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¹According to the NPD Group, GFK Chart-Track and Activision Blizzard internal estimates, including toys and accessories.

²NPD franchise sales based on physical unit sales.

³Based on Bungie internal estimates.

⁴According to NPD Group and GFK Chart-Track life-to-date retail sales data for North America and EU.

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February 2016 VOLUME 19 NUMBER 1

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Photo by Kevin Koski

Steven Scebelo, vice president, licensing and business development, NFL Players Inc.; Todd Gurley, running back, Los Angeles Rams; and Ahmad Nassar, president, NFL Players Inc.

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THE BUZZ IN LICENSING IN 2016



by TONY LISANTI
Editor-in-Chief

One of the most important responsibilities of any executive is to understand the overall trends and dynamics of your business, which is understandably not easy. And, because licensing touches so many different industry sectors, it's that much more daunting a task. So consider the following 10 trends as a quick way to start your strategic planning for 2016 and beyond.

1. Franchise development—It's been a strategy among entertainment licensors for several years, but it now resonates across all types of brands and it's being driven by the need for 24/7 awareness. It's about the ability to extend a brand into new categories, create unique co-branding and sponsorships and hit more non-traditional consumer touch points than ever before.

2. Market fragmentation—The demise of the mass market has been warned for more than a decade, and the “age of craftification” and niche brands are challenging the long-standing global brands for shelf space and are creating new opportunities for brand extensions. It's far easier in today's world of e-commerce for small- to mid-sized businesses to grow without the support of the major retail chains.

3. Entertainment factor—Whether it's a theme park or social media initiative, it's all about fan engagement. For example, CBS Consumer Products, Paramount Pictures and CineConcerts launched a concert tour last month, “Star Trek: The Ultimate Voyage,” which will tour more than 100 cities; and Nickelodeon partnered with Sanshui New Town and Elite Global Group for its first branded attraction in China that is scheduled to open in 2020.

4. Opportunities in China—With its box office revenue topping \$6.7 billion last year and projected to surpass North America's 2015 total of \$11 billion by 2017, the entertainment sector in China is poised for strong growth, which bodes well for licensing. In addition, the recently announced acquisition of Legendary Entertainment by Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda Group further shows China's importance to entertainment. According to the latest BrandZ research report “The Top 100 Most Valuable Chinese Brands,” brand value increased 22 percent in 2015, reflecting the growing importance of its brands and the continued potential for brand extensions.

5. Virtual reality—A joint research study conducted by the Consumer Technology Association and NATPE last month revealed that the Hollywood studios are “passionate about the new medium and believe it is a game changer.” The respondents reported that there are “understandable hurdles that still need to be addressed, including generating a sustainable model for content creation, establishing a clear

pathway to monetization and determining the endurance cap for sustained viewing that will affect long-form storytelling.”

6. Mobile commerce—According to a study conducted by Shop.org and Forrester Research, smartphones were identified for the first time as the No. 1 driver of sales and traffic for retail companies. Retailers surveyed reported that smartphone sales accounted for 17 percent of their total online sales in 2015 versus 14 percent generated by tablets, and that sales from smartphone devices grew 53 percent, while sales from tablet devices grew 32 percent. This is yet another example of not only how e-commerce sales are quickly eclipsing traditional brick-and-mortar, but also the opportunities that exist for brand licensors.

7. Star Wars mania—The headlines throughout 2015, and especially during the fourth quarter, were all about *Star Wars*. With box office sales already topping \$1.5 billion and passing the record set by *Jurassic World*, as well as record ticket sales in China, *Star Wars* hasn't disappointed. The franchise also dominated retail shelves with as comprehensive and diverse a selection of merchandise that any licensing program has ever experienced. With five more films, the next installment due December 2017 and a spin off, *Rogue One*, due late this year, the franchise will continue to be a force. And remember, the next phase of the *Avatar* franchise is in the works, along with the Marvel and WB/DC properties, so the blockbuster franchises will continue to drive entertainment licensing.

8. Girl power—With the major commitment of several licensors in 2016 to girl-driven properties, the market will experience much stronger competition and opportunities that will challenge venerable brands. Among the brands to watch are Hasbro's debut of the new Disney Princess line, DreamWorks Animation's *Trolls* and Warner Bros. Consumer Products' plans for “DC Super Hero Girls.”

9. Brand management groups—The IP companies have aggressively expanded their portfolios and represent major growth opportunities in licensing that prove ownership really does have its privileges. 2016 will likely see more acquisitions, category expansions and global growth in this sector that not only already represents more than \$25 billion in retail sales of licensed merchandise, but also offers the potential for significant growth over the next several years.

10. Generation Z—The pattern of targeting Millennials or Generation Y will continue simply because of the earning power this sector represents, but the next real opportunities are clearly beginning to emerge with their younger counterparts. Born from 1995 through 2004, this generation is totally driven by technology, social networking, multi-tasking and, of course, pop culture. ©



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ANOTHER BIG YEAR FOR TOYS

Bolstered by major film and television releases in 2015 and aided by a surge in collectibles, toys sales grew again last year.



by **AMANDA CIOLETTI**
Managing Editor

2015 was one for the record books in the U.S. and Canada, thanks to a particularly strong year felt throughout the toy industry.

According to the NPD Group, U.S. toy sales grew by 6.7 percent in 2015 and 8 percent in Canada, bringing the total sales to \$19.4 billion and \$1.8 billion in each country, respectively.

The gains are huge. Although 2014 also saw a rise in toy sales, the end result was a modest, yet optimistic, 4 percent.

So what's pushed toy sales over the top in 2015? It should be no surprise to anyone—licensed brands, with Disney again at the top of the heap.

In 2014, Disney topped all toy charts with its *Frozen* film licenses, earning the No. 1 ranking across multiple categories. The property was represented in 39 different toy categories and had more than 300 SKUs at retail in 2014, all of which generated more than \$531 million in the U.S. and led licensed toy sales to a grand total of 31 percent of total industry toy sales. (Source: The NPD Group.)

In 2015, however, it was *Star Wars* that pushed sales to a peak in perhaps the least surprising runaway hit, when taken with the enormous effort The Walt Disney Company put behind both the film's release and the consumer products run up. In fact, *Star Wars* was the No. 1 "absolute dollar growth contributor" to three major toy categories last year: action figures,

vehicles and all other toys. NPD says that the property brought in more than \$700 million in sales last year.

Why was *Star Wars* so popular? Because it satisfied what increasingly seems to be the cocktail for success at retail in the 20-teen market—a stellar, multi-generational heritage property with deep, deep roots in pop culture.

"Over the year, *Star Wars* (accounted for) about 20 percent of the total increase in the toy industry," says Michelle Liem, director, NPD Group Canada. (Source: *Financial Post*.)

And consumers' ravenous appetite for *Star Wars* speaks to a greater trend—people are indeed voting on licensed product with their wallets more than ever.

In April 2015, NPD estimated that global toy sales of licensed brands would continue to rise and they very much did, with Mexico (+15 percent), Belgium (+13 percent), the U.K. (+13 percent), Australia (+11 percent), France (+10 percent), the U.S. (+7 percent) and Poland (+6 percent) accounting for much of that sales growth. Between the months of May 2014 and April 2015, licensed toys accounted for up to one-third of total toy sales in global markets.

Content is proving to be king among toy buyers, and is the link behind 2015's growth, and not just for *Star Wars* merchandise. Other films, TV shows, mobile games and even collectibles supported by YouTube shorts performed strongly. Properties such as Universal's *Jurassic World* and *Minions* racked up big sales, as did Disney/Marvel's other big hit *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, Nickelodeon's preschool TV series "Paw Patrol," Microsoft's "Minecraft" app game and Moose Games' Shopkins, the collectible toy brand that has some web and customizable content.

This uptick is proving to be true in the New Year as toy sales in most of North America had phenomenal results.

NPD reports that nine of the 11 "super categories" posted gains in 2015, with games and puzzles growing the most (10.8 percent) and vehicles at a close second.

"What was especially interesting to see this year among the top 10 best-selling items was the wide diversity of toys from simple to complex," says Juli Lennett, U.S. toy industry analyst, The NPD Group. "In addition, among the top toys were evergreen properties like Hot Wheels, Barbie, *Star Wars* and 'Ninja Turtles,' as well as relatively new properties like Shopkins, 'Paw Patrol' and 'Minecraft.' Price points were also wide-ranging, from under \$1 to over \$150." ©

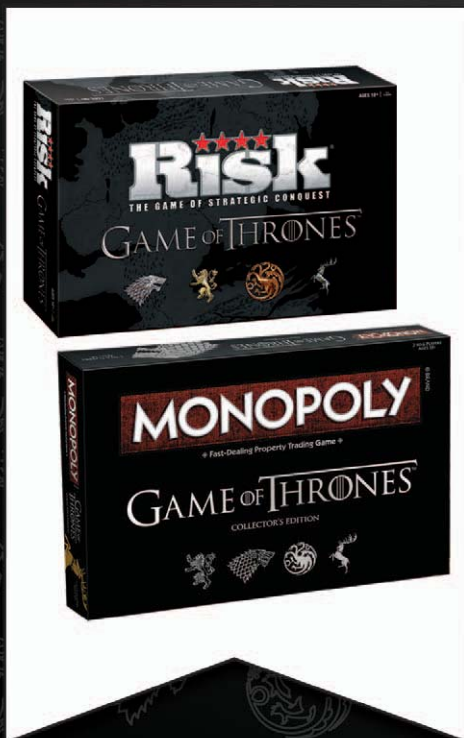
Annual 2015 U.S. Toy Industry Performance

Super Category	Dollar % Change
Games/Puzzles	10.8 percent
Vehicles	9.7 percent
Building Sets	9.4 percent
Outdoor & Sports Toys	8.8 percent
Action Figures & Accessories	8.7 percent
Dolls	8.4 percent
Infant/Toddler/Preschool Toys	5.7 percent
All Other Toys	4.3 percent
Plush	1.6 percent
Arts & Crafts	-4.3 percent
Youth Electronics	-4.9 percent

Source: The NPD Group, Inc./Retail Tracking Service, annual 2015 versus annual 2014.



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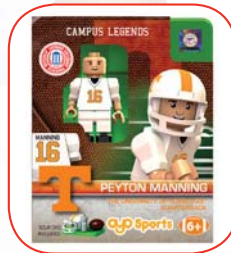
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IGNACIO SEGURA DE LASSALETTA
general manager, Planeta Junior



HANS ULRICH STOEFF
chief executive officer, m4e Group

Planeta Junior Joins Forces with m4e

German brand management company m4e and Spanish-Italian firm Planeta Junior (a joint venture between DeAgostini and Grupo Planeta) have formed a long-term co-production, distribution, licensing and merchandising partnership.

As part of the new partnership, the two companies will now co-produce projects featuring some of Planeta's existing IP and a number of new developments from m4e.

Both companies will also distribute each other's audiovisual rights catalog.

Planeta Junior will focus primarily on France and Southern Europe, while m4e will cover Central and Northern Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, North America, Africa and the Middle East. Both companies will jointly handle Eastern Europe.

"This alliance is a perfect match for both companies, since m4e and Planeta Junior share the same concept of the entertainment business, and we are naturally complementary in reaching the European marketplace through our local terms," says Ignacio Segura de Lassaletta, general manager, Planeta Junior. "This joint venture establishes the ideal framework for our creative

teams to develop new and exciting properties."

Additionally, to continue building a worldwide business, m4e and Planeta Junior will combine several of their teams into an international network that will be able to offer a broad distribution and presence via offices in eight European countries including Germany, Spain,

France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Poland and Benelux, and will expand into other major territories in the medium term.

Both partners will also acquire rights and make their services available to third-party rights

owners. For a common market appearance, the two companies are currently developing joint branding.

"This strategic collaboration represents a major step for the m4e Group in terms of deep distribution, managing our rights and our consumer products business in Europe, as well as financing aspects for our production slate. We share the same vision, and because of our strong teams, the new venture offers a huge opportunity to better control our rights portfolio and revenue streams. Right from the beginning of the discussions we felt that Planeta Junior is the natural fit for such a partnership," says Hans Ulrich Stoeff, chief executive officer, m4e Group.



Activision Blizzard Snaps Up Gaming Brands

Activision Blizzard has acquired Major League Gaming, which creates and streams live gaming events, organizes professional competitions and runs competitive gaming leagues. The purchase is on the heels of Activision's other major recent buy—"Candy Crush" creator King Digital.

The acquisition expands Activision Blizzard's reach across the rapidly growing e-sports ecosystem by adding live streaming capabilities and technologies to the Activision Blizzard Media Networks division, led by former ESPN chief executive officer Steve Bornstein and MLG co-founder Mike Sepso.

"Our acquisition of Major League Gaming's business furthers our plans to create the ESPN of e-sports," says Bobby Kotick, chief executive officer, Activision Blizzard. "MLG's ability to create premium content and its proven broadcast technology platform—including its live streaming capabilities—strengthens our strategic position in competitive gaming. MLG has an incredibly strong and seasoned team and a thriving community. Together, we will create new ways to celebrate players and their unique skills, dedication and commitment to gaming. We are excited to add Sundance [DiGiovanni] and the entire MLG e-sports team to our

competitive gaming initiatives."

MLG will continue to operate MLG.tv, MLG Pro Circuit and GameBattles platforms, and will continue to work with its partners and other publishers across the industry.

"Sundance and I founded MLG to highlight the incredible talent of competitive gamers all over the world," says Sepso. "Activision Blizzard's e-sports leadership, incredible intellectual property and long history in competitive gaming create a perfect home for MLG's capabilities. The acquisition of MLG's business is an important step toward Activision Blizzard Media Networks' broader mission to bring e-sports into

the mainstream by creating and broadcasting premium e-sports content, organizing global league play and expanding distribution with key gaming partners."

The purchase is just one of two major acquisitions Activision Blizzard has made recently. In November 2015, it bought King Digital Entertainment, the mobile gaming company behind hits such as "Candy Crush," for a total equity value of \$5.9 billion.

These recent acquisitions are helping to create one of the largest global entertainment networks, and expand the worldwide reach for Activision into growing business sectors, further diversifying its portfolio of brands.

Sony Scares Up Big *Ghostbusters* Program

Sony Pictures Consumer Products is readying its global licensing program for the new *Ghostbusters* franchise as the upcoming film, a fresh take on the 30-year-old franchise, gets ready to take over movie screens around the world.

The 2016 film is due in theaters this July and will star a brand-new cast of characters, this time female, and includes Kristen Wiig, Melissa McCarthy, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones under the direction of Paul Feig. But, as awareness of the forthcoming film is inexorably tied to the classic franchise, the product program is of course paying homage to both the new and old cast of characters such as Slimer, the iconic *Ghostbusters* logo and the world-class original cast including Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis.

On the product side, the

Ghostbusters program is all about cross-platform, immersive experiences, whether it be in the games you play on your smartphone or console, the books you read or the toys you play

with. To that end, Sony has built a licensing program that includes more than 40 partners across all major categories.

"In the ever-competitive property landscape, we are fortunate to have a strong group of partners in licensing and retail getting behind our efforts," says Mark Caplan, senior vice president, Sony Pictures Consumer

Products. "We have a tremendous amount of respect for the teams that are working non-stop to make product available in the weeks leading up to the film's July release."

In a new partnership with mobile gaming company Beeline, *Ghostbusters* launched an app game, "*Ghostbusters* Puzzle Fighter," a skill-

testing battle game that allows players to choose their favorite characters from the franchise. In addition, *Ghostbusters* is making new guest appearances in high-profile, seasoned mobile games such as "Fruit Ninja," "Family Guy" and "The Respawnables."

Ghostbusters has also made its way onto consoles in the new "LEGO Dimensions" gaming experience which brings toys to life and lets players use characters from the classic film to recreate scenes from the movies.

At its core, *Ghostbusters* is a compelling piece of comedic storytelling that has resonated with fans for more than three decades.

Building on this, Sony has inked a deal with publisher Simon & Schuster for book tie-ins for the new film. The four book series will be available in June.

From Running Press comes a mega mini kit that includes a highly detailed proton pack replica that features light and sound. The kit also includes a mini book with stickers and will debut at retail this summer.

Chronicle Books (a division of Random House) also has a publishing product on offer called *Ghosts from our Past—Both Literally and Figuratively: The Study of the Paranormal*. The

book, also available this June, is derivative of the new film and is a comedic guide to identifying

and coping with any paranormal activity plaguing you.

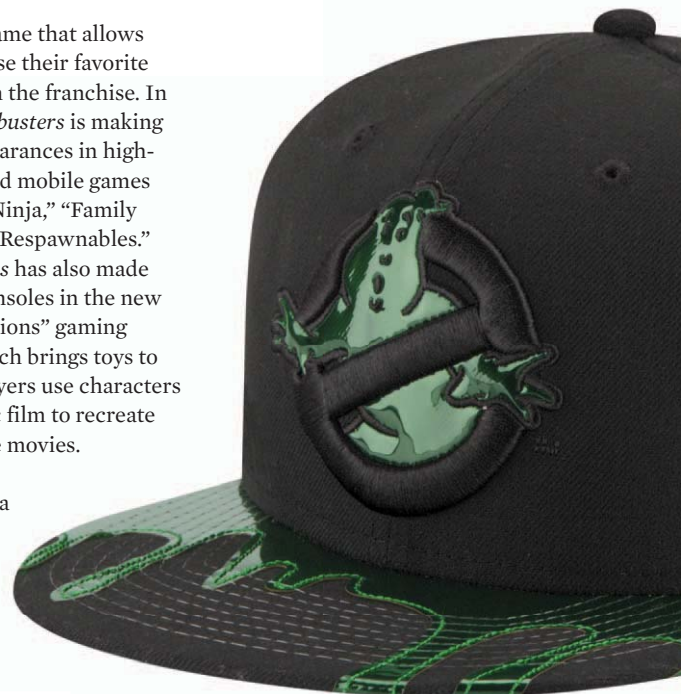
Also on the docket is a novelization from publisher Tor, set to hit market at the end of June.

And last but not least, there are toys, led by The LEGO Group and its collection of building sets inspired by the film franchise.

The LEGO Firehouse Headquarters set stands at 14-inches tall and features a laboratory, living quarters, containment unit and more based on the films. Also from LEGO is the buildable Ecto-1 car set.

Mattel will also bring action figures based on the new film to market, beginning with 6-inch dolls based on the 2016 cast of characters and outfitted in their new jumpsuits.

Additional licensees such as Rubie's Costume Co., Hybrid, MJC and many more will round out the robust licensing program that includes apparel, back-to-school, seasonal, novelty, collectibles and much more.





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NYC Licensing Summit to Feature 18 'Power' Speakers

An impressive lineup of high-level executives from a cross section of major companies will share their insights on the factors driving the future of the global licensing sector at the first NYC Summit: The Business of Brand Licensing, being held March 1 and 2 in New York City. The list includes executives from the apparel, sports, entertainment and agency segments.

Among the thought leaders slated to participate are (in alphabetical order by company):

- Jamie Salter, chairman and chief executive officer, Authentic Brands Group
- Michael Stone, chairman, Beanstalk
- Adina Avery-Grossman, partner, Brandgenuity
- Henry Stupp, chief executive officer, Cherokee Global Brands Group
- Jim Fielding, global head of consumer products and retail, DreamWorks Animation and AwesomenessTV
- Dow Famulak, president and chief operating officer, Global Brands Group
- Simon Waters, general manager and senior vice president, entertainment and licensing, Hasbro
- Cindy Levitt, senior vice president, merchandising and marketing, Hot Topic
- Debra Joester, president, The Joester Loria Group
- Sal Larocca, president of global operations and merchandising, National Basketball Association
- Steve Scebelo, vice president of licensing and business development, National Football League Players, Inc.
- Pam Kaufman, chief marketing officer and president, consumer products, Nickelodeon



- Stu Seltzer, president, The Seltzer Licensing Group
- Yehuda Shmidman, chief executive officer, Sequential Brands Group
- Gaye Dean, group manager, Target Stores
- Eric Beder, managing director, Wunderlich Securities
- Benjamin Grubbs, global head of top creators, YouTube
- Natara Holloway, vice president, consumer products, brand, marketing and retail, National Football League

This exclusive gathering of some of the industry's foremost executives offers a truly unique chance to network and learn from the executives that are shaping the licensing sector.

Among the topics that will be explored during the two-day event are How Brand Management Companies are Driving the New Licensing Models; Brand Value: The Wall Street Viewpoint; and Entertainment Licensing: The Value of Franchise Development, as well as a series of forums focusing on licensing agencies, sports licensing and retail.

Registration is limited for this intimate networking and educational event.

The NYC Summit: The Business of Brand Licensing is being developed by *License! Global* magazine in partnership with UBM Americas (organizers of Licensing Expo and Brand Licensing Europe) and the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association.

Danny Simon to Join LIMA Hall of Fame



DANNY SIMON
founder, *The Licensing Group*

The board of directors of the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association has selected Danny Simon, president of The Licensing Group, as this year's inductee into the LIMA Licensing Industry Hall of Fame.

Simon will be honored at the annual LIMA Awards Ceremony June 21, during Licensing Expo 2016, in Las Vegas, Nev.

With more than 30 years of experience, Simon is a recognized expert in domestic and

international licensing, particularly in the entertainment arena.

Simon has headed the licensing departments at Lorimar Studios, Twentieth Century Fox and Carolco Pictures. He has operated The Licensing Group since 1992.

Additionally, Simon was named chairman of the LIMA board of directors in 1995 and has served multiple terms as a board member. He co-developed and continues to operate LIMA's "Coursework in Licensing Studies" program and has co-authored

three books. Simon has also taught a course on licensing at UCLA for 18 years and continues to lecture on the subject at other universities and law schools.

"This June, Danny will join his licensing peers, who are among the most accomplished and respected professionals in the industry," says Charles Riotto, president, LIMA. "He has enjoyed a successful career helping to shape winning licensing programs, but has also shown a true passion for the industry by his continued dedication to its growth."

A Tribute to Warner Bros.™

Brad Globe

Highly recognized Warner Bros. Consumer Products executive says, "That's all Folks!"



After more than a decade at the helm of Warner Bros. Consumer Products, and more than 35 years as an influential entertainment marketing leader, Brad Globe is ending the WBCP chapter of his illustrious career.

The no-nonsense, personable executive, who has been described by some of his peers as a “game-changer, innovator, collaborator, deal-maker and a trustworthy, team player,” says the time is right to move on to new challenges.

During his tenure at WBCP, which began in February 2005, Globe has appeared on the cover of *License! Global* several times—first, encompassing the magic of *Harry Potter*; then harnessing the power of *Green Lantern* and most recently the legacy of *Batman v Superman*—each of which exemplify his career and accomplishments.

“Brad has been honored and recognized as a real innovator in the world of licensing and promotions throughout his career and tenure at WBCP,” says Diane Nelson, president, DC Entertainment; president, Warner Bros. Consumer Products; and president and chief content officer, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment. “He has helmed some of the industry’s most influential licensing initiatives and retail programs, as well as being the driving force behind game-changing themed entertainment projects like *The Wizarding World of Harry Potter*. He was also instrumental in the creation of new franchises like ‘DC Super Hero Girls.’”

“Brad was a huge champion of the theme park business and believed that *Harry Potter* could be a game changer in the industry well before anyone else recognized the impact,” says Karen McTier, executive vice president, WBCP. “His experience, enthusiasm and passion for the

business are infectious. He is a great champion of the creative process, great storytelling and compelling characters that have a lot of heart. Brad is one of the most knowledgeable and intuitive executives and has tremendous instincts for the business.”

Dan Romanelli, founder and former president of Warner Bros. Consumer Products, also recognized Brad’s leadership and contributions.

“He continued to support, nurture and inspire the phenomenal WBCP management team,” says Romanelli. “No one in the industry is more knowledgeable or competitive than Brad—or a better deal-maker. Also, the man has no ego. In my opinion, Brad is the Steve Jobs of the licensing world.”

Globe is known for his many successful collaborations with filmmakers, strong retail relationships and strategic partnerships with licensees and corporate marketers.

During his WBCP career, Globe spearheaded some of the most powerful and impactful licensing initiatives in the industry.

Globe also championed the creation of groundbreaking retail programs such as

continued on page 82

BRAD GLOBE
former president,
Warner Bros. Consumer Products

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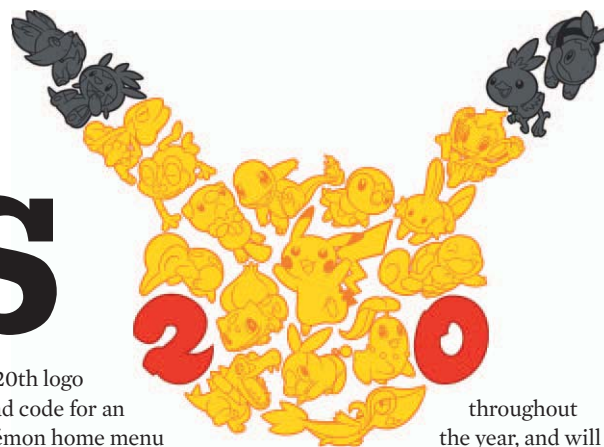


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Pokémon Commemorates 20 Years



In celebration of Pokémon's 20th anniversary, the Pokémon Company International is telling fans to "Train On" with new products and events throughout the year.

To kick off the celebration, The Pokémon Company International will air a new ad during this month's Super Bowl 50 focusing on the Train On campaign. The promo is also tied to social media with the hashtag #Pokemon20 that asks fans to share their favorite Pokémon memories.

Then on Pokémon Day, Feb. 27, the company will organize special events at participating retail locations across the U.S.

A host of 20th anniversary

merchandise including apparel, accessories and souvenirs is also available at PokemonCenter.com. Featured products include a 20th anniversary baseball cap from New Era, limited edition figures and plush from master toy licensee Tomy International and more.

Pokémon will also celebrate its beginnings with the re-release of the original versions of its first video games as digital downloads on the Nintendo e-shop for Nintendo 3DS. A special Nintendo 3DS Pokémon 20th anniversary bundle will also be released with both the "Red" and "Blue" game versions pre-installed, two unique cover plates,

the Pokémon 20th logo and a download code for an exclusive Pokémon home menu theme.

Additionally, the video game "Pokkén Tournament" will be released this spring for Wii U that enables the game to battle in direct response to the player's actions.

A new mobile game, "Pokémon Go," will also launch later this year, encouraging fans to discover Pokémon in the real world.

In addition to the new video games, The Pokémon Company International will also be releasing special expansion packs for the Pokémon trading card game

throughout the year, and will host retail events at GameStop and Toys 'R' Us featuring exclusive collector's items.

Furthermore, 12 full-length Pokémon films will be available for digital download through iTunes, Amazon and Google Play. Among the releases will be digitally remastered versions of the first three Pokémon movies.

Even more updates on retail events, special products and more will be available at the website Pokemon.com/20 throughout the year.



Disney Rolls Out Phase Two of *Star Wars* Merch

After taking the box office by storm and with the film's new storyline officially revealed, Disney has unveiled a second wave of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* products that are rolling out at U.S. retailers.

The new toys, collectibles and other products feature characters Rey, Finn and Kylo Ren, as well as key plot points from the movie such as the identity of Kylo Ren and Rey's lightsaber. The new range also silences recent criticism about the lack of Rey products with a whole host of Rey-themed toys and gear, now set to hit shelves.

Products being released by Disney Store will include a Rey lightsaber toy, updated Elite Series die-cast action figures, a Kylo Ren Unmasked action figure, a deluxe figure play set that includes 10 highly detailed figures and more.

"*Star Wars: The Force Awakens* has made

instant icons of new characters like Rey, Finn and Kylo Ren," says Paul Southern, senior vice president, *Star Wars* licensing, Disney Consumer Products. "We're excited to share an incredible range of products that celebrates these fantastic new heroes and villains, allowing fans to take some movie magic home."

Mass retail highlights include toys from Hasbro such as 12-inch action figures, *Star Wars* Nerf Rey and Han Solo blasters and a *Star Wars* Bladebuilders Rey electronic lightsaber. LEGO will also be releasing *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* construction sets and buildable figures.

Beyond figures and play sets, fans will be able to find new products featuring their favorite characters across a range of categories including Hot Wheels die-cast vehicles from Mattel, plush from Build-a-Bear, outdoor play items from Rubie's, home décor, party supplies and apparel at Target, Kohl's J.C. Penney, Hot Topic and more.



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Hong Kong Licensing Show Ends on High Note

The 14th annual Hong Kong International Licensing Show hosted a record number of visitors at its three-day event, Jan. 11-13.

Organized by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the show gathered more than 20,800 industry professionals from 100-plus countries and regions, an increase of 5.6 percent from 2015.

This year's event highlighted the growing range and scope of licensing opportunities in Asia.

"Hong Kong possesses many distinct advantages, including its proximity to the Chinese mainland, its robust protection of intellectual property and a deep pool of licensing professionals," says Raymond Yip, acting executive director, HKTDC. "Not only can Hong Kong help international brands enter markets in the Chinese mainland and Asia, it is also the best gateway for mainland enterprises to promote their brands to the world. The Hong Kong International Licensing Show is the ideal platform for companies from Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland and the world to come together and explore opportunities in licensing."

The show featured more than 340 exhibitors from 15 countries and regions and showcased more than 860 brands and properties across such categories as animation, edutainment, art and design, fashion and food and beverage. Among the exhibitors were Hearst Magazines and its licensing agent IMG (which also showcased client Ducati), BBC Worldwide, Chelsea Football Club, Hasbro, Sanrio, Warner Bros., the Palace Museum, "Peppa Pig," Yale University, Lamborghini and Twentieth Century Fox. Eight international pavilions also featured

brands from Australia, the Chinese mainland, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand and the U.K.

More than 600 business sessions were held, of which 80 were organized in partnership with local industry associations to promote cross-industry collaboration and explore licensing opportunities. Among the participating associations were the Federation of Hong Kong brands, the Hong Kong Apparel Society and the Hong Kong Toys Council.

Held simultaneously to the Licensing Show was the fifth annual Asian Licensing Conference, which featured more than 30 experts from around the globe and included executives from Harley-Davidson Motor Co., Michelin, The Walt Disney Company, Sesame Workshop, *Cosmopolitan* and the British Library.

The International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association also hosted the 2015 Asian Licensing Awards, which recognizes licensing excellence and innovation across Asia. Brands were honored in a host of categories including Best Corporate Brand, Best Promotion, and Retailer, Licensee and Agency of the Year.

Separately, the Asian Licensing Association also hosted a concurrent International Licensing Summit and award ceremony honoring Hong Kong's licensing accomplishments and featured speakers such as Yoon Sunmin, vice president of "Line Friends" in Korea and *License! Global's* publisher Steven Ekstract. Ekstract discussed the explosive growth of the entertainment business in China and examined the new potential for licensing in the region as the Chinese government cracks down on counterfeits.

Nick Plans China Theme Park

Nickelodeon is teaming up with the Sanshui New Town Management Committee, the representative of Sanshui New Town, and Elite Global Group to develop the first-ever Nickelodeon-branded attraction in China.

The park will be part of a new cultural zone, the Foshan Cultural and Ecological Coastal Project, and is expected to open by 2020.

"We are thrilled we will develop our first branded attraction in China, which will open up further opportunities for our recreation business in Asia," says Ron Johnson, executive vice president, Nickelodeon and Viacom Consumer Products, VIMN. "We look forward to working with Elite Global Group and Foshan to create a series of branded attractions that will appeal to kids and families across China, enabling them to connect with some of the most beloved Nickelodeon characters in the world including 'SpongeBob SquarePants,' 'Dora the Explorer' and the 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.'"

The theme park in Foshan, China, will join several other Nickelodeon-branded attractions and parks around the world.

In addition to Nickelodeon Universe in Minneapolis' Mall of America, SeaWorld on the Gold Coast (Australia), Wet n Wild Sydney (Australia), Nickelodeon Land at Pleasure Beach Blackpool (U.K.), Nickland at Movie Park Germany, Nickelodeon Land at Parque de Atracciones Madrid (Spain) and Nickelodeon Lost Lagoon to open at Sunway Lagoon in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), there are also Nickelodeon attractions at the Universal Studios in Orlando, Fla., and Hollywood, Calif.



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LICENSING EXPO PREPS FOR 2016

With a slew of new exhibitors, tech-based features and much more, Licensing Expo 2016 is gearing up for a show like never before this June.

by ERICA GARBER

As it heads into its 36th year, Licensing Expo is on track to continue the momentum from last year's show, which welcomed 15 percent more retailers than the previous year. With a focus on new exhibitors and advanced features that will improve attendee experience, this year's show is already gearing up to be unlike any Licensing Expo before.

Organized by UBM Americas and sponsored by the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association, Licensing Expo 2016 will take place at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nev., June 21-23.

The event will feature new areas of emphasis for the show, a brand-new matchmaking service, innovative booths and a 26 session Licensing University conference. Additionally, it is steadily pacing to feature more than 150 new exhibitors, ranging from fashion icon Pierre Cardin to women's magazine *Cosmopolitan*.

"Licensing Expo will once again host the who's who of the \$259.9 billion licensing marketplace," says Jessica Blue, senior vice president, licensing, UBM Americas. "We are delighted to welcome so many new exhibitors to the show

and to support them in achieving their licensing goals."

Matchmaking Experience

One new addition to Licensing Expo this year is the launch of its matchmaking service, which will help attendees and exhibitors connect and arrange key meetings in the lead up to the show.

The service will also allow users to search for



specific companies to create connections and enable users to search through various categories to find a match that may have never been considered.

“We’ve been asked many times to business match exhibitors with attendees and vice versa,” says Blue. “It can be difficult to navigate the licensing industry, especially if you’re new, and knowing where to start is often the hardest part. We hope this will give people a solid place to start so they have a number of appointments in place, so their time at the show can be efficient and effective.”

Specifically designed for Licensing Expo, the online platform is complemented by a team of experienced matchmaking professionals who will provide assistance and support to exhibitors and attendees throughout the year. The team will also be available at the event to provide hands-on support.

The matchmaking service is priced at \$500, however it will be offered for free to all attendees and exhibitors in 2016.

“We are excited to be able to meet the needs of the licensing community in this unique way by facilitating these important connections and, ultimately, deals,” continues Blue.

To activate a matchmaking account, go to LicensingExpo.com/2016Matchmaking.

Spotlight on Heritage and Non-Profits

Licensing Expo 2016 is looking to heritage and non-profit brands as it brings companies together to offer licensees a wide breadth of intellectual properties—ranging from art to historical items—from their respective portfolios.

This year, the show will include two new exhibitors under the category, The Ohio State University and the Ford Museum, as well as several exhibitors that have attended the show in the past.



Fresh Faces, Deep Roots

More than 450 businesses will exhibit at the 2016 show, almost a third of which will be brand-new exhibitors looking to enhance and build their brands. Thus far, new exhibitors include brands such as Goldie Box, *Healthy Living* magazine, reality personality Jojo Siwa, Good Work(s) Makes a Difference, The One World Doll Project, Pierre Cardin and more.

New exhibitors are joining Licensing Expo every week including Iconix Brand Group, which will host

a booth to showcase its diverse portfolio of brands such as Candie’s, Strawberry Shortcake, Sharper Image and more.

“It’s always our mission to bring in as many new brands as we can,” says Blue. “Oftentimes it depends on their licensing strategies and if they’re ready to exhibit. We make sure we’re always talking to these brands so when they’re ready for us, we’re ready for them.”

Hundreds of companies and brands are returning to the show as well, including IMG Worldwide, Hasbro, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, King, Pepsi, Cherokee Global Brands, Universal, Nintendo, Skechers, Crayola and more.

New and Noteworthy

Several international brands from Mexico, India, China and Japan will be expanding their presence in Las Vegas in 2016.

This year, there will be two new international pavilions from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The Hong Kong Pavilion will feature a group of Hong Kong-based companies, organized in one block; meanwhile, the New Taipei City Computer Association will organize Taiwan’s 600-square-foot booth.

China’s presence, which has been part of the show for several years, will be organized by a new company, Shanghai Huayou/ACG-IP.

Licensing Expo will continue to add international pavilions in the upcoming years as the show continues to expand. As more attendees from all over the world become interested in diverse, global brands, more countries will be able to be represented in the future.

Read More on the Blog

Additionally, Licensing Expo has launched Licensing HQ, a new digital platform and blog.

Licensing HQ will provide exhibitors and attendees with announcements, testimonials, show highlights, licensing education content and more. Attendees who sign up for the blog will also receive a monthly newsletter with top stories from the blog and information on the show to stay up to date until June and afterward.

Visit Licensing HQ at LicensingHQ.LicensingExpo.com.



Licensing in 2015

A YEAR IN REVIEW

From an increased focus on building 360-degree franchises to a host of major executive moves, here's the news that shaped 2015. **by NICOLE DAVIS**

Last year was marked by a series of shifts in leadership among several of the world's top licensors including Disney Consumer Products, Iconix, Sanrio, Warner Bros. Consumer Products and more.

Meanwhile, the much-awaited return of *Star Wars* to the silver screen turned out to be exactly as big of a deal as everyone thought it would be, providing a road map for the successful exploitation of an evergreen franchise. And Disney wasn't the only major licensor to focus on building

out its core franchises in 2015, with other content creators following similar models to success (think Universal's reboot of the *Jurassic Park* brand and Warner Bros.' plans for the DC Comics properties).

On the toy front, Shopkins reigned. Sales of Moose Toys' line of collectible, shopping-themed

figurines topped \$100 million in the U.S. and Canada alone in 2015. As a result, licensees around the world lined up to get on board, creating extensions that ranged from edible food products to apparel.

Movers and Shakers

2015 was a year of executive shake-ups for the world's major licensors, starting at the top with Disney Consumer Products. In May, Leslie Ferraro moved from her position as executive vice president of the Walt Disney Parks and Resorts division to lead Disney Consumer Products, filling the role left vacant by Bob Chapek who took over as chairman of the Parks and Resorts division earlier in the year. (Former Parks and Resorts chairman Thomas Staggs was made chief operating officer of the Walt Disney Company earlier that same month.)

Then, just a month after Ferraro's promotion, the Walt Disney Company announced plans to combine its consumer products and interactive media divisions into one comprehensive unit, Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media, in order to maximize efficiencies. The new division is being run jointly by Ferraro and Disney Interactive president Jimmy Pitaro.





LESLIE FERRARO co-chair, Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media, and president, Disney Consumer Products

Here are just a few of the other major executive moves of 2015:

- Former Sanrio president and chief operating officer Janet Hsu was appointed chief executive officer of Saban Brands following the departure of Elie Dekel, who helped launch the company in 2010. Dekel stepped down in July to pursue other opportunities.

- Brad Globe resigned from his post as president of Warner Bros. Consumer Products in August, a position he held for more than a decade. Last month, after an executive search that lasted four months, it was announced that licensing veteran Pam Lifford has replaced Globe. Lifford brings more than 25 years of experience to the role from companies including Disney and Quiksilver.
- Beanstalk named Allison Ames as its new chief executive officer as co-founder and former CEO Michael Stone stepped into the role of chairman. Ames, who has worked at the licensing agency for 18 years, will also retain the title of president.
- Pekka Rantala stepped down as the chief executive officer of Rovio in December following a series of cutbacks and a restructuring earlier in the year. Former chief legal officer Kati Levoranta took over the top spot last month, and will lead the company as it readies for the release of its first feature film in May.
- Mattel made major moves to reinvigorate its brand last year with several months of executive shuffling that saw the departure of CEO Bryan Stockton, senior vice president of licensing Jessie Dunne and executive vice president Tim Kilpin. New CEO Christopher Sinclair and new president and COO Richard Dickson are leading the charge for renewal, an effort that may already be paying off—Barbie regained her

title as the top holiday toy for girls, after being unseated by Disney's *Frozen* in 2014.

- Neil Cole stepped down as chief executive officer, chairman and president of Iconix Brand Group, the brand management company that he founded in 2005. The world's fourth largest licensor is currently being led by board member Peter Cuneo, who previously served as president and chief executive officer of Marvel Entertainment, while a successor is sought.

Focus on Franchises

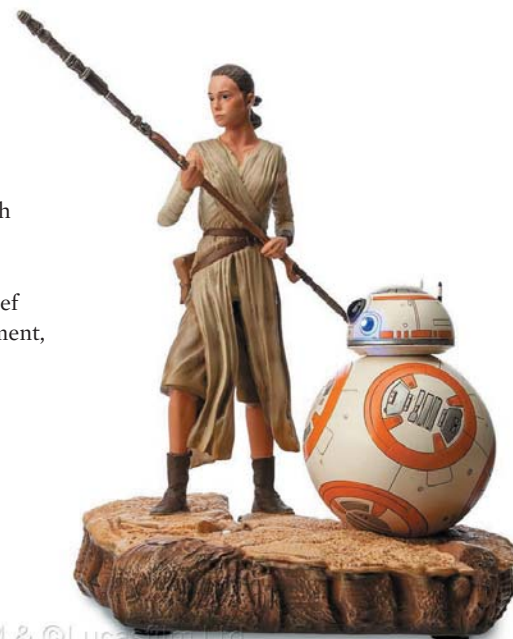
Driven by the need to maintain a 24/7 presence, licensors increasingly looked not just to build brands, but to build franchises.

A key example of this is Disney's work with the *Star Wars* brand, which came to fruition at the end of 2015. Expectations were high for the return of one of the most beloved film franchises of all time, and Disney did not disappoint as *Episode VII: The Force Awakens* barreled past the \$1 billion mark at the box office faster than any other in film in history.

And that's only the beginning. The studio plans to release a new *Star Wars* film every year from now until 2020 in addition to efforts in other arenas including television, live events and, of course, a wide array of consumer products.

While *Star Wars* stole the show later in the year, other major franchises made headlines earlier in 2015, particularly at the summer box office. *Marvel's Avengers: Age of Ultron* continued to prove the power of the superhero genre, bringing in \$1.4 billion worldwide, while Universal's reboot of the *Jurassic Park* franchise, *Jurassic World*, topped both domestic and international charts with \$1.6 billion in box office sales worldwide. Universal had two other major franchises hit it big last summer, as well—*Furious 7* and *Minions*, both of which have proved their staying power through several box office seasons and successful, long-standing consumer products programs.

In a similar strategy to Disney, Warner Bros. also plans



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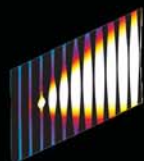
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As seen in the upcoming film, a hilarious guide to identifying and coping with any paranormal activity plaguing you (Crown Books, A Division of Random House)



to keep theaters well stocked with DC Comics content for the foreseeable future. The studio is planning 10 films between now and 2020, the first of which will be *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* this March. This is in addition to other DC content including TV shows, shorts and games, as well new animation content for other evergreen franchises including “Looney Tunes” and “Scooby-Doo” and new attractions and content for the *Harry Potter* brand. And all of this entertainment will be supported by global licensing initiatives from the company’s more than 3,700 active licensees.

Of course franchises aren’t the sole purview of the studios. Nickelodeon named Chris Viscardi to the newly created role of senior vice president of content development in its Franchise Properties division, to oversee the creative direction of its key brands such as “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,” “SpongeBob SquarePants” and “Dora the Explorer.”

Meanwhile, Hasbro, which has already seen great success translating its classic toy franchises into entertainment mainstays (think “My Little Pony” and *Transformers*), announced a new partnership with Paramount in December to bring five more of its brands to the big screen—G.I. Joe, Micronauts, Visionaries, M.A.S.K. and ROM.

In a similar move, video game company Activision Blizzard launched its own in-house studio to create film and television content based on its library of properties including “Skylanders” and “Call of Duty.”

Clearly, the new M.O. for successful licensors in today’s fast-paced market is the proliferation across genres, formats and product categories of a few, key evergreen brands.

The Year’s Biggest Buys

Perhaps the biggest acquisition of the year was Sequential Brands Group’s purchase of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, which brought together the world’s No. 35 and No. 55 licensors (according to *License! Global’s* annual Top 150 Global Licensors report). MSLO will add a new vertical to Sequential’s platform that is expected to generate approximately \$4 billion in annual global retail sales.

In 2015, Sequential also bought the apparel brand Joe’s and took a 62.5 percent majority stake in the Jessica Simpson brand from the Camuto Group.

The apparel sector was rife with ownership changes in



2015. Saban added to its burgeoning portfolio of lifestyle brands when it bought the Australian surf brand Piping Hot in March, Cherokee acquired the casual lifestyle brand Everyday California and Authentic Brands Group bought the American fashion label Jones New York.

In a completely different sector, gaming company Activision bought “Candy Crush” creator King Digital Entertainment for a staggering \$5.9 billion. With the acquisition, Activision Blizzard, the No. 107 largest licensor in the world, has taken a foothold in the mobile gaming space. The new, combined company’s portfolio will include two of the top five highest-grossing mobile games in the U.S. (“Candy Crush Saga” and “Candy Crush Soda Saga”), the world’s most successful console game franchise (“Call of Duty”) and the world’s most successful personal computing franchise (“World of Warcraft”). Then in early January, Activision bought Major League Gaming, which develops live gaming events. The purchase not only adds live streaming capabilities to Activision’s roster, but also furthers the company’s plans “to create the ESPN of e-sports,” according to Bobby Kotick, chief executive officer, Activision Blizzard.





Other Big Moments from 2015:

- **Shopkins storms shelves**—Moose Toys’ collectible brand Shopkins became a global toy phenomenon and continually added to its roster of licensees in Europe and North America throughout 2015. Since launching in June 2014, more than 207 million Shopkins toys have been sold worldwide.
- **Frozen sweeps LIMA Licensing Awards**—It’s no surprise for anyone who followed retail trends in 2014 that Disney’s *Frozen* took home the top honors at the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers’ Association’s annual Licensing Awards in June, and gave wins to partners such as Kohl’s and Jakks Pacific.
- **LEGO unveils virtual toy system**—There was no end in sight for the toy company’s resurgence, with LEGO implementing major expansions to production facilities in order to keep up with growing demand. (Demand was so high in fact that there was a product shortage in some European countries during the holiday season.) And as if its core building set business wasn’t enough, the company launched a new virtual toy system, as well. “LEGO Dimensions” merges video games with classic LEGO gameplay, giving the toy company a solid presence in the booming toys-to-life category.
- **Authentic Brands Group builds a brand powerhouse**—Since its launch in 2010, this brand management company has grown to encompass 27 brands with close to \$5 billion in retail sales. Acquisitions in 2015 included the IP of basketball legend Shaquille O’Neal, lingerie brand

- Frederick’s of Hollywood and American fashion label Jones New York, as well as a deal with the production company Warrior Poets to create entertainment projects based on its portfolio and a global representation deal for the Michael Jackson brand. This explosive growth illustrates the strength of the brand management model, which has contributed significantly to the expansion of the brand licensing sector over the last decade.
- **IMG reigns as Top Licensing Agent**—The world’s largest licensing agency was at the top of its game, bringing in \$8.3 billion in retail sales of licensed merchandise across a diverse roster of clients that continues to grow. New additions in 2015 included Laughing Cow, the fashion label Joyrich, the vitamin drink mix Emergen-C and expanded representation agreements with *National Geographic* and *Cosmopolitan* magazines. The company even bought the bull riding circuit Professional Bull Riders, strengthening its foothold in the live events space.
 - **FAB NY exec to lead dELIA*s comeback**—After teen retailer dELIA*s filed for bankruptcy in December 2014, Steve Russo, founder and CEO of accessories licensee FAB NY, bought the defunct brand and re-launched it as an online-only outlet in August.
 - **MGA re-launches Bratz**—Following a prolonged legal battle with Mattel and brand image challenges, MGA Entertainment overhauled and re-launched its popular girls’ doll brand Bratz, and quickly followed the launch with plans for a range of brand extensions. ©



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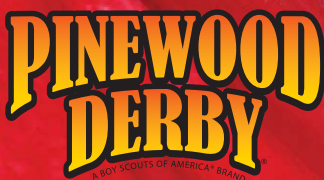


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CONNECTING POWER, STYLE AND TEAMWORK

by **TONY LISANTI**

From the eclectic and friendly character world of Sanrio to the power and style of Saban Brands, Janet Hsu brings the same passion and poise that helped her drive the growth of the Hello Kitty franchise to entertainment and lifestyle brands.

Hsu's energetic and spirited approach, combined with her creativity and drive, is perhaps the perfect complement to lead Saban Brands' diverse portfolio, which is notably defined by the growth potential its properties have around the globe.

Hsu, who was named chief executive officer of Saban Brands Group in August 2015—succeeding Elie Dekel, who led the company since it was founded in May 2010—has inherited that “potential” and the challenges to deliver that go with the position.

With a “Go, Go, Power Rangers!” attitude, Hsu believes that her experience with Sanrio and the iconic Hello Kitty property will help her to execute new and exciting initiatives for the Saban catalog of brands.

“I had the opportunity to lead, experience and drive multi-dimensional aspects of the business. I was really into everything,” Hsu says of her time at Sanrio.

She remains thankful to the Tsuji family for empowering and trusting her to drive a new vision, which is exactly what she has begun doing at Saban Brands.

“It was an invaluable journey transforming the way we approached products, from design to retail, marketing and fan touch points,” she recalls. “I was

JANET HSU

chief executive officer, Saban Brands

able to work with incredible partners and really drive relevancy, modernization and most importantly connection. You can have a great brand, but at the end of the day, if you're not connecting with consumers, then the brand is not as good as you need it to be."

Hsu hopes to bring the aspects of connection and change to Saban Brands in new and innovative ways.

"The importance and value of being 'disruptive,' and really thinking differently about how to grow a brand, is what can take it to the next level," Hsu says. "That's what connection is when you are evolving with how the world is thinking and providing something that is relevant to customers."

She also brings the same passion and commitments she became known for at Sanrio to Saban Brands, and believes that the company's diversified mix of established and globally loved brands are ready to be leveraged in new ways through partnerships and initiatives.

"With every single brand there is a specific key that could be a combination of many things that unlocks the true DNA and touch points of that brand," Hsu explains.

And she is determined to find each one that will continue to build a fan base and global footprint.

Hsu, who is a big believer in teamwork and collaboration, has quickly begun to put her stamp on the company and recently appointed five new executives to key positions across various business disciplines. They include Tori Cook, senior vice president, global retail business development; Marcy George, vice president, global consumer products; Jennifer Wexler, senior vice president, marketing; Stan Wan, creative director, Saban Brands Lifestyle Group; and Scott Rosenbaum, senior vice president, business and legal affairs.

"I always tell my key employees that it's important to have a voice as well as honesty and transparency," Hsu says. "Good ideas come from everywhere, and I expect all employees at every level to contribute to our brands and business."

"I am constantly pushing and empowering my team to think big, to be unconventional and not always look at what was done in the past," she adds. "I am really all about teamwork, and I believe it is key to success within an organization. I encourage the team to be collaborative and results-driven and bring fresh and creative ideas to the table, to take calculated risks and to try new and different things."

Hsu is focused on taking the Saban Brands portfolio of brands to the next level and already has numerous initiatives in development, some of which will be unveiled at the company's licensee meeting early this month, as well as at other major trade events including New York Toy Fair, MAGIC Marketplace and June's Licensing Expo.

The brand focus hasn't changed since last May when

License! Global featured Saban Brands in an exclusive fifth anniversary tribute. They include the following:

- **"Power Rangers"**—The feature film, scheduled to release in March 2017, is one of the most important extensions for the 22-year-old franchise and will expand its audience and reflect the new licensing initiatives Hsu refers to. In addition, Saban Brands recently extended its broadcast partnership with Nickelodeon through 2018. The franchise's 23rd season, "Dino Super Charge," premiered last month, and the name for the 24th season (due in 2017) has been announced—"Ninja Steel." "We have a tremendous opportunity to connect with different aged fans and to bring a disruptive—but meaningful—execution of product, marketing and brand positioning," Hsu says. "The heritage of the brand will be unlocked in different formats throughout the pre-, during and post-movie cycle."

- **"Popples"**—The popular kids' franchise from the mid-1980s re-launched last October as a Netflix original kids' series with an extensive accompanying consumer products program.

- **"Glitter Force"**—The Japanese anime series adaptation from Toei premiered in December 2015, also as a Netflix original series.

- **"Luna Petunia"**—This is a new TV show for preschoolers that is under development in partnership with Cirque du Soleil Média. It's scheduled to launch in the fall on Netflix.

- **Paul Frank**—The art-driven lifestyle brand, created in 1995, will be re-introduced in ways that will bring back more of its nostalgia and authenticity with a completely new vision.

- **Mambo and Piping Hot**—Australian lifestyle and surf brands Mambo and Piping Hot will be introduced in various markets worldwide.

"We are bringing disruption, change and out-of-the-box opportunities to all of our brands, diversifying licensing, creating a stronger presence in how we are positioned at retail and really driving global growth," explains Hsu. "We are taking our current IP that have nostalgia and heritage and bringing a new twist to those brands, while also trying fresh and different things with new IP. Experience will be a strategy that will be incorporated into all the brands," she adds.

Hsu's passion and relentless push toward innovation and connection with fans bodes well for Saban Brands' future.

"We have a mix of popular brands, up-and-coming brands and iconic brands that offer strong opportunities," says Hsu. "I look forward to growing our brands internationally and strengthening and diversifying Saban Brands' global reach and also identifying and acquiring additional brands and building new IP." ©

JUST IN TIME, MTIME



KELVIN HOU, chief executive officer, Mtime

For China's nascent movie business, it's about time, Mtime.

by STEVEN EKSTRACT

Mtime, the 10-year-old, Beijing, China-based movie marketing company founded by Kelvin Hou, a former Microsoft executive, is creating a revolution in the Chinese movie merchandising business that promises to be a very bright spot for the future of Hollywood studio merchandising revenues coming out of China.

Mtime was originally created to be the Chinese version of digital movie resources Fandango, IMDB, Rotten Tomatoes and the TV series "Entertainment Tonight" all rolled into one, and has become the largest online movie

ticket seller in China. The company claims 160 million monthly visitors to its website, who come to buy movie tickets, look at movie reviews and get entertainment news. Now, having built a loyal following of Chinese moviegoers and fans for the past decade, the company is further monetizing its customer base by offering them officially licensed movie merchandise both online and in specially designed retail kiosks at movie theaters throughout China.

For Hollywood's movie industry, the Chinese market has been a double-edged sword. On the one side, Hollywood has seen a tremendous interest from Chinese moviegoers for Hollywood films, which has helped build franchises in what will soon be the largest movie market in the world. Yet on the down side, the Chinese government exercises quota limitations on the number of foreign films allowed into the market in any given year.

The consumer product business is also a source of frustrations for Hollywood studios—the licensing component has for years been rife with counterfeit product.

Market Size

Mainland China is currently the world's second largest movie-going market, behind only North America, with rapid growth driven by a booming middle class and a theater-building spree that shows no sign of slowing. To put that in perspective, box office receipts for the U.S. and Canada totaled \$11.1 billion in 2015, up 7 percent (source: Rentrak). According to the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, China has added about 9,000 movie screens in 2015 alone, increasing its total by about 40 percent to roughly 32,000. By the end of 2017, China will have 40,000 movie screens and most likely eclipse the U.S. in box office gross. This is significant for the licensing business because movie merchandising in China is still in its infancy.

Rules of Engagement

Currently, the process to get a film into China is this: Hollywood studios need to lobby the state-controlled China Film Group to get films released in the country, and because of revenue share with China Film Group, the studios only get to keep 25 percent of the box office revenue. On average, each of the major U.S. studios only has the opportunity to release four to six films per year in China, due to the fact that the majority of films screened in China need to be locally produced. In 2015, 60 percent of films screened in China were made there.

Last year, China allowed 58 foreign films into the country, but only 34 of those were permitted in on a "revenue share" basis, allowing Hollywood studios to take home up to 25 percent of the box office receipts. Foreign revenue share films sold about \$2.25 billion in tickets in 2015—meaning the studios



DREAMWORKS

CHINA'S HOLLYWOOD CONNECTION—THE WANDA GROUP

The China-based Dalian Wanda Group owns 125 Wanda Plazas, 81 hotels (including 68 five-star hotels), 6,600 cinema screens and 99 department stores nationwide.

The company operates in four major industries—commercial property, culture and tourism, e-commerce and department stores.

Most recently, Wanda acquired the U.S.-based Legendary Entertainment for \$3.5 billion in cash—the largest cross-border cultural acquisition to-date. The purchase is intended to help bolster film market opportunities in the fast-growing China market.

“The acquisition of Legendary will make Wanda Film Holdings Company the highest revenue-generating film company in the world, increasing Wanda’s presence in China and the U.S., the world’s two largest markets,” says Wang Jianlin, chairman, Wanda Group.

The company’s cinema ownership is perhaps the largest in the world, and extends

beyond China and deep into the U.S., as it is the owner of AMC Entertainment, which it purchased for \$2.6 billion in May 2012. The deal combined the company’s Wanda Cinema chain with the 338 AMC multiplex theaters.

Further acquisitions under the Wanda Cinemas/Wanda AMC banner have now included the U.S.’s Starplex Cinemas in December 2015, which adds a further 33 theaters in 12 U.S. states to the portfolio; as well as Australia’s Hoyts, the continent’s second-largest theater chain, also last year.

Wanda is a significant investor in Mtime as well, with a 20 percent equity interest. The strategic deal combines the company’s Wanda Cinemas branch with Mtime’s data, closing the circle on theatergoing experiences.

Under its culture and tourism umbrella are also multiple theme parks including its latest, the Wanda Xishuangbanna Inter-

national Resort in Jinghong in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, China. The 5.3-square-kilometer park is the third major location-based entertainment undertaking for the company, and represents the largest investment yet for Wanda.

In line with its commitment to all-things entertainment, Wanda also owns a 100 percent stake in the World Triathlon Corporation, which hosts the Ironman competitions around the world. The deal closed in August 2015 for \$650 million.

Other acquisitions and strategic partnerships include a deal with Royal Caribbean International that will further expand cruise travel into China, the purchase of Europe-based sports marketing company Infront Sports & Media, a 20 percent stake in Spain’s Club Atletico de Madrid, a cash infusion for online travel company Ly.com and much more.

pocketed a maximum of \$560 million from those 34 titles.

The remaining 24 imports were allowed in on a “flat fee” basis, under which Chinese distributors pay a lump sum up front and all the box office proceeds stay in China, no matter how well the film performs. The upside for China can be huge—one such film, a Japanese animated movie based on the cat character Doraemon, earned \$83 million in mainland China this year.

Another major challenge for Hollywood is that China Film Group usually only provides a 30-day notice for release dates, making it very difficult for the studios to properly market and advertise films.

Good News for Movie Licensing

According to Mtime’s Hou, from the studio merchandising perspective, what has helped licensing efforts is the Chinese government’s increased scrutiny on intellectual property protection and the booming middle class in China which is demanding quality

products for their favorite films. Mtime has made a major commitment in its merchandising efforts to create a total merchandising solution with licensing, manufacturing, shipping and merchandising, as well as online/mobile app retail sales.

Exit Through the Gift Shop

Hou believes that Chinese moviegoers will embrace the experience of both entering and exiting a theater with a gift shop that sells officially licensed, high-quality merchandise much like one would find in a museum or concert venue.

To that end, Mtime creates and franchises highly sophisticated in theater retail kiosks that create a point-of-purchase environment conducive to impulse sales of licensed merchandise right then and there. Mtime entered the movie merchandising business several years ago, giving customers the opportunity to purchase movie merchandise at Mtime or at an Mtime-franchised, in-





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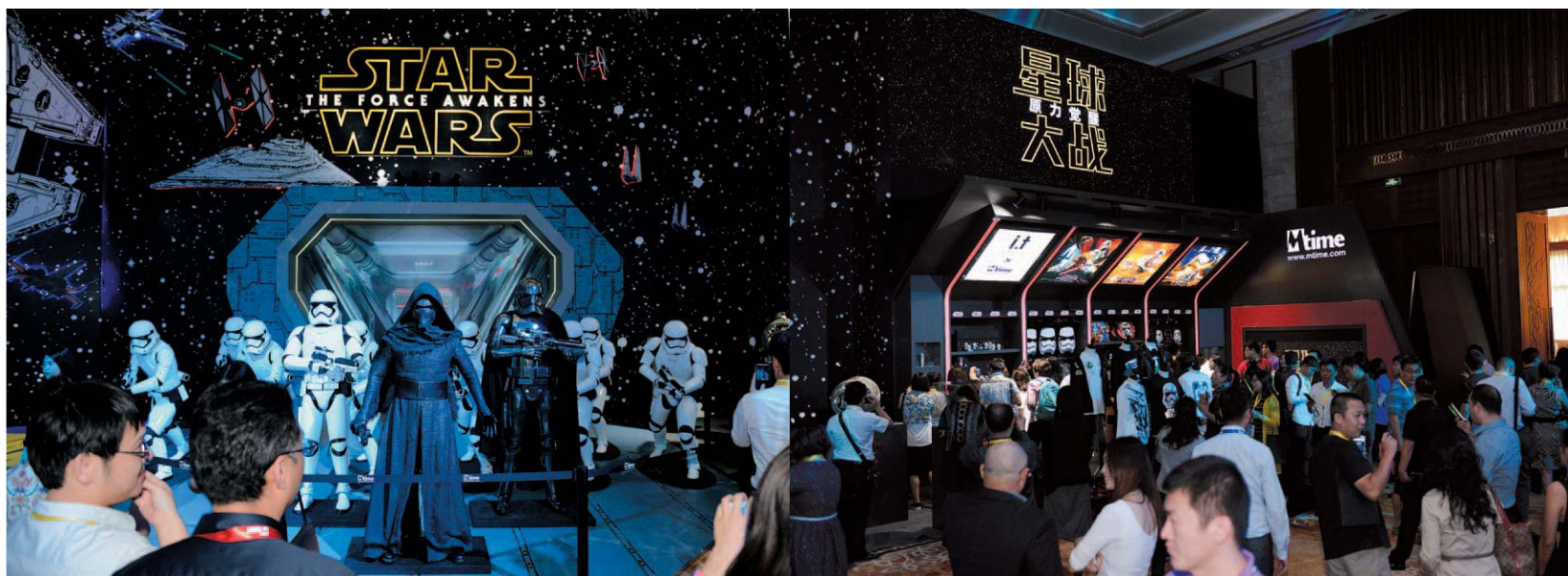


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theater merchandising kiosk. Mtime currently has 55 in-theater stores that sell movie products for films such as *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and *Kung Fu Panda 3*.

Mtime plans to have 100 in-theater retail stores installed by mid-2016. To make that happen, in September 2015, Mtime sold a 20 percent stake in its company to Wanda Theatres (China's largest theater chain), betting that retailing movie merchandise will be a growing and profitable area for theater owners.

U.S. Presence

In Los Angeles, Calif., Mtime has an office that acts as its Hollywood marketing base of operations. The office is run by Afrat Spalding, a former Paramount publicity executive who oversees a staff of five full-time film and entertainment reviewers that cover all things Hollywood and entertainment related specifically for Mtime's 160 million monthly visitors. In addition to its L.A. press contingent, the company recently hired licensing executive Aaron Sobel to be its U.S. deal maker and act as a conduit to the U.S. studios. At Mtime's Beijing headquarters,



Matthew Su, a former Disney Consumer Products executive, oversees all licensing deals for the company.

2015's Winners

Universal and Disney were the big winners among Hollywood studios in China in 2015, mirroring their worldwide performance. Universal brought in \$690 million in Chinese ticket sales from its five major titles, led by *Furious 7* and *Jurassic World*. Disney also had a great year in China with six major releases—*Avengers: Age of Ultron* and *Ant-Man* proved to be big hits.

What the Future Holds

In 2017, the studios will have the ability—through the MPAA lobbying organization—to renegotiate both revenue take and the number of films permitted for distribution in China. The studios are hopeful that more competition among Chinese distributors will enable them to derive higher percentages from the box office takes and lessen controls on the numbers of foreign films released per year.

Looking ahead, the future looks very bright for the studio's marketing and licensing folks as there is now a more legitimate way to bring official licensed merchandise into the Chinese marketplace. ©



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60
YEARS

**GAME
CHANGERS**

An exclusive look at how the National Football League Players Association has evolved and expanded its initiatives and importance from the core legal representation of its players to their individual and collective business interests including marketing, sponsorships and brand licensing.

by TONY LISANTI

As the National Football League Players Association teams up to celebrate its 60th anniversary amidst the backdrop of the 50th annual Super Bowl extravaganza, the focus remains as simple as it was when it was founded in 1956 and the future is as promising as ever.

While the mantra to represent the best interests of its players hasn't wavered, those best interests of the mid-1950s have evolved from the basics of clean uniforms and safe equipment to include business development such as content, technology, social media and innovative brand extensions.

"Player leadership is at the center of our history. Our union has grown stronger over the past six decades because there is a belief that the sacrifices made today will benefit those who come tomorrow," says DeMaurice Smith, executive director, NFLPA. "For 60 years, we have done what every union in America has done—fought for workers' rights, sought improvements to our working conditions, protected our fair share of wages and advanced the health and safety of NFL players."

STEVEN SCEBELO, vice president, licensing and business development, NFL Players Inc.; **TODD GURLEY**, running back, Los Angeles Rams; and **AHMAD NASSAR**, president, NFL Players Inc.
Photo by Kevin Koski



NFLPA

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PANINI



DEMAURICE SMITH, executive director, NFLPA

Smith maintains, however, that the history of the NFLPA is so much more than that, and it's evident in a multitude of new initiatives that have afforded players more benefits and opportunities during and after their respective football careers.

"We have innovated how we negotiate and administer benefits, improved the many ways we provide services and generated millions in revenues to support our members," emphasizes Smith, who was elected unanimously by a board of active player representatives in March 2009, succeeding Gene Upshaw, who held the post since the early 1980s. The late Upshaw, who passed away in 2008, is credited with reorganizing the association, getting the players more involved and advocating the business aspects.

"In NFL Players Inc., we have the revenue generating engine that drives our union and allows us to operate our organization without using the dues of our members. That type of innovation gives players more opportunities than ever before to explore things they want to do off-the-field," Smith adds.

Over the past several years, a major emphasis has been placed on NFL Players Inc., the licensing and marketing arm of the group, which was established in 1994, and the inherent opportunities it creates for its players. In addition to the core representation of legal, labor and health issues, there is a prime time game plan to aggressively expand its business in licensing and establish the brand potential of

its players both during and after their football careers.

It's not only about selling the jersey of the most popular players, but also cultivating a brand business that drills down to a player's relationship and popularity on a local and personal level. In addition, NFL Players Inc. continues to develop new and innovative ways to connect its players with fans in ways that were not even possible throughout much of the association's early years.

"When we look back at the NFLPA, which was formed in the pre-Super Bowl era, the players wanted and needed clean socks and clean jocks; they had to do their own laundry, and they all had separate jobs outside of football, because playing football was nowhere near a full-time job for them to support their families," recalls Ahmad Nassar, president, NFL Players Inc., who joined the organization in 2009 and was named to his current position in February 2015. "When we fast forward to where we are today, it's astonishing how much the sport, the association and the business side has grown in that time frame."

For NFL Players Inc., the business has continued to grow significantly. According to the exclusive Top 150 Global Licensors report, which is published annually by *License! Global* magazine, NFL Players Inc. reported \$1.34 billion in retail sales of licensed merchandise worldwide in 2014, ranking No. 46 overall. And according to Nassar, the goal is to double in size over the next several years.

The point that is reflective of NFL Players Inc.'s importance to the players and to its potential is that from the beginning the leaders of the players association viewed "the commercial rights as their birthright," says Nassar.

"We need to protect them, we need to monetize them and we need to grow them," he says. "Those rights are critical and empowering for everyone who works for the organization to focus on. We want players to get more out of the sport of football than the sport gets out of them."

And that same mind set and mantra is applicable to the business side of football.

"We want players to work with sponsors and with licensees to be featured in products and to have product extensions, but above all else we want players to be able to learn the business for themselves and translate that into personal success," explains Nassar. "We focus on organizational success and collective success, which is our mandate, and we want players to focus on individual success and what players can do to position themselves for life after football."

Says Jared Cook, tight end for the Los Angeles Rams, who was drafted in 2009: "The former players and the people who work for the NFLPA have really just boosted how they represent the NFL and the players. They've done so many things from player safety issues to helping players get exposure and using their likeness and their

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– JARED COOK, LOS ANGELES RAMS

brand image. It’s something that we need as players. And I think that’s important to have a relationship as a player as well as a relationship as an ambassador for the NFLPA to speak about all of the positive things they do.”

“I would say the biggest thing about the NFLPA is helping guys after they’re done playing,” says Shane Vereen, running back for the New York Giants, who was drafted in 2011. “Football is only a short amount of time, and after football you have the rest of your life. It’s much more important than what you’re doing now, so just to prepare for that, I think, is the best thing the NFLPA offers.”

The very first player to be able to leverage his persona and parlay that into national ad campaigns and sponsorships was “Broadway” Joe Namath, who played in the NFL from 1965-1977. Then in the 1980s, a trading card boom and the launch of EA Sports’ “Madden” video game series began to change the dynamics of the potential business and licensing opportunities for players.

“We still have players who do the national endorsements such as Drew Brees, Tom Brady and Peyton Manning, and those opportunities

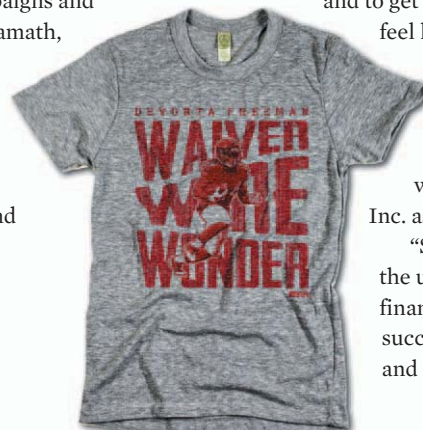
will always be there,” explains Nassar. “But the biggest difference is a broader set of opportunities with more regional and local deals for players in smaller markets. Ten years ago, only 150 to 200 players were getting any kind of deal. Now, more than 1,000 players, or half the players in the NFLPA, are getting some individual, customized deal—that’s the game changer.”

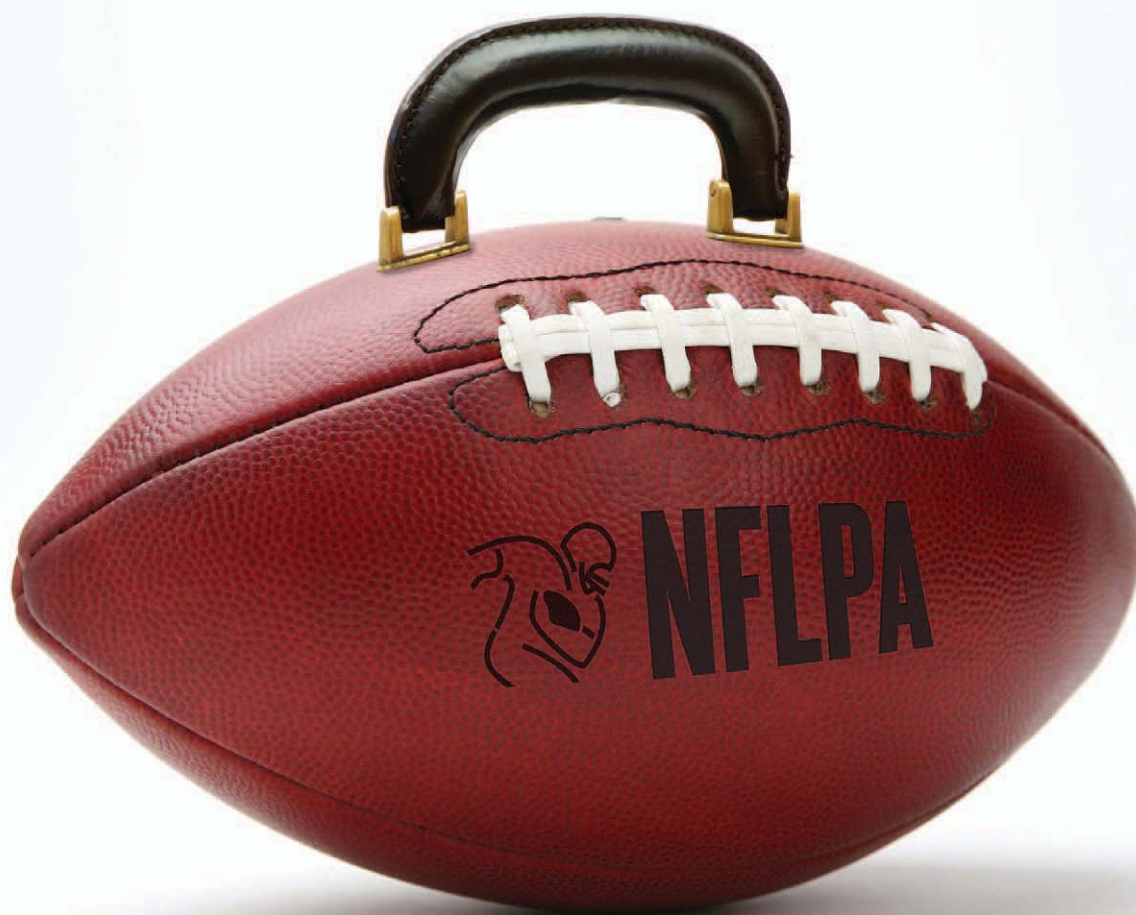
“Just helping players increase their marketability is an important aspect because a lot of players who may be in smaller markets might not get the same chances as players in larger markets,” adds Cook. “By giving me opportunities to extend myself, make me better as a person and to get my name out there and my face out there—I

feel like they are doing that already, and it’s something that’s going to get even better as people find out about it as it grows.”

Nassar says that when Smith took over as executive director in early 2009, it was very clear that he saw the NFL Players Inc. as an “under utilized, but critical, asset.”

“Smith wanted to do more and help the union succeed by putting it in the best financial position possible and help players succeed, both while they were playing and after to generate as much money for





**FOR 60 YEARS, THE NFLPA HAS PUT THE BUSINESS OF PLAYERS FIRST.
COYNE PR IS EXTREMELY PROUD TO BE ON THEIR ROSTER.**



“THE NFLPA DOES A GREAT JOB OF GIVING GUYS THE OPPORTUNITY TO VENTURE INTO THE BUSINESS ASPECT AFTER FOOTBALL OR REALLY MAXIMIZE THEIR POTENTIAL AS A FOOTBALL PLAYER. THE PEOPLE I’VE BEEN ABLE TO MEET AND THE EVENTS I’VE BEEN ABLE TO GO TO HAS TAUGHT ME SO MUCH.”

– SHANE VEREEN, NEW YORK GIANTS

them as we possibly could,” says Nassar. “He wanted us to be much more on the cusp of what’s to come in the business and where new opportunities may lie.”

“Over the past few years, we have been aggressively reaching out to partners in new areas to see how we can adapt the players’ IP to their products,” adds Steven Scebelo, vice president, licensing and business development, NFL Players Inc.. “Players have become pop culture characters—like super heroes, except that they are real.”

One of the first partners that saw a new opportunity was licensee Fathead, according to Scebelo.

“They created a category and allowed the players to be featured in a new way. It reinvented the wall décor category and opened people’s eyes to ask what else could we do,” he explains.

Scebelo says that the NFL Players Inc.’s overall strategy is best described in one word—connections.

“We are connecting the players with the right partners and licensees that we think are a great fit, and then we are helping those licensees connect their products with their fan base.”

“We want to be a consultant, advisor, coach and strategize with our partners and incentivize them,” adds Nassar. “We market ourselves to our partners as much more than the licensor of 25 years ago. We want to be a dynamic partner.”

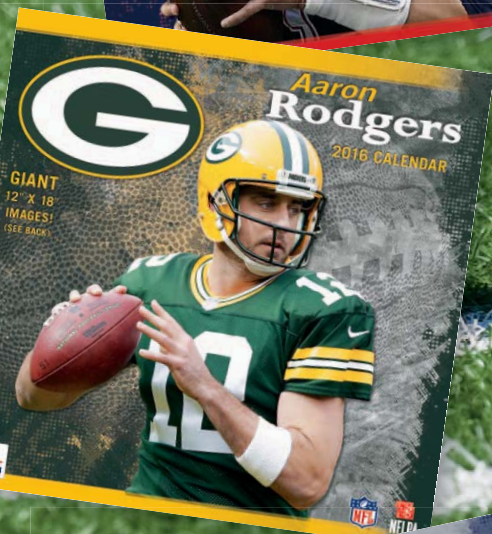
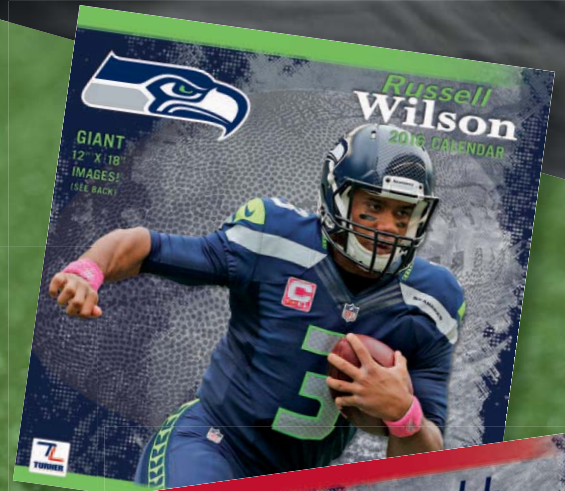
The key initiatives for NFL Players Inc. that Nassar and Scebelo believe will drive growth and opportunities for the players in the future focus on the following:

- **Technology**—The ability to create and sell a player t-shirt or other product within 24 to 48 hours drastically reduces the product cycle from 90 to 180 days, thereby enabling instantaneous merchandising based on a particular player performance. Nassar recalls last year when Jonas Gray (then of the New England Patriots, now of the Jacksonville Jaguars) scored four touchdowns during a Sunday night game—Gray barely played the rest of the season, and may not score four touchdowns during the rest of his career, “but for one week, he was all the fans talked about. And that week, to have been able to have related product in the market, would have been a game changer for that one player,” Nassar says. Nassar views Fanatics as a tech e-commerce partner versus an old school retailer or apparel partner. “We are getting to the point where a person can go on the website and order a t-shirt that doesn’t really exist, click ‘buy,’ and within 24 hours, they have printed that shirt. Forty-eight hours later it’s in the customer’s mailbox. That’s also a game changer,” says Nassar. In addition, Nassar believes that 3D printing will further impact the business and NFL Players Inc. is

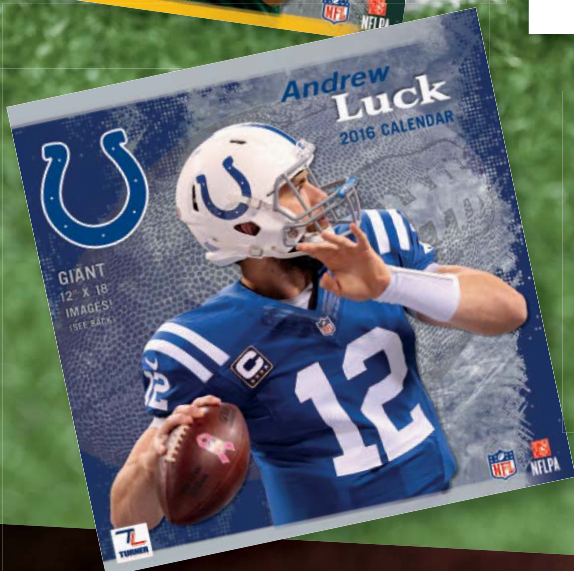




CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NFLPA
ON 60 MEMORABLE YEARS!



NFLPA

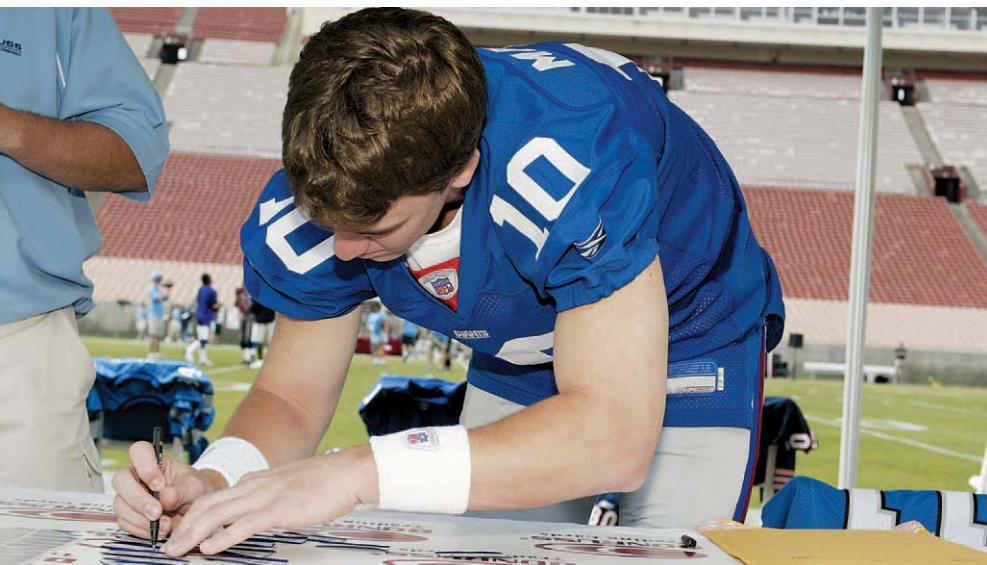


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actively researching the technology and its applications. “Customers will be able to print a Jonas Gray bobble head, for example, or action figure, and the little kid who is watching on Sunday, within a day or two, will be able to play with a figurine. We are looking at a world when technology will completely eliminate inventory risk. I believe that maximized fully and properly—and assuming the technology gets there maybe in few years—that it is something that could double our business.”

- **College connection**—The ability to maximize a player’s popularity tied back not only to the respective college or university that he played for, but also to the local high school and hometown where a strong fan base exists in addition to a current team affiliation. Nassar believes there is a huge opportunity that exists in this arena for various products and sponsorships—there are 300 markets with no NFL team, but that have strong interest in players tied to those markets.
- **Content and ACE Media**—The opportunity and focus is to spotlight the players in non-football related content year-round. “It’s not about developing a player’s network, but pursuing the untapped potential for content the other six days of the week,” says Nassar. “Whether it’s about recovery, health and safety, training in the off-season, doing an internship or going back to school. We think there are huge opportunities in being able to capture that content and to partner with outlets such as *Bleacher Report*, “120 Sports,” BET Networks and ABC in new ways to generate revenue versus spending money to get this done.” For example, NFL Players Inc. worked to bring 10 Pro-Bowl players together on the TV series “Family Feud” and “Take it to the House,” in which an NFL player goes looking for a

house in a new city. Last September, NFLPA announced the creation of Athlete Content & Entertainment (ACE Media), a new, original content business that will create sports-lifestyle content opportunities for its athletes. “Like all athletes, NFL players are an extraordinary group of people with an incredible range of talents, passions, perspectives and back stories. Many of those stories have flown under the public radar,” says Nassar, who is also a member of ACE Media’s board of directors. “ACE Media will aim to unlock those stories for diehard and casual fans alike and will reach new audiences as well by casting athletes in a light that allows their off-the-field attributes to amplify and complement their on-field accomplishments.”

- **Unique promotions**—As part of the launch for EA Sports’ “Madden 2015,” NFL Players Inc. coordinated a promotion with Uber and EA Sports in which players/brand ambassadors delivered the new video game to customers in Uber cars in the NFL’s 32 markets.
- **Education**—In December, the NFLPA launched a national educational program with EA Sports and Discovery Education called Madden NFL: Football by the Numbers, which was designed to engage students in grades 5 through 9 in science and math content through an interactive digital learning game. The program kicked-off with a community launch at the Franklin Middle School in Chantilly, Va., and was supported by players from the Washington Redskins including DeSean Jackson, Morgan Moses and Darrel Young, each of whom interacted with students during the two-hour event.
- **Trading cards**—Panini America, now the exclusive trading card licensee for the 2016 season, recently launched a college series based on players wearing their respective college jerseys.
- **Consumables**—Last month, the NFLPA announced the launch of Big Game Party in a Box, which features Bolthouse Farms products and Chef’d recipes alongside the Minnesota Vikings’ Kyle Rudolph and Chad Greenway. The meal kits include planning tips and fun recipes such as Rudolph’s bratwurst sandwiches and Greenway’s 4-hour pulled pork tacos.



CONGRATULATIONS
NFLPA ON
60 YEARS



Fanatics



NFLPA: FLASH HEADLINE



The NFLPA Player Group Licensing Program begins and the association hires an outside company as its exclusive licensing agency.

The NFLPA is certified as a union by the National Labor Relations Board.

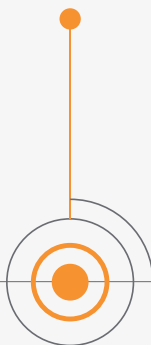
A new four-year CBA is signed that improves benefits and gives the NFLPA the right to player salary information and the ability to regulate agents.

1956



The NFLPA is formed as a professional association, as the players of the NFL sought improved working conditions.

1969



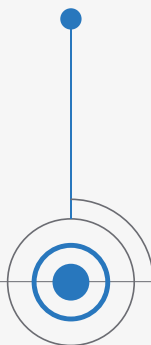
The NFLPA Player Group Licensing Program begins and the association hires an outside company as its exclusive licensing agency.

1970



The NFL and AFL merge, and so does the AFLPA with the NFLPA. The first players' strike results in a four-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

1971



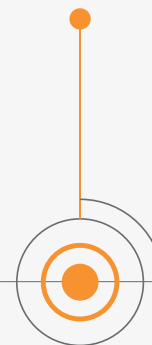
The NFLPA is certified as a union by the National Labor Relations Board.

1974



The players again go on strike, this time under the mantra "No Freedom, No Football." John Mackey v. NFL is filed, challenging the "Rozelle Rule," which unfairly restricted trade.

1982



A new four-year CBA is signed that improves benefits and gives the NFLPA the right to player salary information and the ability to regulate agents.

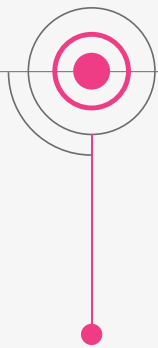
BACK OF NEWS



The NFLPA is decertified and files antitrust lawsuits against the NFL, again challenging free agency restrictions. During this time, licensing revenue from GLAs increases from \$2 million to \$11 million, allowing the NFLPA to stay afloat and finance the suits.

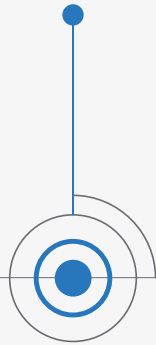
The NFLPA Board of Player Representatives vote to create NFL Players, Inc. as a licensing and marketing arm of the NFLPA to generate more revenue for players.

1986-1987

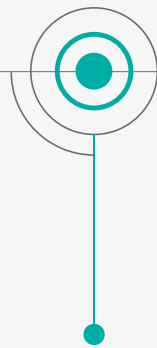


NFLPA reclaims group licensing rights. A majority of NFL players sign Group Licensing Assignments (GLAs), and the NFLPA signs licensing deals with several companies.

1989-1990

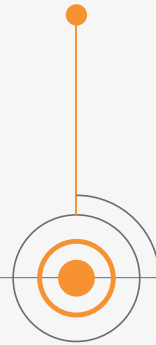


1992-1993

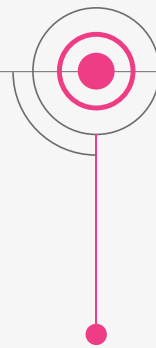


With a settlement in *White v. NFL*, the players win true free agency, a percentage of gross revenue and damages to players who were restricted between 1988 and 1992. The NFLPA is reconstituted as a union.

1994



2011



The players decertify the union and file an antitrust lawsuit. In response, the owners lock the players out for 130 days. Following the settlement of *Brady v. NFL*, a 10-year CBA is signed.



- **Mobile gaming opportunities**—NFL Players Inc. recently announced a deal with TinyCo, a mobile game developer and publisher, to launch a Road to the Big Game promotion that allows players of “Family Guy: The Quest for Stuff” to interact with NFL players such as Tom Brady, Richard Sherman and former player Brett Favre. The players also provide voice overs for the game, with other notable

players like Cam Newton appearing as characters.

- **New initiatives**—Among other new areas that are being developed for 2016 and beyond are data licensing and the ability to market player knowledge and assets, as well as international expansion.

Like one of its league’s best coaches who prepares relentlessly for the next match up, the NFLPA has maintained a very consistent game plan for its players over the past six decades and it has successfully expanded its business in ways its early members would not have dreamed possible.

“We are on the cutting edge, we are growing the business and are proud of what we have done, but we are not satisfied with it,” says Nassar.

“I believe that our union is headed for even better things in the future. We are proud of the things we have achieved, the gains we have attained, the investments we have made in the areas of medical research through the Harvard Players Health Study and in new business ventures like ACE Media,” says Smith. “The NFLPA will support the lives of its members in a meaningful and substantive way for decades to come.” ©

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PLAY IT AGAIN

The international toy fairs tease the new games and merchandise kids will be lining up to play with in 2016.

by AMANDA CIOLETTI

Christmas comes again! Toy Fair season is again upon us, and with it comes a glimpse into the business that will shape the play patterns of children through 2016 and '17.

The events kicked off Jan. 9 in Hong Kong, China, at the Hong Kong Toys & Games Fair. The U.K.'s annual event, The Toy Fair, hosted by the British Toy and Hobby Association, launched Jan. 24, followed immediately by Spielwarenmesse, Nuremberg, Germany's annual event, Jan. 27-Feb. 1. The shows culminate with the Toy Industry's Association's New York show, Toy Fair, which last year saw steady traffic fill its more than

422,000-square-feet of exhibit space.

So what can you expect to see in the toy space this year? A lot of new and classic properties, that is for sure.

Emphasis on Girls

2016 may be called "The Year of Girls" as many toy companies are revisiting the demographic and bolstering their portfolios with properties that favor females.

Last year, Cartoon Network re-launched its "girl power"-centric TV series "The Powerpuff Girls," and in 2016, a comprehensive licensing program will roll out, led by global master toy partner Spin Master.

Product will hit shelves this fall and include plush, figures, play sets, dolls, role play and more.

Other licensees are also



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on board to support characters Blossom, Bubbles and Buttercup such as A&A Global, Cardinal Industries, Disguise, Funko, Pressman Toy and Toy Factory. Cardinal is a new partner for the brand and will launch a full range of puzzles based on the all-new series this fall, while Disguise will offer role play items and dress-up apparel and accessories. Funko will bring the characters to its popular Pop! vinyl figure range, and Pressman is debuting games and puzzles in North America. Lastly, A&A will take ownership of “Powerpuff” representation in vending machines with an array of product, and Toy Factory will manufacture plush, pillows, rubber balls, novelty hats and more for amusement venues.

Following in the heritage brand category is Care Bears, which will build on its nearly 35-year history by debuting all-new product this year.

Just Play is inked as the brand’s master toy partner and will showcase brand-new merchandise in 2016 including the Glow-a-Lot Care Bears plush.

Also tapped for the brand are Wonder Forge for games, Cra-Z-Art for arts and crafts

and Montco Crafts for coloring kits and grab bags.

Warner Bros. Consumer Products, in partnership with Mattel, is bringing the super hero genre to girls in a big way in 2016 with the launch of its toy assortment.



The new range of 12-inch action dolls and accessories supports the new, multi-platform property “DC Super Hero Girls,” which launched entertainment via its dedicated website (DCSuperHeroGirls.com) last fall. (For more about this new property, see the feature on page 68.)

MGA Entertainment is taking the girls’ sector by storm with two brands—the all-new Project Mc2 and the re-imagined Bratz.

Project Mc2 empowers young girls to foster interests in science, technology, engineering, arts and math through innovative merchandise such as experiment kits that allow children to create usable items like perfume or invisible ink pens. Of course, the property is also backed by fashion-forward dolls, serving to offer every girl an avenue to play.

Other items in the range include Camryn’s Wind-Up



Pet Robot doll plus experiment pack that lets girls create their own robot using common household ingredients, or the Circuit Beats set, which teaches kids to complete an electrical circuit and make music out of almost any object.

MGA is also bringing its Bratz doll range back from hiatus. The new line of fashion dolls has an all-new look and message that says “It’s good to be yourself; it’s good to be a Bratz!”

The dolls’ spring collection is taking on music festivals and offers the range of characters and accessories in fun new prints and assortments, including a Bratz Music Festival tent. There’s also a sweets-inspired range on offer from MGA, which takes the dolls into themed fashion outfits and accessories that include items such as candy barrettes, earrings and bags and even a sweets-themed pet.

Bandai America is bringing a new, inspirational character to girls’ world with the launch of the range of super hero figures in support of Zag Heroez’ new CGI-animated TV series “Miraculous.”

Bandai is the brand’s master toy partner and is introducing a robust assortment of toys centered on aspirational play, transformation and friendship—all hallmarks of the new series. The complete line of toys will include action and fashion dolls, role play and plush.

The series premiered last fall on Nickelodeon in the U.S. and is rolling out globally this winter and spring in partnership with broadcasters such as Disney EMEA, TF1 France, ABC Australia and EBS Korea.

Also from Nickelodeon is a new range of girls’ toys inspired by the preschool series “Shimmer & Shine.”

Fisher-Price will debut several new items this fall including a “Shimmer & Shine” Magic Flying Carpet, Wish & Spin assortment and more.



And you can certainly expect all eyes to be toward Disney and Hasbro, as the two’s new Princess doll partnership begins to play out in a real way this year.

Evergreens Still Going Strong

Hasbro’s Play-Doh brand has been around since 1956, and the crafting IP shows no sign of fatigue in children’s playrooms or on retailer’s shelves.

In 2016, Hasbro will launch a new world of play with its Play-Doh Town range. The new collection includes the toy company’s proprietary moldable mixture, but also integrates customizable figures and play sets that allow kids to build their own world and includes a firehouse, police officer, pet store and even an ice cream truck.

Entertainment One is continuing to build on the popularity of its evergreen “Peppa Pig” property, which in 2016 is hitting market with a new range of merchandise.

Master toy licensee Jazwares will debut a new collection of products including figures, plush, play sets and construction sets based on the “Peppa” brand. Stand outs from the range include the Muddy Puddles family pack of plush that snorts, a “Peppa Pig” treehouse and house construction set and collectible blind bag figures.

Other licensees for the brand include Parragon for publishing, Montco for arts and crafts and Kurt Adler for holiday ornaments and décor.



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Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy dolls are returning to shelves, but this time with sound, thanks to licensee Aurora World. For the first time ever, the classic dolls will now be able to say phrases such as “I love you,” all while dressed in their recognizable blue gingham and denim outfits.

Aurora will also bring a brand-new line of plush based on Hasbro’s “My Little Pony Friendship is Magic” series, as well as launching a brand-new Hush Puppy line available in three different sizes.

Meanwhile, “Thomas & Friends” remains as strong as ever, and Ravensburger will bolster the ever-growing range of consumer products for the brand with a new Thomas the Tank Engine Counting Train 21-piece puzzle.

New Movies, New Merchandise

This summer, Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment will premiere the new animated feature *The Secret Life of Pets*, and in the run-up, the companies will unveil a first look at master toy partner Spin Master’s line of products, which includes everything from traditional plush and figures to interactive and motorized toys. Universal Brand Development will also offer a sneak peek at New York Toy Fair at the full range of consumer products tied to the film across categories such as apparel, accessories, back-to-school, home, stationery and more.

Also hitting theaters this spring is Warner Bros.’ *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, and, to support the film, Warner Bros. Consumer Products has teamed with global licensees for a broad, multi-category merchandise program.

Mattel has been tapped as global master toy licensee and will helm the program



with a far-reaching toy range that includes action figures, vehicles, play sets and collectible figures that is anchored by the new Multiverse line.

Other licensees on board to support the film include The LEGO Group for construction sets, Rubie’s Costume Co. for costumes and accessories for kids and adults, Funko for collectible figures, Thinkway Toys for role play, Jakks Pacific for collectible figures in two sizes, Tonner Dolls for fashion dolls, Bandai America for poseable figure model kits, Spin Master for remote control vehicles, Buffalo Games for puzzles and more.

The comprehensive licensing program will also include other categories such as apparel, accessories, stationery and publishing from best-in-class licensees.

And while not a new film from Warner Bros., the *Harry Potter* franchise continues to remain as relevant as ever thanks to new experiences such as Universal Studios Hollywood’s soon-to-be revealed *The Wizarding World of Harry Potter*, as well as a forthcoming new film that builds on the universe, *Magical Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

For the now classic *Harry Potter* franchise, Funko has a new series of Pop! vinyl figures inspired by the property’s characters including Harry Potter in his Triwizard uniform, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger in Yule Ball apparel, Dobby the house elf, Sirius Black, Luna Lovegood, Draco Malfoy, a Dementor and more. The new line will be available in March, along with a collection of Funko x *Harry Potter* Pop! pens.





For the Boys

The new series “Yo-Kai Watch” hit TV screens last year, and Hasbro is continuing to build on the property’s momentum with new products.

At the center of its consumer product program is the actual Yo-Kai watch, which holds the brand’s collectible medals, replicating the central character’s watch for real, live boys. The watch comes standard with two, exclusive Yo-Kai medals.

And what is a collectible product program without the collectibles themselves? Hasbro will also debut this spring a “Yo-Kai Watch” medal mystery bag assortment, as well as a medallion collection book.

For young boys (or just the general sport enthusiast), Playmobil is continuing its foray into licensed ranges, building on its already released NHL line and adding a new Porsche collection in the U.S., of which details have yet to be released.

The Playmobil NHL line will add to the “Original 6” assortment that debuted in 2015 and include new team goalies and players that can be matched with its existing NHL Hockey Arena play set. Additional play sets and accessories will hit market later this year and include figures inspired by teams such as the Ottawa Senators, Winnipeg Jets, Edmonton Oilers, Calgary Flames, Vancouver Canucks, Pittsburgh Penguins, Los Angeles Kings and more.

Nickelodeon is building its toy program for its hit series “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” with a new collection of construction sets in partnership with Mega Bloks. The range, for children 5-years-old and up, will include sets such as the TMNT Party Wagon, Pizzeria Showdown and the Turtle Sewer Lair.

In the boys’ preschool demographic, DreamWorks’ is expanding its newest property “Dinotrux” globally thanks to a new broadcast agreement with streaming



network Netflix. The property will now extend its range of toys from Mattel around the world with new SKUs sold at additional retailers. (Last year, “Dinotrux” was exclusive to Toys ‘R’ Us in the U.S.)

Discovery Consumer Products is growing its Animal Planet toy line with expansions within its ocean, land and dinosaur themes.

Licensee Smart Play is building on its 2015 product launch by adding new electronic toys and puzzles, while MasterPieces is adding new images to its Animal Planet wildlife fine art puzzle range. Also for Animal Planet is a new collection of Hatch ‘Em Eggs from SCS Direct, which will now feature dinosaurs, safari, rainforest and sea creatures. Discovery is also continuing to develop its relationship with Wild Republic for plush, debuting new designs in 2016. Wild Republic also provides Discovery’s “Shark Week” range of plush based on the annual summer TV event.

Under the Discovery Kids banner are products from licensees DGL, NKOK, Journey North/Explore Scientific USA, Horizon Group and Merchsource. The new items will span multiple SKUs and include science kits, puzzles, multi-function solar kids, tech and interactive gadgets, optic products, toys and games. ©



GET YOUR CAPE ON!



Warner Bros. Consumer Products and DC Entertainment, in partnership with master toy partner Mattel, have teamed up to launch a comprehensive range of toys, products and animated content as part of the all-new, 'DC Super Hero Girls' franchise. **by AMANDA CIOLETTI**

In fall 2015, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, DC Entertainment and global toy partner Mattel, in collaboration with Warner Bros. Animation, introduced "DC Super Hero Girls," the new multi-platform entertainment property geared toward girls, ages 6- to 12-years-old, that centers on the iconic female super heroes and super villains of the DC Comics universe during their formative years—prior to discovering their full super power potential.

The franchise launched with a robust website (DCSuperHeroGirls.com) in October that features a series of animated shorts and activities, videos, character photos and more, and is further bolstered by TV specials and made-for-videos that will roll out over the course of the year.

"DC Super Hero Girls" brings together DC Comics' female super heroes for the very first time with new art, style and aesthetics that feature alongside the characters' very own unique storylines

that reinforce confidence building and the realizing of one's full potential.

Principal to the cast of "DC Super Hero Girls" characters are Supergirl, whose heat vision can melt steel or vaporize an iceberg; Batgirl, a tech-wizard who has an exceptional IQ; and Wonder Woman, a natural born leader whose mission is to make the world a better and safer place.

"DC Super Hero Girls' represents the embodiment of our long-term strategy to harness the power of our diverse female characters. I am so pleased that we are able to offer relatable and strong role models in a unique way," says Diane Nelson, president, DC



Entertainment; president, Warner Bros. Consumer Products; and president and chief content officer, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment.

Other characters include Bumblebee, Katana, Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy, creating a well-rounded line-up that gives every girl an opportunity to find a relatable personality. Now, in 2016, “DC Super Hero Girls” will debut its global consumer products program.

Anchoring the play range is master toy licensee Mattel, featuring an industry first with its 12-inch collection of action dolls and its first-ever 6-inch action figures made with girls in mind.

“Partnering with the best and being the best partner is a Mattel priority,” says Lisa McKnight, senior vice president and general manager, girls’ brands, Mattel. “Together with Warner Bros. and DC Entertainment, the ‘DC Super Hero Girls’ franchise will further expand our already powerful girls’ portfolio. We know super heroes are a culturally relevant theme, and the ‘DC Super Hero Girls’ franchise will engage and inspire girls to unlock the super hero inside of them.”

Warner Bros. Consumer Products is additionally supporting the launch of the property across key

merchandise categories including toys, apparel and accessories, hard lines and soft lines. Additional licensees include The LEGO Group as exclusive construction partner; Rubie’s Costumes with a collection of costumes and dress-up accessories; and many more with products to come.

Random House is also on board as master publishing partner for a range of middle-grade novels authored by award-winning writer Lisa Yee. The books will hit shelves this spring under the Random House for Young Readers imprint, and bring to life the new world of female super heroes in all-new, universe-expanding stories and adventures.

“We are thrilled to be working with long-time partner Random House on a book series that will dive further into the stories of this exciting new franchise,” says Karen McTier, executive vice president, Warner Bros. Consumer Products. “Lisa Yee is a gifted storyteller who will take the relatable world of ‘DC Super Hero Girls’ from the pages and into the imaginations of young fans and readers everywhere.”

A series of original graphic novels from DC Entertainment, written by Shea Fontana with art by Yancy Labat, complements Random House’s publishing program. The first graphic novel, *DC Super Hero Girls: Finals Crisis*, will hit shelves in July.

Social media and digital activations will also play a significant role in creating awareness for the property via platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and a dedicated YouTube channel. More platforms will be launched this year including an app, which will hit mobile devices this spring.

As the program grows globally—more than 25 additional markets will launch beginning this July including Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico and the U.K.—so will the entertainment opportunities and product categories. Warner Bros. Consumer Products and DC Entertainment will continue to develop the franchise and add new characters, both female and male, from the DC Comics cannon, with bi-weekly webisodes rolled out on the website and its YouTube channel.

“DC Super Hero Girls’ offers girls their very own super hero world that is unique, immersive and fun, where they can play, watch, read and be inspired to discover their own true potential alongside legendary DC Comics female super heroes,” says Nelson. ©





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global head of franchise, DreamWorks Animation



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global head of licensing, DreamWorks Animation

DREAMWORKS' NEW HAIR-IT

DreamWorks Animation is raising the bar on franchise opportunity with its latest feature film *Trolls*. by AMANDA CIOLETTI

The New Year is shaping up well for DreamWorks Animation as it debuts its newest and most hair-raising franchise yet—*Trolls*. Based on the collectible, multi-hued mini dolls that have been in-market since the mid-20th century, *Trolls* is likely to become a rock-solid franchise that will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with DWA's other evergreens such as *Shrek*, *Kung Fu Panda*, the *Madagascar* franchise and *How to Train Your Dragon*.

And, on the heels of DWA's announcement that it will expand its multi-year contract with streaming network Netflix around the world, the film and its ancillary entertainment will be the next major tentpole to add new dimension to the studio's girls' offerings. It also presents a unique opportunity for DWA to showcase its multi-channel ability to present a total entertainment package for the whole family, not just led by film, but one that includes digital short-form content, interactive gaming, publishing, consumer products and more.

Trolls, directed by Mike Mitchell (*Shrek Forever After*), will premiere first in Europe on Oct. 13, followed by the U.S. debut Nov. 4, and includes an epic voice cast led by musician and actor Justin Timberlake, who has also been tapped to write and perform original music for the film. He'll star alongside Academy- and Tony Award-nominated actress Anna Kendrick, who stars as Poppy, as well as Gwen Stefani, James Corden, Russell

Brand, Ron Funches and Kunal Nayyar. The film's cast also weaves in two new media stars—Meg DeAngelis (known as beauty and fashion vlogger MayBaby on YouTube and DWA's AwesomenessTV) and comedian and self-dubbed “Queen of YouTube” GloZell Green.

“The movie is an incredible property, and for consumer products, it is the largest merchandising program we have ever done to support a film,” says Jim Fielding, global head of consumer products and retail, DreamWorks Animation and AwesomenessTV. “The film is so wonderful with its rich characters and wide cast of personalities, as well as the comedy and the storytelling. Then, with the music layered on top of it, the property is very consumer-friendly around the world.”

The *Trolls* brand has a long and storied history in the global marketplace, first emerging in 1959 in Denmark when fisherman

and skilled woodcutter Thomas Dam carved a doll for his daughter based on Scandinavian lore. The doll went on to become an international phenomenon that was revived in the '90s and again in 2003, when the Toy Industry of America inducted *Trolls* into its list of the Top 100 Most Treasured Toys of the Century.

In 2010, DWA inked the film concept onto its production slate, and in 2013, it acquired the full rights to the IP from the Dam Family and Dam Things of Denmark, effectively controlling all rights to the



AGE



property from the top, down, enabling the company to build an all-encompassing strategy that leverages the studio's multi-channel strengths. As of press time, the film is the only piece of content that has been formally announced, however additional supporting entertainment is in the pipeline, drawing out the franchise for several years at least.

The move speaks to an internal DWA shift that is just becoming visible to the consumer as the studio transitions away from a film-centric strategy and one that better incorporates all aspects of its business—from publishing and consumer products to multi-channel entertainment and TV series. It's a new 365-day engagement approach that is beginning to pay off huge at retail.

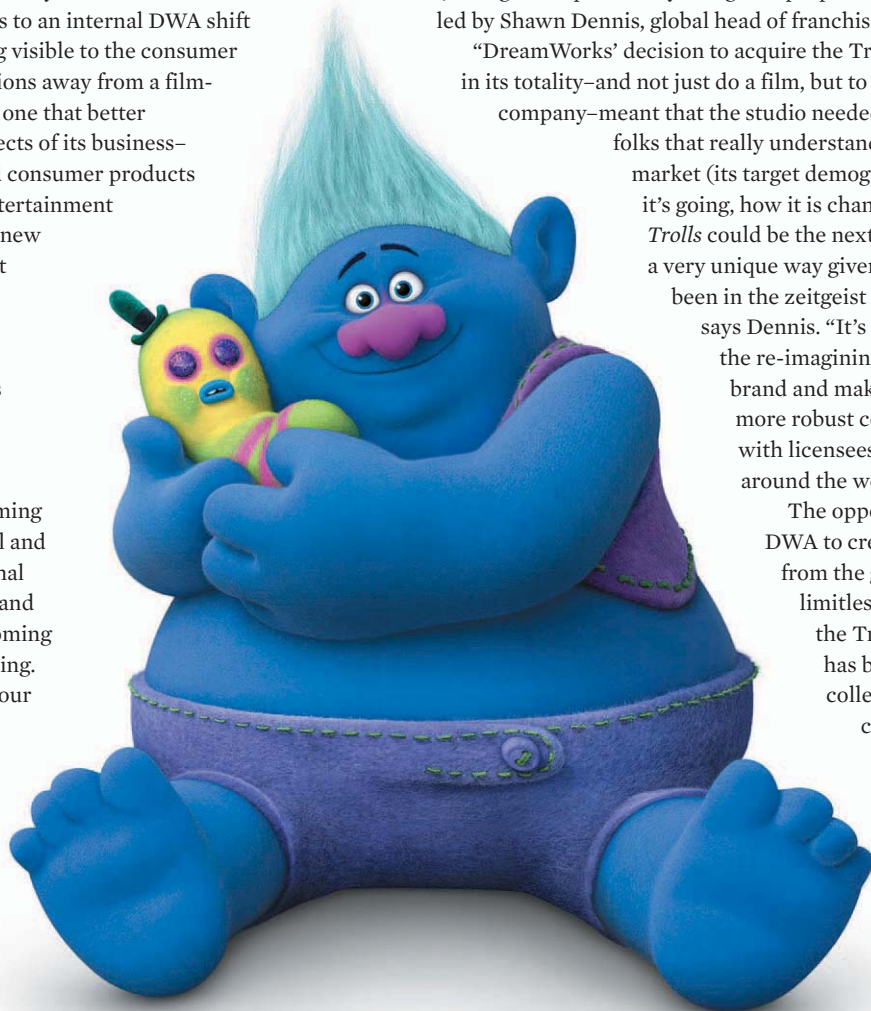
"DreamWorks is getting increasingly strong at leveraging every part of its ecosystem—from gaming to publishing, digital and short-form, traditional consumer products and marketing. It's all coming together," says Fielding. "It was visionary of our leadership team to find a property that can be leveraged through multiple touch

points throughout the company, but the important thing to remember is that the film is getting made because it's an incredible story."

With an eye to strategy and building a completely packaged brand franchise, DWA brought on board new executive talent to helm franchise development (among other potentially evergreen properties), led by Shawn Dennis, global head of franchise.

"DreamWorks' decision to acquire the Trolls property in its totality—and not just do a film, but to buy the entire company—meant that the studio needed to bring in folks that really understand the girls' market (its target demographic), where it's going, how it is changing and why. *Trolls* could be the next big thing in a very unique way given that it has been in the zeitgeist for 58 years," says Dennis. "It's really about the re-imagining of this great brand and making it a much more robust conversation with licensees and retailers around the world."

The opportunity for DWA to create a franchise from the ground up is limitless—although the Trolls concept has been in the collective global consciousness for nearly 60 years, there has never been



MORE IN STORE FROM DREAMWORKS' SLATE

Trolls is not the only property new to the DreamWorks pipeline for 2016, and thanks to a renewed partnership that makes streaming network Netflix the global home of additional original DWA series, the content slate is increasing.

"Dinotrux" launched on Netflix last year, and in 2016, the series will be re-upped with new episodes to debut in March. The series was supported at retail in 2015 by soft lines at Gymboree and hard lines at Toys 'R' Us, and in 2016, new categories will be added at even more retailers around the globe.

Another major and continued effort for DWA is the *Dragons* franchise, led first by the films and further expanded by an animated series.



How to Train Your Dragon 3 is not due in theaters until 2018, but the TV series remains a flagship for DWA on Netflix. Spin Master has long supported the franchise as master toy partner.

2016 will also see the re-imagining of the classic property "Voltron" for new audiences; while DWA will additionally re-launch the classic Noddy property.

"Noddy, Toyland Detective" debuts this spring in France, and is being positioned as a preschool property, with Spin Master leading the toy program. Products will hit shelves this fall.

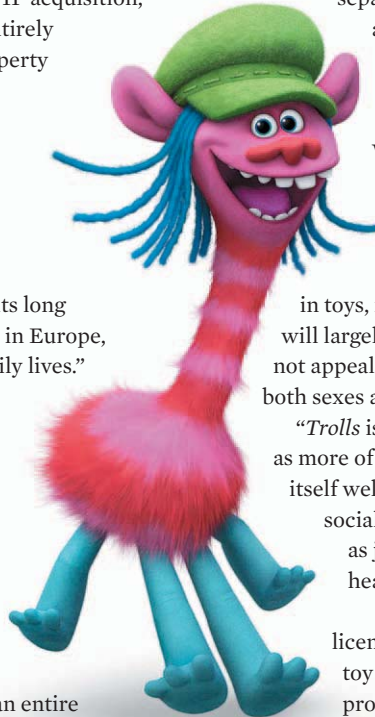
More is certainly in the pipeline as the expanded DWA/Netflix agreement promises new original series in development based on recent, upcoming and classic IP.

any formal content around it. With the IP acquisition, DWA now has the ability to build an entirely original world around the heritage property and lend it a new and refreshed voice.

"We're absolutely treating *Trolls* as a brand-new IP, but the value of it and its foundation as a Top 100 toy doesn't hurt," says Dennis. "It is all-new because the story is all-new, but from a brand awareness point-of-view, it has got great recognition because of its long heritage, especially internationally and in Europe, where it is very much a part of their daily lives."

And for DWA, the *Trolls* property ticked off multiple boxes paramount when building a sustaining franchise: proven appeal and desirability, a steadfast play pattern, merchandising opportunity and the ability to maintain continued content.

"One of the very smart things that DreamWorks did was to unbox the DNA of the brand's heritage, meaning that while building an entire universe of characters, magical locations and worlds, they looked at the core of this brand and



separated that into two key pieces—its meaning and its context," says Dennis. "Before we wrote word one of what the story would be, we had to understand what the meaning of the brand is and what is cool about it. What's connective is that *Trolls* already stands for feelings like happiness and positivity, and what's cool about *Trolls* is that it has this crazy hair in bright colors."

Trolls, although it has its roots in toys, is positioned as a lifestyle brand that will largely speak to girls, but more likely than not appeal to multiple demographics across both sexes and spanning all age ranges.

"*Trolls* is giving us the unique opportunity to launch as more of a lifestyle brand franchise that extends itself well organically to everything from soft lines to social expressions—it's certainly not pigeonholed as just a toy brand," says Tim Erickson, global head of licensing, DreamWorks Animation.

The film has locked in its product program licensees, with Hasbro leading the charge as master toy partner. (Hasbro has been inked on for the program for some time now, signing on in summer 2013.) The long-term partnership is particularly important for both companies, and the pairing is

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viewed as an ongoing, multi-year franchise for both.

“We are looking to build out *Trolls* and continue it for several years,” says Erickson. “We have a tremendous amount of content that we are working on to support the *Trolls* franchise—there is no expiration date for this brand.”

The core merchandise range will still include the collectible doll, but there is a robust collection of items that will easily fold into the range alongside them.

Other licensees include Random House as the core publishing partner in the U.S., General Mills (food), Kraft Macaroni & Cheese and Jell-O (food), Goody (health and beauty accessories), Franco (bedding and bath), Freeze (t-shirts), Hallmark (stationery and self expressions) and Crayola (arts and crafts). Additional apparel is also in the works.

“From a franchise perspective, No. 1 is to understand who this film is for, and that is multiple targets—this film has to deliver entertainment value to a four-quadrant audience,” says Dennis. “But the franchise—the group of people that will live into the *Trolls* experience and find it useful in their lives—is for girls. That means that some key elements that are resonating with girls today need to be a key part of the franchise’s meaning... things like embracing imperfection, music, humor, creating.”

Product will trickle into market beginning in August, but the bulk of phase one merchandise will roll out closer to the film’s fall premiere. 2016 will set the stage for consumer products, but it is 2017 that will truly see the property realized on shelf.

“The key for us has been to ask ourselves what categories we should really focus on around the launch of the franchise, and how do we have natural extensions grow from that? 2016 will be an amazing year for *Trolls* from a consumer product perspective, but 2017 and 2018 will see the brand and its extensions grow,” says Erickson. “As we build out the *Trolls* ecosystem, we’ll certainly be leveraging all of the other key touch points of the property with the consumer. 2017 is all about extending from the film, naturally.”

The film’s international appeal is also sure to be central to its success at the box office and on shelf, as well as to establish *Trolls* as a multi-year franchise, much like films such as *Kung Fu Panda* have held key roles in DWA’s global bottom line.

“DreamWorks’ properties have always played really well

internationally,” says Fielding. “We’ve always acted and thought globally, and we have always tried to create content that resonates around the world with our fans. *Trolls* is another of those to add to the portfolio. We’re very happy that we have these characters and stories, particularly for consumer products—that is a huge advantage.”

The film opens internationally ahead of the U.S. premiere, and it’s a move that will be equally supported by global marketing campaigns and activations, beginning this summer.

“I love that we are opening in Europe,” says Dennis. “It’s something we’ve never done, but we’re doing it now in a bow to the heritage of the property. While we have created this new universe and new story, there is an existence on this planet that is long, and we want to pay tribute to the founding nation and the continued recognition of the brand. *Trolls* are a continued mythology in Europe today, and it makes all the sense in the world to give a nod to that.”

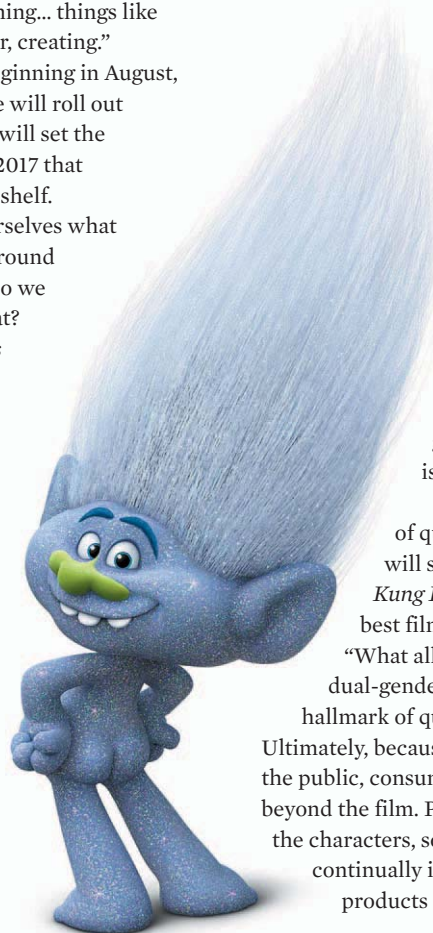
The marketing campaign kicked off last month via social media, with the film’s stars each tweeting pictures with their characters. Marketing will steadily continue

throughout the spring, with summer seeing ramped up activations and activity that is tailored regionally.

“Our main goal is to make sure the consumer is immersed in the *Trolls* franchise, and there is no better way than first through the film,” says Erickson. “It’s our first focus, and we will be leveraging our partners to reinforce that messaging from now through the film’s launch. Consumer product marketing will begin heavily in October.”

In the end, the franchise is only as good as the film, which Fielding promises is among the studio’s best to-date.

“*Trolls* is joining an incredible legacy of quality and innovative storytelling, and it will sit right there with *Shrek*, *Madagascar*, *Kung Fu Panda* and *Dragons* as some of the best filmmaking we’ve ever done,” says Fielding. “What all of our films have in common is a broad, dual-gender, multi-generational appeal with its hallmark of quality storytelling, humor and heart. Ultimately, because these films resonate so well with the public, consumers then want to extend the dream beyond the film. People fall in love with the movie and the characters, so the natural next step is to want to continually immerse in the story through consumer products and consumer experiences.” ©





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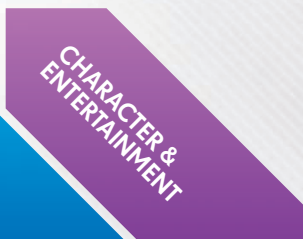
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L I C E N S E D T O WEAR

Licensed fashion is exploding, from entertainment property collaborations with well-known designers and high-end retailers to brands entering new categories to even more celebrity ranges.
by **BARBARA SAX**

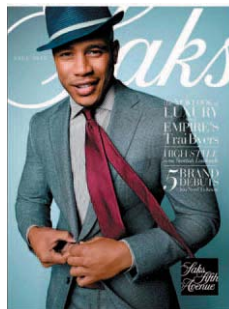
Licensed fashion permeates all aspects of the apparel business and cuts across all demographics, ages and regions. A visible representation of this is probably most apparent at MAGIC—a collection of 11 events that comprise the world’s largest fashion marketplace, bringing together the latest in apparel, footwear, accessories and manufacturing for men, women, junior’s and children. The event takes place Feb. 16-18 in Las Vegas, Nev.

Fox Builds ‘Empire’ Appeal

The hit show “Empire” has become a fashion powerhouse, and Twentieth Century Fox Consumer Products will certainly be building the brand at MAGIC this year across a number of platforms.

“The influence ‘Empire’ has had on so many

aspects of popular culture proves that it has the ingredients to become a standalone fashion brand,” said Jeffrey Godsick, president, Twentieth Century Fox Consumer Products, earlier this year.



To underscore that statement, the series’ second season premiere last fall was celebrated with an exclusive partnership with high-end fashion retailer Saks Fifth Avenue for a multi-platform, in-store and online collection featuring product from luxury fashion brands such as Alexis Bittar (fine jewelry), Cushnie et Ochs (women’s ready-to-wear), Jimmy Choo (men’s and women’s footwear) and MCM (handbags and accessories).

Items from each designer were curated to create an “Empire” collection at select Saks Fifth Avenue stores and online at Saks.com, with “Empire”-curated windows that were featured at the retailer’s New York City and Beverly Hills, Calif., flagships. Furthering

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the retailer's support for the property and accompanying fashion line, "Empire" actor Trai Byers was featured on the cover of Saks Fifth Avenue's fall magazine.

In November, Twentieth Century Fox Television teamed up with fashion label Hood By Air for a new line based on the series. Designer Shawn Oliver's HBA x Empire collection featured a wide range of products including sweatshirts, dresses, shorts and tops.

Also for the series, Twentieth Century Fox Consumer Products recently announced a new collaboration with e-commerce company Delivery Agent to launch a new online store that features "Empire"-inspired products. The e-shop, EmpireFoxShop.com, offers a full range of fashion and accessories that targets all ages and demographics. The line includes jersey dresses, varsity jackets and vests.

Star Wars Fever

The December 2015 release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* from Disney/Lucasfilm has given a jumpstart to the *Star Wars* mega-brand, and manufacturers and retailers are supporting the franchise's return to the big screen with a wide range of apparel ranges and collaborations.

Fast fashion retailer Forever 21 debuted a limited edition apparel line inspired by the classic *Star Wars* films. The collection, which launched in stores and online in December, just ahead of the film's Dec. 18 U.S. premiere, boasts 30 SKUs including sweatpants, bodysuits, dresses, t-shirts and more.

Junior's retailer Hot Topic also bet heavily on the franchise with an all-new *Star Wars* fashion collection from fangirl fashion company Her Universe. The collection includes dresses, sweaters, jackets and fashion tops and is available now exclusively at select Hot Topic stores and online at HotTopic.com. Hot Topic supported the collection with a program by Her Universe founder and "Star Wars Rebels" voice actress Ashley Eckstein, asking fans to share their unique *Star Wars* story on social media using the hashtag #MyStarWarsStory.

The franchise also went formal with a boys' collection of neckwear from men's accessories company CuffLinks. Partnering with Lucasfilm, CuffLinks created

a collection that features characters from the franchise such as Darth Vader, Storm Troopers and Yoda. Product, targeted to boys ages 3 to 12, is now available at Nordstrom, better specialty stores and on CuffLinks.com.

Cherokee Takes on New Retailers

Cherokee Global Brands has been signing agreements with new retail partners and will likely expand its reach at the MAGIC event.

One such agreement is the company's recent pairing with Walmart Canada to launch a broad assortment of branded gear for young men and boys into the country under its Tony Hawk range. The new line covers apparel, accessories and footwear for boys and will launch in time for back-to-school.

The company also entered into a new license agreement with Saborn Licensing Company for its Cherokee brand to bring a wide assortment of men's, women's and children's clothing and accessories to department stores, specialty stores and hypermarkets in countries throughout Western and Central Europe including Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and select Scandinavian countries. Product is expected to launch this fall.

Last spring, Cherokee sealed a pair of licensing agreements with Sears Canada for its Liz Lange Maternity and Sportswear and Cherokee brands. Under the Liz Lange deal, Sears Canada will sell the "maternity chic" collection of affordable maternity pieces such as jeans, t-shirts, dresses and swimsuits in Sears Canada stores and online at Sears.ca. The new line will be available this spring. The Canadian collection will come in an expanded size range that covers "pregnancy and beyond," according to the company. Cherokee and Sears Canada also struck a new multi-year agreement for Cherokee brand men's, women's and children's clothing, as well as footwear and accessories.

Plus-Size Market Expands

The fashion industry is paying more attention to the plus-size market, and new launches and licensing agreements will give retailers an opportunity to increase their visibility with this customer segment.

Plus-size fashion brand Torrid recently collaborated with actress Rebel Wilson for an exclusive holiday capsule collection, Rebel for Torrid. The limited edition line launched in November



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2015 in Torrid stores across the U.S. and its website and featured 25 pieces including tops, bottoms, jackets, dresses and accessories. A spring 2016 collection is in the works.

Actress Melissa McCarthy also launched a new plus-size collection in collaboration with denim brand Seven7. McCarthy's line hit stores in September and is now available at retailer Lane Bryant,

on the Home Shopping Network and at Macy's. The line includes dresses, tailored separates and denim.

Target rolled out its Ava & Viv plus-size line as well, which features styling and input from fashion bloggers Gabi Gregg, Chastity Garner-Valentine and Nicolette Mason. The inaugural collection launched in Q1 2015 with a 90-piece collection in sizes up to 26 and 4X.

And finally, more recently, Touch by Alyssa Milano, a sports-licensed apparel brand for women, announced that it will debut a plus-size line this fall.

The MAGIC show should be the source of plenty of action in this segment of the market.

Footwear News

Camuto Group will kick off some new partnerships for the spring season with a host of licensed deals including a partnership with talk show host and TV personality Ellen DeGeneres' for her new lifestyle collection, ED. ED footwear is a mix of casual and athletic styles made of leather, suede, natural linen, canvas and denim in neutrals, whites and shades of blue with pops of red. The line will be available at better department stores and specialty boutiques.

Camuto Group will also debut a footwear line with premium British fashion house AllSaints, with the first collection arriving in AllSaints stores worldwide this spring.

In other footwear news, LJP International recently signed a licensing deal to produce and distribute boys' shoes under the Ben Sherman label. Styles will include sneakers, oxfords, boots, chukkas and moccasins that incorporate the styling and details of Ben Sherman's British roots.

LJP International has also signed with brand management company Bluestar Alliance to become the footwear licensee for the Limited Too brand. (The tween retail brand was purchased by Bluestar Alliance in July 2015 following the retailer's closure of its brick-and-mortar locations in 2008.) LJP will develop an expansive girls' collection for launch at retail this fall.

Beachwear and Beyond

Island lifestyle and leisure brand Tommy Bahama recently signed a licensing agreement with NOXS to design and produce men's and women's outerwear.

The collection of high performance outerwear is set for a fall launch and will incorporate a mixture of technical fabrics, waxed textures, pigment dyes and intricate detailing. Silhouettes will include parkas, puffers, trench coats, wool car coats and pea coats. The collection will be sold in North America at better department stores and at select independent retailers.

The brand also has a new collection with the Amerex Group for a swimwear range timed to resort 2016. The new Tommy Bahama children's collection will include prints and pattern mixing derived from the spirit of Tommy Bahama, such as vintage tropical motifs and botanicals to geometrics and whimsical pineapple prints. The new collection will be available for girls in infant and toddler through youth sizes and for boys.

Intimate apparel company Felina has partnered with Dreamwave, a division of The Bentex Group, to manufacture swimwear for three bands under its banner—Felina, its classic line; Jezebel, its trendy line; and Paramour, its contemporary, plus-size line. Felina owner Robert Zarabi called Dreamwave "the perfect partner" for the deal.

"They understand our customer and the retail environment and are able to produce quality merchandise at competitive price points," he says.

The deal was brokered by The Brand Liaison, the exclusive licensing agency for Felina brands. The Brand Liaison, on behalf of Felina, is currently seeking other licensing deals in categories such as hosiery, socks, slippers, activewear, fragrance and personal care.

Evergreen Franchises are Going Strong

Once brands reach evergreen status, manufacturers and retailers can typically be assured they will have a hit with licensed merchandise.

The BBC's sci-fi franchise "Doctor Who" has become one of those long-term performers.

"Doctor Who" has become one of the most sought-after merchandising brands in the U.S., and the show continues to draw big ratings on BBC America," says Carla Peyton, senior vice president, licensing, BBC Worldwide North America.

New opportunities for the evergreen brand will be available at MAGIC.

Also for the series, Hot Topic has recently unveiled a new, limited edition fashion collection. The nine-piece collection is now available exclusively at select Hot Topic stores and via its website and features dresses, knits and outerwear inspired by popular characters and iconic items from the world of "Doctor Who." Each piece features distinctive details such as Sonic Screwdriver and TARDIS prints, embroidered gears, pinstripes and bow ties. In addition to the fashion collection, Hot Topic will offer a wide range of "Doctor

THE BUSINESS OF MAGIC

More than 60,000 fashion industry insiders will meet for three days in Las Vegas, Nev., at the MAGIC global fashion market, Feb. 16-18. Attendees from men's and women's fashion, children's apparel and accessories, footwear and sourcing from more than 210 countries will be at the comprehensive marketplace making key decisions about what consumers will be wearing for the next several seasons.

This year, the show will include five merchandised destinations including the best in denim, tailored menswear, women's high-end collections, junior's fashion and branded and licensed apparel, ranging from premium to accessible price points.

WWDMAGIC, a collaboration with *Women's Wear Daily*, brings together the latest in women's, junior's and children's apparel and accessories, activewear and swim. The fashion collections are covered in six aligned destinations across a broad range of categories, from premium

denim to popularly priced fashion.

The show will also present a curated offering of intimate apparel and swimwear brands in its Lingerie and Swim by CURVENV@MAGIC platform, allowing curated brands and retailers to benefit from the crossover of intimate apparel and ready-to-wear offerings.

Playground, the only trade show in Las Vegas dedicated exclusively to the better contemporary children's market, offers buyers and manufacturers a fresh, forward-thinking perspective by placing focus on on-target trends that mirror the adult market in taste and style.

Footwear is a big part of the show as well, and two platforms have the industry covered. FN PLATFORM is the global showcase for branded footwear showcasing more than 1,600 men's, women's, junior's and children's footwear brands from upwards of 20 countries. From luxury to lifestyle, six merchandised lifestyle environments offer buyers a convenient and

efficient way to shop the most comprehensive selection of international footwear.

The trade event's WSA@MAGIC component focuses on retail's hottest market category: fast fashion footwear. With a global base of product and buyers from more than 100 countries, WSA@MAGIC boasts on-trend, affordably priced footwear for women, men, junior's and children. Offering the largest selection of fast fashion footwear anywhere in the world, WSA@MAGIC is the only show dedicated to this market category.

Factories, fabric and trim suppliers, print design studios, technology and service providers are represented at MAGIC's SOURCING event, giving designers, manufacturers and retailers a link to the global supply chain.

This massive show also features a popular seminar series, compelling celebrity panels and blog content, all designed to bring fashion industry professionals the education and information they need to succeed in the business of fashion.

Who" officially licensed merchandise for men and women including t-shirts, accessories, gifts and more.

This past fall, digital scarf retailer Lovarzi (in partnership with BBC Worldwide) added four new products to its "Doctor Who" line in the U.K., including the company's first foray into designs inspired by the new revival of the TV series. Among the new offerings are a The Pandorica Opens scarf, a Seventh Doctor hanky, a Fourth Doctor shorter scarf and a Fourth Doctor knitted tie.

Now in its 27th season, "The Simpsons" is the longest running TV series of all time and the property boasts 150 million viewers globally each week. Twentieth Century Fox Consumer Products has signed multiple deals for the evergreen franchise.

Under the fashion category, several new partnerships have been established including the launch of a capsule collection with Neff, available around the world; a Hype clothing line; and a boys' apparel line that debuted at U.K. retailer Sainsbury's this year.

Also in the U.K., Fox partnered for a girls' range with retailer George at Asda, a line of day and nightwear for teen girls with retailer Primark and a womenswear collection at fashion retailer Zara. A second capsule collection of accessories from Skinnydip featuring the fan-

favorite character Krusty the Clown also debuted this fall at the Skinnydip store off London's Carnaby Street, Topshop retail locations worldwide, Selfridges, Asos, Skinnydip London Gatwick Airport and on the Skinnydip website.

Fox says they are committed to pushing boundaries even further for "The Simpsons" and will be working closely with new and existing partners to continue offering fans fresh, contemporary and innovative product lines.

Sanrio sealed several new licenses for the perennial Hello Kitty brand as well as other Sanrio characters. A new collection of Hello Kitty junior's sportswear from licensee The Classic Brand launched this past year; while in the junior's sector, licensee Vinca will work with Sanrio to create laser-cut jewelry including bangles, earrings, necklaces and rings featuring characters Hello Kitty, Little Twin Stars, My Melody, Bartz-Maru and Chococat.

Those characters and the Keroppi character will also be featured on kids' and adult fashion caps from Brick Brick and will include Brick Brick's signature interchangeable front plate customization feature.

Retailers and manufacturers should find the latest in fashion licensing for the next few seasons at this month's MAGIC show. They will also be using the show as an opportunity to connect with partners on the licensing deals that will shape fashion for many seasons to come. ©





continued from page 19

Walmart Premiere Night around the film *Man of Steel*, and WBCP's unique brand partnership with Target to launch an exclusive, long-term Justice League collection of licensed products in more than 20 categories.

He also spearheaded major licensing programs around Warner Bros.' tentpole films including Zack Snyder's *Man of Steel* and the highly anticipated *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, set for release on March 25; the *Harry Potter* film franchise; Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* trilogy; Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit* trilogy; and *Godzilla*.

"Brad's passionate and sustained commitment to making the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal theme parks a reality was the capstone of an amazing career," says Jordan Sollitto, former WBCP executive. "I was insanely lucky to have as bosses perhaps the two most successful guys ever to work in our industry—Romanelli and Globe."

"Brad is a talented and accomplished leader in the world of entertainment and consumer products," says Richard Dickson, president and chief operating officer, Mattel. "The positive and lasting impact he has made at Warner Bros. will be felt for many years to come. He is among the best, most collaborative partners in the business, and he understands the value and importance of teamwork and trust at every level."

WBCP's major licensees also agreed on the strengths of Globe.

"Brad was a staunch supporter of Rubie's Costume Co. during his 10 years at Warner Bros. Consumer Products, and for many years in his positions at DreamWorks and Amblin prior to that," says Howard

Beige, executive vice president, Rubie's Costume Co. "Brad exemplifies as a consumer products marketing and licensing executive. His understanding that licensing is a marketing function, his broad knowledge of many different disciplines within consumer products—licensing, marketing, retail and different needs in global markets—made him an invaluable partner."

Prior to joining WBCP, Globe launched and headed the consumer products business for DreamWorks SKG. Globe worked closely with Steven Spielberg for 20 years, having joined Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment in 1983, where he launched the consumer products business there.

Over the course of his career, Globe has developed some of the largest and most innovative programs for such notable franchises as *Jurassic Park*, *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, the *Back to the Future* trilogy, *An American Tail*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, *Hook*, *The Flintstones*, *Casper*, *Twister*, *The Land Before Time*, *Men in Black*, "Steven Spielberg Presents Tiny Toon Adventures," "Steven Spielberg Presents Animaniacs" and the Academy Award-winning *Shrek* and *Shrek 2*.

Additionally, Globe has received numerous marketing and promotion awards, and in 2004, Globe was inducted into LIMA's Licensing Hall of Fame.

"It's been a tremendously rewarding and exciting chapter in my career to be part of such a world-class company," says Globe. "I look back with great pride on all we have accomplished as a division. The time is right for me to close this chapter and open another, in which I plan to focus on creative and entrepreneurial business opportunities."

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