuPaul and World of Wonder to produce a collection of RuPaul inspired footwear. The launch coincides with the fourth season of RuPaul’s series “Drag Race.”

“We see RuPaul as a fashion icon,” says Leanne Anderson, chief creative officer, Iron Fist Ladies. “We are excited to have the opportunity to collaborate with him on a line of footwear that will appeal to women and men of all shapes and sizes.”

“I’ve worked closely with the folks at Iron Fist to create a line of shoes that are sexy, fashionable, comfortable and affordable,” says RuPaul. “What woman doesn’t want runway-ready shoes at a price where you can pick up several pairs... I know that’s what I’m looking for in a shoe! I am so proud of the Iron Fist Drag Race shoes.”

Iron Fist Drag Race shoes will feature a variety of styles in sizes 5-14 and will retail between \$75 and \$90.

Jennifer Lopez/Marc Anthony

Not even a marital separation could keep Kohl’s from going forward with the launch of the Jennifer Lopez Collection and the Marc Anthony Collection, which debuted in September 2011. The buzz is that Lopez is outselling her former husband, but sales figures have yet to be released.

The ranges include women’s apparel, accessories, sleepwear, shoes and a home line, the Jennifer Lopez Home Collection, under the Lopez banner; and men’s apparel, sportswear, dress shirts, neckwear, suit separates, sport coats and shoes from Anthony.

Kohl’s sources say an on-going update of its store design is helping all licenses, as



is the cross-promotion of the brand with Lopez and Anthony’s Spanish language talent series, “Q’viva! The Chosen.” The stars and series cast members are wearing pieces from their collections on-air. The series debuted on Univision Jan. 28 .

The Kardashians

The Kardashians are a multi-pronged and multi-shopping channel brand. In the last year, Kim, Kourtney and Khloe launched K-Dash on QVC and Sears’ exclusive Kardashian Kollection. Kim and Rob Kardashian sealed deals with Skechers and Op, respectively.

The word is that the Kardashians could build into a billion dollar business worldwide within two years. APA Talent & Literary Agency reps all five Kardashian sisters, which include Kendall and Kylie Jenner, and helped to secure the Sears Kardashian Kollection deal with Jupi Corp., their biggest fashion deal yet. The Kardashian Kollection is on target to generate \$200-300 million in retail sales in its first 12 months, according to Bruno Schiavi, Jupi president.

The K-Dash line with QVC, which hit 100,000 units by the end of last year, is being extended. At Sears, despite the departure of John Goodman, executive vice president of apparel and home and news the retailer is closing some stores, the Kardashian Kollection is one that is bringing new shoppers to stores.

Sears has also added Dream Out Loud by Selena Gomez at its Kmart division and Sofia by Sofia Vergara. Vergara fuels interest in the line by making appearances on-air to bolster her brand.

Jason Wu

Last year, the launch of Missoni’s line for Target crashed the retailer’s website and sold out merchandise almost immediately. This year it is Jason Wu’s turn as he launches an exclusive line for Target on sale through the beginning of March.

Wu, who designed first lady Michelle Obama’s Inaugural Ball dress, is launching his debut line for Target in a 53-piece collection.

Also notable at Target is the pop up in-store shops that will be set up for six weeks. In apparel, Target will feature unique ready-to-wear from Miami-based retailer, The Webster. ©



A VISIONARY LEADER



Steve Russo, founder, president and chief executive officer of Fab Starpoint.

Steve Russo, founder, president and CEO of Fab Starpoint, proves to be a leading licensee with a history and reputation to support the title.

There are very few executives among the world's top licensors and retailers—and those throughout the fashion accessory industry—that don't know Steve Russo, founder, president and chief executive officer of Fab Starpoint.

As the 15th anniversary of the company approaches, Russo's name and reputation as a leading licensee has become synonymous with success and survival across multiple categories and retail channels.

Despite the competitive marketplace, difficult economy and fickle consumer, Russo has found the right business strategy and philosophy to deal with the ever-changing market and meet every challenge the company has faced, while also laying the foundation for future growth.

Russo, a Wharton School graduate, attributes this success to hard work, day-to-day involvement, strategic planning and commitment to the core principles of quality, reliability and

performance. He believes that Fab Starpoint's adherence to these principles combined with the constant goal of exceeding expectations of its retailer and licensor partners and hiring the top talent, has established the fashion accessory company as one of the licensing industry's premier partners.

Since its inception in April 1997, Fab Starpoint has built an impressive portfolio of character licensed properties. In the latter part of 2008 however, the company strategically re-evaluated its existing product categories and licensing portfolio and embarked on a significant change in its business model.

"We were almost exclusively focused on kid's character licensed properties, many of which were movie-based and short term in nature," says Russo.

Today its current character license portfolio consists of evergreen properties from major licensors including Nickelodeon (Dora the Explorer, SpongeBob SquarePants, iCarly and Victorious), Hasbro (Transformers, My Little Pony and other diverse properties) and Marvel (Spider-Man, Marvel Heroes and Avengers). To reach an older age demographic, Fab Starpoint partnered with WWE Wrestling, NBA players such as Kobe Bryant and LeBron James who are the next generation of super heroes. Core licensed brands are Hello Kitty, Gwen Stefani's Harajuku Lovers and Paul Frank.

"We have partnered with the strongest character license companies who have multiple properties and offer a blend of evergreens, fashion and entertainment. This enables us to develop long-term partnerships with the best in the industry and enable our team to be more focused on building and growing a consistent business," says Russo.

From a license brand perspective, the company is well stocked.



“Fab Starpoint has the best girl’s brand in the world—Hello Kitty,” says Russo. “It’s a brand that has been able to captivate girls from infant to junior and contemporary. Sanrio’s true partnership in all aspects of the business including design, retail initiatives and retail differentiation is the best in the industry.”

Furthermore, Russo began on a new endeavor of expanding his business beyond traditional licensing with the acquisition and development of company-owned contemporary handbag brands.

Living by the “glass half full” philosophy, Russo realized in 2009 that many mid-size independent brands were having a very difficult time getting the financing needed to properly manage their businesses and thus would need support and help to grow. Capitalizing on his expertise with woman’s handbags and leather goods, Russo purchased the first brand, Isabella Fiore, and his new venture Artisan House was formed. This entity is run by a team led by industry veteran Laura Mays, a former senior vice president of Juicy Couture responsible for launching the Juicy accessory business and most recently its retail store expansion.

Today, Artisan House consists of wholly owned brands Isabella Fiore, Foley & Corinna and Danielle Nicole, along with long-term multi-year partnerships with Gwen Stefani’s luxury brand L.A.M.B. and fashion icon Charlotte Ronson.

“Our focus is to build up the presence of these brands at retail and then look at strategic licensing partnerships in key categories for the brands we own,” says Russo.

In three short years Russo has re-engineered Fab Starpoint’s business model.

“I’m happy with the healthy blend of character licenses, brands and contemporary ladies brands that we market today as well as the shift made in Fab’s product category focus,” he says.

Fab Starpoint’s core categories continue to be back-to-school, backpacks, lunch bags and school supplies, as well as kid’s accessories, home décor and gifts. Most recently, the company has focused on expanding the children’s luggage and travel business. While the kids’ luggage category lacks a true destination/home at many retailers, Russo says that Fab Starpoint is committed to growing the business one retailer at a time by proving that mothers will buy their children luggage.

“Next time you are in an airport, look at how many kids are carrying their school backpack on their trip,” says Russo.

A key to Fab Starpoint’s success, points

out Russo, has always been the company’s philosophy to look two to three years ahead and begin testing new ideas and planting seeds.

This philosophy can further be seen in Fab Starpoint’s launch of its own exclusive line of backpacks, Mojo. The line debuted in July 2011 exclusively on a designated e-commerce site (mojobackpacks.com), and will be marketed to select retailers at the Street section of MAGIC in Las Vegas.

Now that Russo is becoming a licensor, what are the challenges that he faced as a licensee that he will now handle differently?

“Unlike 10 years ago, licensing today is one product category handled by more than one licensee who then compete for the same retail dollars and its become the industry norm,” he says. “I believe a better approach is to seek out best in class licensees in a product category that focus on different channels of distribution and do not compete directly with each other. This synergetic approach eliminates confusion, price competition and promotes quality and value, while maximizing each channel of distribution.”

Russo, who not only takes pride in his hands-on style but also his big picture strategic planner philosophy, still gets excited about new ideas and new deals.

“When a retailer builds on an idea which has been carefully thought out—such as exhibiting at MAGIC and introducing a Hello Kitty junior line that generated an overwhelming response—that is what makes it worthwhile,” admits Russo. “This gave us the confidence and performance with the independents nationwide to introduce a junior program to our core retailers that had a strong potential to succeed. It resulted in a win/win situation and a feeling of making a difference.”

Russo, who is proud to be an out-of-the-box thinker, is already looking ahead to the future and planting the seeds for new business.

“This past summer we opened an Artisan Workshop pop-up shop on Main Street in East Hampton to better understand retail,” says Russo. “And we will be opening a Foley & Corinna store in Nolita to expand on its successful Stanton Street, Bowery New York location.” ©





PLENTY MORE FUEL IN THE TANK

Disney's Cars franchise has come a long way in its short time on the market, and proves that it has many more miles left to travel.

By **Sam Phillips**

Disney's Cars has become an international success story in just six years. In that time, the property has steadily broken through a number of barriers including 200 million die casts sold, which helped to tip the NPD charts strongly in its favor, and the introduction of innovative new technology to licensed products.

The Cars franchise has topped \$1 billion in worldwide sales (source: Box Office Mojo) since the original film opened theatrically in 2006. Revenue further grows with the release of DVDs, an additional medium for children to discover the world of Cars.

With its central themes of vehicles and racing, Cars has underpinned a universal play pattern for boys. Prior to its

initial release, the only major competitor in the market was Mattel's Hot Wheels. The Cars toy range, also by Mattel, which covers every price point and encourages collecting, proves popular at retail even without consumer familiarity of the film.

"Disney acquired Pixar in 2007 which was perfect timing to provide confidence in our commitment to content," says Marianthi O'Dwyer, vice president of merchandise licensing, U.K. and Ireland. "There was always a continuity plan."

The film *Cars 2* opened in 2011 and a third installment is on the horizon. In the interim, Disney has been releasing "Cars Toons," carefully executed animated shorts that create awareness,



introduce new characters and themes and help to sustain the franchise.

“The success of the content lies in the strong characterization and the constant introduction of new personalities. These aren’t just vehicles,” says O’Dwyer. “The beauty of Cars is that you can extend the world to every sort of play vehicle, from a small assortment of die cast cars to LEGO, Scalextric and high price point remote control cars from Simba.”

The richness of the toy line has helped the franchise become one of the top three licenses of 2011 in France, Italy and the U.K., according to NPD.

“Cars is strong in all countries in Europe,” says Frederique Tutt, European analyst, The NPD Group. “It has shown the ability to grow without a film and could remain strong after the spike last year from the *Cars 2* release.”

The property also has an enviable pan-European appeal. The range of Cars has now expanded to encompass the entire boys’ world. Now boys can eat, sleep and live the Cars property.

“Step-by-step, not all at once, we have turned Cars into a lifestyle brand driven by content,” says O’Dwyer.

Mike Stagg, vice president and general manager, retail, U.K. and Ireland, describes the retail strategy as a “pull rather than push.” Demand is consumer led with spikes in sales around new content releases which tend to trend reliably for retailers.

Rather than produce bespoke retail lines, new style guides are produced, driven by new themes and characters that inform product and packaging, giving



retailers plenty of assets to use.

“I believe it is better to distinguish yourself by quality of execution, supply chain, retail handwriting and good theater,” says Stagg.

At the end of last year, the *Cars 2* Blu-ray DVD was successfully cross-promoted with other products and in-store displays in Europe at retailers such as ASDA and Tesco, each merchandised by a Disney team.

“An initiative like this lasts only a few weeks, but it’s a big buying opportunity, gives confidence and therefore has a positive knock-on effect,” says Stagg.

O’Dwyer stresses the importance of product innovation. New remote control toys, books using augmented reality and the Disney AppMATEs are recent examples. On deck is a new range of toys, now in prototype, with a fresh appeal.

Stagg describes the Cars property as “a perfect storm” and one which shows no sign of abating.

“The challenge of the last six years has been about keeping the brand fresh,” says O’Dwyer. “*Cars 2* provided a great spike in the story.”

In 2012, DCP plans to leverage the Pixar brand, bringing it together in a cross-character campaign. The next installment of Cars is in the pipeline, bringing the characteristic humor, warmth and distinctive personalities of the vehicles to the air with the 2013 release of the Planes property. ©



Cars Vital Statistics:

- The original *Cars* film has grossed \$462 million worldwide to date.
- Of the 200 million die cast vehicles through January 2012, 50 million have been sold in Europe.
- Sixty-three million books and 12.4 million magazines have been sold to date worldwide. The Cars merchandise program also includes apparel, home décor, food, stationery and personal care.
- There were 300 new toys in the *Cars 2* line which launched last year.
- According to NPD, Cars was the second best performing property in the overall toy market, pulling in £34 million in U.K. retail sales (January-November 2011). It was the No. 1 property in the vehicle category in the U.K. (January-November 2011), pulling in £16 million, which put it ahead of Hot Wheels.



BRAND LICENSING EUROPE

RETAIL MENTORING PROGRAMME

Good for retail, good for licensing and good for business.

By **Sam Phillips**

Brand Licensing Europe's Retail Mentoring Programme is the only one of its kind. Established in 2010 to promote a wider understanding of the licensing industry among retail buyers, the Retail Mentoring Programme increases retailers' understanding of the licensing industry by providing mentoring, industry placements and bespoke seminars to participants.

The participants (or mentees) are junior or assistant buyers nominated by their seniors from major global and U.K. retailers such as Mothercare and Sainsbury's. The 2011 program saw a 20 percent increase from the prior year's participation.

After attending a LIMA introduction course and networking event in May 2011, the mentees set a series of licensing-related objectives to research, which are then formally presented just following Brand Licensing Europe. During that six months, the mentees spend one day with a licensor, attend a bespoke seminar created by the Brand Licensing Europe team and have unlimited access to mentoring, advice and information. Attending Brand Licensing Europe for meetings and to look for new properties is also a key part of the Programme—this year the show recorded

a 22 percent increase in retail visitors. The Retail Mentoring Programme is open to all retailers.

"We have now seen the value of the Retail Mentoring Programme to all parties, most of all the retailers," says Jessica Blue, Brand Licensing Europe show director. "After another successful year we are working to attract more retailers to the Programme for 2012."

Historically, it has been easy for a buyer to take a supplier's word when purchasing product. However, over the past several years, the number of available properties has swelled, shifting licensing from the fringes to become a core strategy for categories like children's apparel where a hot licence can make all the difference to the range. As a result, buyers are more deeply involved in the licensing process. The Retail Mentoring Programme helps buyers gain stronger licensing knowledge, giving them more control and allowing them to make more informed choices.

The benefits to all parties are becoming clear. Sainsbury's head of children's wear John Carolan says that the hardest thing for a junior buyer is to choose the right license simply because there are so many.

“To help make those decisions, it’s important to know how a property comes to market, how it is put in front of parents, how a customer gets to learn about it and what gives it longevity,” says Carolan. “The Retail Mentoring Programme has helped create more informed decisions about which licences to buy into.”

On an individual level, the licensing knowledge and confidence gained by mentees has helped them to decide which properties to support.

“The Retail Mentoring Programme has given me the confidence to lead a good licensing meeting and ask the right questions,” says Hannah Aldred, Mothercare assistant buyer. “I saw some new properties at Brand Licensing Europe and now have the confidence to give them a go with the knowledge to be able to back them up internally.”

Buyers’ ability to promote licensing with authority internally has also enabled more cross-promotional activity in stores.

A better knowledge of deal structures and licensing contracts means buyers can understand their effect on factors such as pricing or brand management decisions.

“Understanding how a licensor controls a property and why they make certain decisions about it helps us understand the full story,” says Gemma Parlow, Sainsbury’s assistant buyer.

The Retail Mentoring Programme facilitates increased access between retailer and licensor which has been very beneficial all around.

“The licensor often has a different perspective from the licensee and can explain the full story behind the property, the statistics, the history, the way it has come to market and how it will be supported. Hearing this from the horse’s mouth helps you make the ultimate decision about it,” says Emma Johnson, Sainsbury’s buyer’s assistant.

Mentees attended day placements with licensors including Entertainment One, Turner CN Enterprises and BBC Worldwide



to gain a fuller understanding of the creativity, planning and investment that goes into launching and maintaining a new property.

“It was good to show the buyers what goes into creating a TV series and the lengths we go to ensure longevity,” says Graham Saltmarsh, U.K. licensing director, TCNE. “I think they were surprised to find out we will have done two years work on a brand before it reaches the licensees and them.”

Hannah Mungo, head of U.K. licensing at eOne agreed.

“The day helped buyers to understand why we do things the way we do, including the work and investment that goes into making something a success,” she says.

The last event in the Programme is Brand Licensing Europe itself, an important opportunity for mentees to test their licensing knowledge and to meet a property’s decision makers face-to-face.

“Buying a character is different from buying a brand,” says Parlow. “You need all the background information and support that is available. At Brand Licensing Europe, we were able to get that information and to give feedback to the licensors and to get a feeling for how the property is being supported. We also approached licensors about things that are completely new for us and were able to brainstorm how they might work at Sainsbury’s.”

Style guides came under particular scrutiny in 2011 as mentees pondered their purpose and challenged some of the restrictions in relation to buyer’s product categories. With the ability to access the right decision makers, some mentees have been able to overcome this by brainstorming creative solutions with the brand managers, despite apparent limitations within the style guide.

Increasing knowledge about the licensing business is having an impact on the day-to-day business but also on the wider retail strategy.

“There is a wider recognition that everyone has to be informed about licensing and the Retail Mentoring Programme has raised awareness of licensing within Mothercare,” says Barbara Robinson, category manager for Mothercare. “I fully endorse the Programme. The retailer holds an important place within the licensing equation and being better informed, having the knowledge to allow succession planning, and taking licensing more seriously helps us to be ready for the next thing.”

If you would like to know more about the Retail Mentoring Programme, contact Keith Pashley, facilitator, at keith@thekeithpashleyproject.co.uk or Brand Licensing Europe event director Jessica Blue at jbblue@advanstar.com. ©



Nelvana Gets Ready to Grow

Corbus appoints a new leader to oversee its home entertainment and consumer product biz.



Andrew Kerr, head of consumer products for the Americas and Australasia

Prior to this appointment at Nelvana, Kerr was the executive vice president, consumer products and marketing, international, for Entertainment Rights/Classic Media based in London, where he oversaw licensing for more than 100 brands including Postman Pat, Tinga Tinga Tales and Guess with Jess. Also on his resume are positions with various other licensing-centered companies including Ragdoll, where he was the executive vice president, global licensing and marketing.

By **Amanda Peabody**

As Nelvana Enterprises and its parent company Corbus Entertainment continue to roll out new entertainment and marketing strategies, brought in to helm the consumer products business is Andrew Kerr, newly named head of consumer products for the Americas and Australasia. The role brings Kerr “home again” to Toronto, Ontario, Canada, the Nelvana headquarters.

With more than 14 years in the consumer products business, Kerr is joining Nelvana at a time when its entertainment properties are hitting their stride. Successes for the company include “Beyblade” which was, according to Nielsen Media Research, the No. 2 boy’s action series in Canada last fall, enjoys a 37.5 percent audience share for kids ages 4-10 on Gulli in France and is a leading show on Cartoon Network’s Saturday morning entertainment block in the U.S.

“I’m stepping into a situation in which there is such value and such trajectory,” says Kerr. “Nelvana has really made its case to leverage its capability to be a major player in kids’ products globally, particularly in the boys’ arena with Beyblade and forthcoming properties.”

The Beyblade property and its entertainment iterations (“Beyblade: Metal Fusion,” “Beyblade: Metal Masters” and “Beyblade: Metal Fury”) can be found in more than 50 countries and has 200 partners on board for its consumer product program, including master toy partner Hasbro (excluding Asia) and D-Rights. Plans for 2012 include special tournament themed promotions in time for the World Beyblade Championship March 25 in Toronto, and a hush-hush product evolution set to roll out this fall.

Also on tap for Nelvana is a roster of preschool properties such as Babar, which continues to celebrate its 80th anniversary this year, Franklin and Friends and Max & Ruby.

“I’ve had a lot of experience with preschool and I look forward to working with those properties in particular, especially Franklin and Friends and across the portfolio,” says Kerr. “The idea of taking

original, novel and compelling preschool content that is as friendly to parents as it is to children and creating a consumer product program such as I did for ‘Teletubbies’ or ‘In the Night Garden’ is exciting. I look to take that IP and make the most compelling and appropriate products for the existing program and those in the pipeline over the next two to five years.”

Kerr plans to drive Franklin further into the U.S. market this year and “begin conversations in earnest” that will set the program up for success into 2013. On the Max & Ruby side, Kerr will continue to ensure that appropriate content is on retail shelves over the next 12-18 months for a program he says is doing very well. Kerr also will continue to grow soft goods for the program and extend the range of categories as the series heads into its third season.

“We’re believers that a successful on-shelf experience helps to breed content, so its ensuring that we make the most of what we can and create a positive experience for the brand not only in North America, but also in Latin America,” says Kerr.

For each preschool property in the Nelvana portfolio, Kerr will look to expand the traditional programs with full ranges of plush and plastic toys.

“We want to make sure we have an intelligent, sizable and meaningful program in place,” says Kerr.

For Babar, it’s a continued year of celebration, which launched in 2011 with appearances in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, at the New York Stock Exchange and is currently featured in Paris’ toy gallery at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs through Sept. 2. Abrams Books reissued a range of titles from Laurent de Brunhoff, and in France, Hachette Jeunesse plans to publish 50-60 titles over the next three years, the first debuting this spring.

Kerr will report to Colin Bohm, managing director for Nelvana Enterprises.

“We are thrilled to have Andrew join our team at Nelvana,” says Bohm. “Andrew brings a unique and valued set of experiences and skills to our company and our brands.” ©

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