

BRANDS UNTAPPED

Celebrating the creativity of the licensing community | October 2025

Disney
LORCANA
TRADING CARD GAME



FABLED

WELCOME TO THE STORY

BRANDS UNTAPPED

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FOREWORD

Welcome



As you can see, it's a joy for me to write punny headlines for these opening columns... Even if it's a chore for you to read them! Still, you're here now

and it's that time again... Three days of exciting meetings, fresh connections and real inspiration wherever you look – and a new issue of our Brands Untapped Magazine!

As ever, we have plenty of creative deep dives for you to enjoy. These include chats with creative studios about powerful new style guides for brands like PlayStation, Peppa Pig, Jaws, Wallace & Gromit, London Zoo and D&D. We also get the lowdown on an terrific new offering from the talented team at Skew, and we talk to two studios celebrating big milestones this year: Dynamo and Blue Kangaroo.

Elsewhere, we explore recent success stories for wide raft of brands... From KISS and Superman to Sesame Street and Minecraft. And as a card-carrying KPop Demon Hunters fan, I took the liberty of writing a piece about where that enticing franchise could go next. It's always great to find something you're a fan of taking off in the licensing world. And yes – I do now have a six-page feature on the Ice

Cream Man comic book series ready to go! Now it's a waiting game...

Meanwhile, for fans of Disney and gaming, we're lucky enough to speak to several members of Ravensburger's Disney Lorcana team. Here they tell us what goes into developing their extraordinary trading card game. In addition, we'll put our best four feet forward in a chat with BBC Studios about Converse's recent Bluey collab.

I was also over the moon to head to Danilo HQ to find out more about what goes into the design and development of its impressive slate of licensed cards and calendars. This is a sector I fear doesn't get the credit it deserves when it comes to design and innovation.

Finally we have an in-depth look at licensed trails, a feature on Reiss' New York Botanical Garden collection and a lovely chat about the new Traitors collection with Aykroyds' Robyn Cowling... She wore the cloak and everything!

All that's left to say is that I hope you enjoy the mag and have an amazing BLE. Be sure to stop by the Brands Untapped stand – E154 – to say hello!

Billy Langsworthy
Co-Founder,
Brands Untapped



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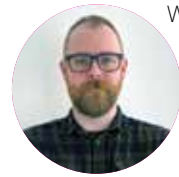
Part Strategy. Part Style. All Substance.



"The unboxing trend is moving from a focus on social-media reactions to the actual consumer experience of unboxing."

Trending Now...

Ben Roberts, Content Director at License Global, puts the spotlight on a macro trend and micro trend in kidults and unboxing.



When evaluating trends, there're macro trends and micro trends... Macro trends dictate what's happening in the wider sphere of things over the longer term, while micro trends, which are smaller, take a more focused look at consumer behaviour.

Over the last few years, one macro trend that's become the focus for licensors, licensees and retailers alike is multi-generational brand engagement. It's huge, with parents choosing 'their brands' for their children. This is something we'll be exploring in a keynote at BLE – A Legend Reborn: Reimagining the Masters of the Universe Franchise with Mattel – on Tuesday, October 7th.

A key component of that generation-spanning brand outreach is the millennial consumer base. Millennials are at the heart of all things 'kidult'. They buy comics, action figures, posters... And the fact that many companies have huge amounts of revenue attached to this trend could be cause for concern... Especially when questions are asked about the longevity of the kidult craze.

But when we look at the trajectory of revenue that comes from the top global

licensors – data taken from License Global's Top Global Licensors 2025 report – there's good news: millennials currently lead licensed product purchasing at 28%. And that's not all... In an era where discretionary spending faces increasing pressure, consumers continue to prioritise products that deliver meaningful connections, nostalgia and identity expression.

But will Gen Z pick up the mantle of that aspect of millennial life? Our report suggests that while millennials led purchasing in 2024, Gen Z is expected to take a slight lead in 2025/26, with Gen Alpha also growing in relevance to 22%. Something to keep an eye on.

Over to micro trends... One that I think will become more applicable to Gen Z is unboxing. Now, unboxing is nothing new, but I think this trend is moving from a focus on social-media reactions to the actual consumer experience of unboxing.

And it's an experience that spans multiple categories across multiple price points... From the accessibility of Fugglers, to the premium luxury of something like Advisory Board Crystal's recent blind box Fantastic Four sneakers. We're even seeing it with food... Doritos recently teamed with Netflix and Squid Game for Flamin' Hot or Not packs, where one in every four crisps in the pack were Flamin' Hot. Whether to surprise or delight, the 'blind box' consumer experience is one I feel more brands will be interested in exploring.

Ben will be further exploring trends at BLE with his State of the Nation: The Brand Licensing Forecast session, taking place on Thursday October 9th at 10AM.



Studio Noon



Fan-centred creative

We don't just design style guides.
We build living worlds fans step into.

Style and trend guides | Pitch decks | Character illustration |
Product and retail concepts | Toolkits and asset packs



“Coming at everything from a fan’s perspective keeps things authentic, exciting and, ultimately, commercially successful.”

Fan Fare

Gurdeep Bains – Global Creative Director at YuMe Toys – on what fuels the company’s creativity... and why it’s always about the fans.



At YuMe Toys, we live and breathe fandom. Every brand we touch – from anime icons to global entertainment juggernauts – is one we’re genuinely passionate about. And that passion runs through the whole company.

That’s why every new product starts with immersion. We don’t just skim the surface of an IP; we dive in headfirst. We binge the series, play the game, pore over the lore – all to understand the emotional hooks that make fans fall in love with these worlds. That fan-first mindset drives every decision... From sculpt and stylisation, to materials and packaging.

Our recent Stranger Things Upside Down Capsules Series 3 is a great example. We didn’t just design collectibles – we built an entire experience that lets fans feel like they’ve stepped inside Hawkins, using Morse Code clue cards and walkie-talkie-inspired capsules that double as both role-play devices and display cases.

Different products unlock different fan experiences. A chibi-style keyring becomes a subtle badge of belonging. A plush turns a favourite character into a comforting, huggable friend. And a capsule can transform unboxing into an adventure. Whatever the format, our rule is simple: be true to the character, and fans will feel it.

Quality matters too. Fans can tell when something feels special. That’s why we push materials and finishes to elevate every piece. For Hello Kitty & Friends, we chose epoxy to give our keychains a

premium tactile feel. For Stranger Things, we upgraded the walkie-talkie packaging with a larger tray box to command attention on shelf – we know collectors value presence as much as detail.

But we don’t create in a vacuum. Fans fuel our process every step of the way. We listen to conversations across forums, social channels, and collector communities – and we act on that insight. Stranger Things capsules Series 1 and 2 became best-sellers because fans embraced them, shared them and built communities around the hunt. Series 3 builds on that legacy with fresh characters, new poses and more interactive details – all directly informed by fan love. If fans are talking, sharing and celebrating a YuMe product, that’s success. It means we’ve captured lightning in a bottle.

Our creativity is also powered by our people. With designers and illustrators spanning the UK, Hong Kong, Canada, and the US, we’re a true global melting pot. Different cultures, styles, and experiences collide daily – sparking ideas around the clock. That 24/7 energy means YuMe can respond faster, innovate quicker and keep pace with the ever-evolving trends fans care about.

At YuMe, everything comes back to one thing: fans. Their passion fuels ours, their creativity inspires ours, and their joy validates ours. With fandom at the heart of product development, the future of YuMe is about continuing to surprise, excite, and celebrate the worlds fans love most.



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KIDS & FAMILY

"Could the fandom around Saja Boys and HUNTR/X extend beyond a musical stage show and into touring concerts?"



Top of the Pops

Billy Langsworthy looks at the licensing possibilities around recent smash-hit KPop Demon Hunters.



If Soda Pop, Golden, Saja Boys or HUNTR/X mean anything to you, then chances are you've seen KPop Demon Hunters – Netflix's most-watched movie to date.

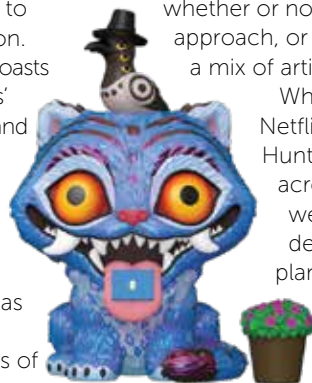
In an article titled How KPop Demon Hunters become Netflix's Frozen, The Wrap reports that sequels and a stage musical are now in the works. Now, if the brand lives up to its Frozen tag, consumer products will of course play a big role in the brand's next steps.

On Netflix's dedicated KPop Demon Hunters website, you can already find official apparel, blankets, stickers, hats, earrings, puzzles, plush – as well as some merch on Amazon and Hot Topic. Collectibles from the likes of Funko and Youtooz are on the way.

And to continue the Frozen comparison, there're plenty of parallels when it comes to product potential. Each of the main characters has multiple outfits – be they for battles, music video recordings or live performances – as well as distinct weapons... These would all suit dress-up, action figures and fashion dolls, with plenty of hit songs to activate at the push of a button.

KPop Demon Hunters also boasts its own 'Disney animal sidekicks' equivalents in Derpy the Tiger and the hat-wearing three-eyed Magpie Sussie. Derpy already has its own plush and a glow-in-the-dark Funko figure landing in January.

It's also worth noting that, as well as giving Netflix a pillar brand to sit alongside the likes of



Squid Game and Stranger Things, the success of KPop Demon Hunters has actually spawned two additional brands in HUNTR/X and Saja Boys. Both bands already boasting chart-success and passionate fans, and early apparel launches are leaning into styles associated with music merch, like band logos...

What's more, there are a few items that adopt the 'heartthrob tee' design style for both bands – as well as one dedicated to Saja Boys' frontman Jinu. Merch is also celebrating 'side characters' and band members outside the main cast... One shirt on the Netflix store replicates the abs for which Saja Boys member Abby is known... There's even a signed poster of Abby's abs, taken straight from a scene in the film where he sketches over his chest.

Despite being both fictional and animated, could the fandom around Saja Boys and HUNTR/X extend beyond a musical stage show and into touring concerts? With brands like the virtual singer Hatsune Miku already performing at sell out gigs around the world, there seems to be potential... Regardless of whether or not they adopt a tech-infused approach, or go the Gorillaz route with a mix of artists and animation.

Whatever licensing levers Netflix pulls, KPop Demon Hunters is ripe with potential across the board. It's a welcome reminder that – despite industry predictions, planning and perceptions – smash-hit brands can still take the industry by surprise.



TRUST THE PROCESS

IC
VIZE CREATIVE

Style Guides | Character Illustration
Packaging | Product Ideation |
Pitch Decks | Branding | Retail Concepts
MARCOMMS | Asset Packs
Concept Art | Experiential
Design & Build



On the Button

Stacey Bates-McCue – Creative Director of Licensing at Fluid – takes us inside development of DTR kits for the iconic PlayStation brand.

How did your relationship with the PlayStation brand begin?

We've had a great relationship with Samantha Matthew-Bond – Product Development

Manager at PlayStation – for years. We're very aligned with our thoughts on effective creative, and Sam had been desperate to create amazing retail packs and style guides for PlayStation.

As you may know, video game brands can be cautious when it comes to licensing, but an opportunity came up for PlayStation to try something new when it came to creative. We were tasked with doing small DTR kits that were specific to certain retailers. Our research looked at who their customers are, and what sort of aesthetics a buyer might be looking for.

You kicked things off with two guides. One focuses on PlayStation kidswear for a specific retailer. How did you tackle it?

It was about exploring the different layers of the retailer, its customer base and the heritage of PlayStation as a brand. As a gaming brand, it needed to have this edgier digital aesthetic to it – but we didn't want to just focus on the PlayStation logo. For this one, we based it in 90's trends as a nod to 1994 when PlayStation first launched. That came through in this grunge overlay. Then, in terms of the elements we have to work with, there's the triangle, square, circle and cross buttons...

When you put it like that, it's quite a limited set of assets!

You'd think, but we found it really elevated things by adding multiple outlines. It gave the icons a hand-drawn feel and brought some movement into the assets. Again, it's video games, so play and movement are key... If we can bring that into a flat graphic, we're winning. We also added colours that went beyond their traditional colour palette.

And it went down well?

It was presented to the retailer and got a round of applause! They were so excited to see something from PlayStation that they could run with. PlayStation then came back

to us for more guides – I think we're 14 packs into the partnership now.

It's a nice example of doing exciting things with a brand that – on paper – is associated heavily with just four iconic shapes.

PlayStation is the holy grail. It sits at the very top of the food chain for me. And it's a joy to create for a brand that can travel in lots of different directions. For example, we've since worked on a PlayStation guide for a different retailer. For them, we went in a different direction, embracing a 3D-holographic futuristic style. It's a totally different dimension to what we did for the other DTR guide.

And I suppose it's still just scratching the surface in terms of the wider PlayStation brand, with the controllers and the consoles...

That's the next route I want to go down! I'm constantly badgering Sam to do something retro because I love the idea of doing a PS1 lo-fi filter in a style guide – that retro colour spectrum of the original PlayStation logo... I think people would really gravitate to it. It'd be cool to explore that.

"These guides showcase how impactful you can be if you really strip things back."

Has working on these PlayStation guides given Fluid any new 'tools' in the toolkit? Or energized the team in a certain way?

It's given us a real sense that we can take anything anywhere, as long as you spend some time with it. It's also given us a new sense of clarity... What I mean by that is that, when we now work on more character-based IP, we're confident in not having to go too heavy on the characters. These guides showcase how impactful you can be if you really strip things back. Whether it's through a smart use of a colour palette, or a unique design execution focused on just a few assets. It's been a nice lesson and an exciting success story for us.



 PlayStation

Never Stop Playing
Since 1994

"I've never been prouder to be a part of a game's community"

Disney Lorcana Co-Designer and Senior Brand Manager **Ryan Miller** discusses recent highlights for Ravensburger's popular TCG...



Ryan, it's been another big year for Disney Lorcana. What are some of the biggest additions to the game that your 2025 sets introduced?

The first thing that comes to mind is dual ink cards introduced in Archazia's Island. Aside from looking really cool, they added a fun new twist to deckbuilding. The Iconic and Epic rare cards we added in Fabled have made collecting and pack-opening so much more exciting! I finally opened my first Epic just last week, and it really took me back to the days of The First Chapter.

Fabled is the latest set – and, as you mention, it introduced Iconic and Epic rarities. How you decide which characters take these new rare spots?

The process is similar to how we choose enchanted rares: a mix of card utility – that is, how useful the game text is – and the 'star power' of the character. Star power is totally subjective and debatable, but we try to choose cards that are very exciting from a character or story perspective. Of course, we also like to surprise and delight, so not all cards follow this path... Making Winnie the Pooh – Hunny Wizard an Enchanted card in Fabled is a great example of this!

On that, are there any cards from Fabled that you we're especially excited to launch?

I've been lucky in that I've been able to meet thousands of Disney Lorcana fans over the past couple of years, and one of the most asked-about franchises is A Goofy Movie! Of course, I knew when we'd be doing it, but I couldn't say anything! Making games is like that feeling you get when you've bought someone a gift and you can't wait for them to open it. Cards from A Goofy Movie have been in the works for a long time, and I'm

excited for Disney Lorcana fans to finally get to play with them!

We're now a few years into the brand's history and it remains a sensation. How has your relationship with Disney evolved over this time?

When we started this journey, well before the game came out, we had lots of dreams of where it could go. Maybe we could be in the Parks? Maybe on the Cruises? Maybe we could work with Disney artists for card art? The team we work with daily within Disney has been nothing short of amazing and, since the game's launch, they've helped bring those dreams and more to reality. I'm really thankful for the Disney folks! They really have been there every step of the way to help make this game the wonderful work of art that it is.

What would you say is key to fruitful collaborations on a trading card game such as this?

TCGs are a specific type of product, and generally more complex on every level than standalone board games and card games, which are not simple products to begin with! So it was important early on to get the game into the hands of as many Disney folks as possible... That's the best way for people to see what we're trying to accomplish here.

I go on several trips a year to Orlando and Glendale to do immersion meetings with various Disney teams, giving them booster packs and walking them through the game and the realm it's set in. This in-person time is an invaluable tool in communicating the concepts and needs of a TCG. It's also a lot of fun!

What makes trading card games an especially powerful tool for igniting fandom?



"One of the most asked-about franchises is A Goofy Movie!"

One of my favourite things about TCGs is the capacity for self-expression they offer. I can express myself through the deck I build, but also with the playmat I play on, or the sleeves I use on my cards, or the way I track victory... This level of self-expression just gets me more excited for my favourite characters and stories... Now, I'm not just being told a story, I'm becoming a part of it in my own way. It's hands down my favourite aspect of Disney Lorcana.

Now we're a few years in, what keeps you energised and enthusiastic working on the brand?

The community. I've been in this industry for over 25 years now, and I've never been prouder to be a part of a game's community. They are the nicest, most

welcoming and creative people I've ever made games for, and it's a true honour that I get to work on fun cards and events for them.

The other aspect is our team. We've got a growing team of talented and passionate folks working on this game, which is why it's getting better with each set. Disney Lorcana fans give me and co-designer Steve Warner a lot of credit for this game, but the kudos really goes to the team that puts so much love and attention-to-detail into every Disney Lorcana card.

Finally, the next set, Whispers in the Well, is landing soon. Anything you can tell us without getting into trouble?

We call that a "Bruno" question. We don't talk about Bruno.

10 DISNEY LORCANA MILESTONES...



The decision to develop a TCG with Disney happened at Glendale's The Famous bar in 2019.



The game was announced at D23 Expo in August 2022.



Disney Lorcana launched at Gen Con in August 2023, with thousands of fans getting their hands on the very first cards.



Disney Lorcana was launched simultaneously in four languages.



In December 2023, Ravensburger worked with several legendary Disney artists on Disney100 cards.



In May 2024, Ravensburger launched Disney Lorcana Challenge events.



The first ever Disney Lorcana World Champion was crowned in June 2025.



In August, Ravensburger did a limited run of Collection Quests with Disney Cruise Line on the Disney Treasure.

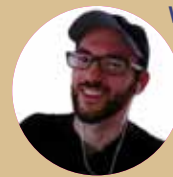


The latest set, Fabled, arrives adding Iconic and Epic cards to the game.



August saw the start of the first limited run of Collection Quests in Disney California Adventure Park.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: JOHN LOREN



What was the first card you illustrated for Disney Lorcana?

Robin Hood – Unrivaled

Archer. That's the only card ever for which I submitted just one sketch, because I was certain we should introduce Robin Hood in his most iconic pose.

How do you engage with a Disney Lorcana brief?

When I get a brief, I'll watch scenes from the film in question to get a better sense of the character, and then consider how the brief might reflect or put a new spin on how we've seen them before. I tend to work in colour a lot, as establishing the mood helps me wrap my head around the goal of the scene.

What have been some of your favourite cards to illustrate?

Robin Hood – Daydreamer might have been my favourite, where Robin Hood takes a nap on the river. It was just a pleasant scene to imagine and get lost in. I also really enjoyed painting Ursula – Deceiver of All (Enchanted) with my friend Nicholas Kole. We needed to evoke the look of a rougher oil painting, which was a more experimental process than usual.

INTERVIEW: SHANE HARTLEY & MATT ENG, RAVENSBURGER



Art of the Deal

Shane Hartley and Matt Eng – the creative team behind Ravensburger's Disney Lorcana – on why cards in the game must do more than look good...

How do you work alongside the Narrative and Game Design teams? Can creative decisions impact gameplay and story choices?

Shane Hartley, Executive Creative Director, Trading Card Games, Ravensburger: Our Game Design, Narrative, and Art teams are what we call the DNA team, and each part is equally important in shaping a set. It's a true collaboration... From the very beginning, we're riffing off one another, sharing ideas, and building something together.

Every set starts with a theme. That theme sets the tone for the story we're trying to tell. From there, we identify which characters and locations fit naturally and which could be exciting surprises. Game Design builds mechanics that tie into that theme, Narrative develops the world and story threads, and

Art brings it all to life visually. It's a very organic, back-and-forth process, and that's what makes each set feel so cohesive.

And cohesion can't be easy, given all the different themes and fresh takes on characters...

Matt Eng, Creative Director, Illustration, Disney Lorcana, Ravensburger: We started Disney Lorcana by creating a unifying art style we call "modern storybook". By following this style guide, all of the art across different properties and films, as well as different artists, will feel cohesive on the table as people play the game.

Shane: Whether you're looking at glimmers from Steamboat Willie, Encanto, or anything in between, everything feels like it belongs in the same magical realm.

"Every card has to do more than just look great; it has to tell a story..."



You work with lots of talented artists on Disney Lorcana. What makes an artist a good fit for the brand?

Shane: Every card has to do more than just look great; it has to tell a story... And not just the story of the glimmer on the card, but also how that glimmer fits into the set's theme and mechanics. The best artists for Disney Lorcana are those that can capture that storytelling in a single image. They understand character, emotion and world-building, and they bring those elements to life in a way that feels true to Disney and the realm of Lorcana.

Matt: And to be a successful artist on Disney Lorcana, they need to be able to have a solid understanding of illustration fundamentals and visual storytelling. We always have a heavy emphasis on character likeness and recognisability as well.

What's been key to the success of the Disney collaboration?

Shane: Disney's been amazing to work with

from the very beginning. There's a lot of trust on both sides, and that's made the project a true creative collaboration. We're in constant conversation with them, from the early concept stages to putting the game into the hands of the fans, they've really embraced our vision for the game.

Now that you're a few years and several sets in, what keeps you excited about the brand?

Matt: Every set brings a lot of new opportunities and challenges. The constantly turning wheel of production and focus helps keep us on our toes and gives us opportunities to push the creative with each set!

Shane: That's the magic of working with Disney, the possibilities feel endless. There are so many stories and characters to explore, and with new Disney content coming out all the time, we're constantly inspired.



TALKING SHOP

Richard Foulston, Owner, Black Dragon Games



"Disney Lorcana has become one of the most important TCGs at Black Dragon Games, occupying a unique niche that has attracted an entirely new group of customers to our store. From day one, we could see the appeal that Disney Lorcana would have for family groups looking to play together and we've enjoyed watching our casual multiplayer league on Sunday mornings grow into a truly joyous community."



The Neverending Story

The Disney Lorcana Narrative team reveals how they craft stories and themes for ongoing, and interlinking, sets of Ravensburger's hit TCG.



To kick us off, can you talk us through the role of the narrative team for Disney Lorcana?

Jenna Giuffrida, Senior Narrative Designer: The Narrative team at Ravensburger is small but mighty, and we do a lot more than folks might think. In a game like Disney Lorcana, narrative touches everything – it's the glue that holds all the pieces of a game together.

Every set begins with a theme and a story around which we build cards and other products. So we have a diverse set of skills embedded within the team to address many different needs. We primarily guide story from set to set and build the ever-expanding realm of Lorcana. But we also cover creative text, led by Chris Page, which involves creating the version names, ability names and flavour text seen on cards.

Nick Webb, Senior Narrative Designer: At its core, Disney is about telling stories that connect with people, and bring them together. Only our medium is a trading card game. It's a delightfully collaborative effort between art, design and narrative, where ideas bounce from person to person, discipline to discipline, and culminates in a set that, if we've done our job, makes the effort look seamless.

And on that, how entwined is your work with that of the game design team?

Jenna: The key to TCG narrative is that it's nonlinear and very ambient. We don't get the luxury of a beginning, middle and end because players encounter the cards completely randomly – and may never see all the cards in a single set.

Two things must be true of a card at once: it's embedded in the story or theme AND it makes sense on its own during play. To accomplish this, we always strive for what's called top-down design: Narrative gives Game Design an idea for

what a particular character's role is in the set, then Design applies mechanics that make sense for the character and their specific role, then it goes to art.

Nick: As an example, let's look at the upcoming tenth set, Whispers in the Well. For this Disney Lorcana take on a spooky detective story, we thought: 'What if there were glimmers that looked a little ethereal or wispy, and needed a boost of ink from an Illumineer to make them fully materialise?'

Glimmers being these unique manifestations of classic Disney characters?

Nick: Absolutely. From there, the Design team came back with the idea of Whisper glimmers, and the Art team came up with some stunning concepts that really brought it all together. For every card, I want a player to pick it up and see all three disciplines tied together seamlessly. So much so that they could never guess whether the card started as a need from the Design team, an idea for a story from the Narrative team, or a cool concept piece from the Art team.

The game features some fun new takes on classic characters. How do you balance being faithful to iconic IP with creating something fresh?

Jacob Rennaker, Narrative Writer: It's important that we see ourselves as both stewards and translators of the most beloved characters of all time. First, we need a deep understanding of what makes each character tick. Then, we imagine the most exciting ways in which that character might appear.

In other words, we're translating that character's essence into the language of our game. There's no such thing as a perfect translation, but if we're faithful to both the character and the world we've created, something magical happens and



"The key to TCG narrative is that it's nonlinear and very ambient."



we're gifted with something familiar, yet refreshingly original.

Chris Page, Creative Text Designer: When it comes to the creative text, part of it is doing my best to understand the characters, their motivations and their voices. This involves watching scenes that certain characters appear in over and over to find their speaking cadence, as well as watching interviews with the voice actors. It's a matter of trying to think like and understand the characters. The majority of creative text is original; often in the character's voice. That



lets us take things in new directions while honouring the originals.

Finally, what has Disney been like as a collaborator?

Jacob: Disney has been a delight. It's honestly a bit surreal when the folks who created the characters who raised you are also fans of your work. So there's very much a sense of mutual respect for our crafts. With that shared admiration comes a shared desire to make this game the best it can possibly be, which comes through in the final product.

DISNEY SPOTLIGHT

Divya Dalal, VP of Global Hardlines, Disney Consumer Products

Divya, what's at the heart of this successful collaboration?

Ravensburger and Disney have been working together for over 60 years, so there's a strong foundation of trust and collaboration woven into this relationship. With the introduction of Disney Lorcana into the market and its subsequent success among fans and collectors, it became clear that the product demands a consistent flow of content and innovation. Ravensburger continues to handle this demand effectively and creatively, and has been a great collaborator in the trading card games space thus far.

Has the game reignited fandoms around Disney IP that's considered legacy?

It's clear that Disney Lorcana continues to breathe new life into different brands and fandoms in the Disney sphere. A great example of this are the cards that tap into Disney's The Emperor's New Groove. Fans have a sense of nostalgia around the original animated film and remember the characters and story elements fondly. Ravensburger recognises that and has given the cards such an attention to detail that really services the fans.

Do you see brand potential in Disney Lorcana itself? Could it grace other types of consumer products?

The vast collection of artwork that has stemmed from Disney Lorcana has already allowed us to explore growth into other product categories, with the

Disney Lorcana-inspired puzzles that recently came to market. We are excited to potentially explore more ways to continue to develop our product offerings in the future.





Making Magic, One Dot and Dash at a Time...

Hello from Dot Dash Design! We are a surface design agency specialising in the creation of style guides for infant, toddler, tween and fandom driven brands. We help brand owners and creative teams translate their characters and stories into scalable, shelf ready assets that connect with consumers and drive retail success.

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Demi Patel
Global Creative Lead -
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INTERVIEW: ANITA MAJHU, BBC STUDIOS



Heart and Sole

Anita Majhu – UK Head of Licensing for Softlines & FMCG and Sustainability Lead at BBC Studios – takes us inside Bluey's recent collection with Converse...



Anita, let's start with something of a silly question! What made Converse an attractive partner for Bluey?

So many things felt right to us! The first was our like-mindedness – both BBC Studios and Converse have a real sense of purpose. We were here to do something we care about. Inclusion and value for all underpins our organisation – and theirs too. There's also a sense of creativity underpinning Bluey, Ludo Studios, and Converse... Another thing is Converse's authenticity. There's no gap between what they say and what they do. And with Bluey being such the global phenomenon that it is, that authenticity is important to us.

One other key thing was a real sense of ambition... We all felt we could really go

and push ourselves to create something different, which is why the range is as wide as it is. We wanted to create a collection that meant something to people, so that was very exciting. Factoring all that in, it felt like we had something special – and that was a great base to start this relationship from.

Did the fact that both Bluey and Converse are creatively ambitious brands mean you could take 'swings' from a design point of view?

Everything we do is based on authenticity. We're trying to extend the fans' enjoyment... To do that authentically, we need the products to resonate with what they love about the show. Creativity is at the heart of the show and we need to reflect that – whether it's in the smallest of pocket money ranges or our big brand

“Creativity is at the heart of the show and we need to reflect that.”

collaborations as with Converse or LEGO. That steered where we went design-wise with all the special details that reflect moments people love.

Yes, talk me through some of those...

There's a design feature of the red balloon from the 'Keepy Uppy' episode. We knew that would be instantly recognisable, but it also taps into Converse and Bluey's shared values: movement, fun, togetherness! It was important to find ways to anchor all that into these designs, and great to do it while referencing such a loved moment. There're plenty of other design touches: from the design of the logo lock up to the custom shoe boxes. We have details on the tongues and the shoe liner... Lots of little easter eggs that celebrate the brand.

You mentioned this is an expansive range, and it spans items in both kids' and adult sizes. Why go for both?

Well, as a brand, Bluey's reach is wide. It has true intergenerational appeal and, because of that, there're opportunities to reach those audiences through product in an authentic way. And that's also true of Converse – the 'Chuck' is so iconic for so many generations, so it felt like the perfect format to celebrate this love that parents, caregivers and children have for Bluey.

When you're weighing up whom to work with, how much does a licensee's approach to design factor in?

Any successful partnership in consumer products is underpinned by creativity and feeling. We had a fantastic team to work with at Converse and Ludo Studio, but it's also critical in the delivery of a branded partnership for the audience to understand the why. We want consumers to understand why Converse and Bluey would be friends – why the partnership makes sense...

The reason the Converse + Bluey collaboration – and many of our other partnerships – are so successful is because we really think about the why... And try to convey that through the creativity of the products. That's key – especially when you want to see the personality of both brands, like with Converse and Bluey. It's about coming together and celebrating who we both are in that shared moment.

Absolutely. And is there more to come from this Converse Bluey partnership? Does my face give anything away?!

Ha!

All I'll say is that Bluey has surprised and delighted fans around the world globally with this partnership and we may well do it again.

Nicely teased. And what do partnerships with the likes of Converse and LEGO say about where Bluey currently is on its licensing journey?

It's wonderful to be part of a team and part of a brand that reaches so many people in this way. With Bluey, we get the privilege of turning up for the fans and kids every day. That's also a responsibility to do our best to use our scale for good. It's a responsibility to work with partners that share our values and allow us to do some brilliant things.

We're fiercely proud of our relationships with the likes of Converse, LEGO, Moose Toys and our other licensed partners. Right now, I'm really proud about our recently launched FMCG portfolio in the UK, where we have relationships with Kellogg's, Childs Farm and many others.

Also, Billy... News just in! Specsavers joins us on Bluey for kids' prescription glasses across the UK and other international markets. This brand is at a stage where we have the privilege to show up every day on the screens that they watch us on, in their play patterns, what they wear, in their everyday moments, at their breakfast table... It's a huge responsibility and a joy at the same time. It's rewarding and energising!

Last question! You have a background as a buyer. Does that help inform how you do what you do?

I think that's valuable experience to have for somebody in my role, but it's not the only thing. What my previous 10 years at retail in buying taught me was the end-to-end value chain – so I often look across the spectrum when doing what I do now. It all comes down to knowing your consumer and making sure what we then present back to them is something that ensures they feel seen, understood and listened to... As a consumer and as a fan.



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Baby on Board

Hasbro's **Demi Patel** joins Wigwam's **Debs Southwood** to discuss developing a Peppa Pig asset pack... And the creative opportunities that came with the arrival of Baby Evie.



Demi, what did Hasbro need an asset pack like this to achieve?
Demi Patel, Global Creative Lead – Fashion & Preschool at Hasbro: We design these packs to be small but mighty. They're designed to energise and inspire product development, not prescribe every detail. Above all, an effective pack is clear, accessible and rooted in what makes the brand special.



Debs, can you talk me through how you brought baby Evie to life in the creative?

Debs Southwood, Design Director & Co-Founder, Wigwam Studios: When we found out there was to be a new little pig, we were excited by the endless storylines we could bring to life with this adorable addition. And the execution came naturally... We leaned into storytelling that reflects the familiar journey every family experiences when a new baby arrives: the excitement, the need for home renovations, a bigger car and more.

For this first asset pack, the spotlight was on Siblings and Routines, exploring how Peppa and George would step into new roles to support Mummy and Daddy. We also introduced Evie herself, highlighting her personality, unique traits and favourite toys.

Did Evie open up interesting creative possibilities?

Demi: Absolutely. The introduction of Evie is a game-changer, both creatively and commercially. She allows us to tell new kinds of stories – stories that reflect the joy, chaos, and wonder of sibling relationships. It's a dynamic that's instantly relatable to both children and parents and one that opens up new emotional territory for the brand.

Debs: And as you might imagine, much of the storytelling centred on familiar routines – mealtimes, bath times, bedtimes... This created the perfect opportunity to showcase product inspiration that aligns with these key categories. The introduction of a softer palette also brought a gentler aesthetic compared to what had previously been delivered for the core range.

I imagine this guide came with quite a lot of pressure! Big brand, important new character... Did it feel like that way? And did that change anything about your approach?

Debs: Being among the first agencies entrusted with this confidential information was an incredible honour... And it certainly added an element of importance to the project, yes. The development was shrouded in secrecy, so we took every precaution to prevent leaks. That included carefully controlling how we shared creative with the client and using code words for anything that might give the game away!

However, when it came to the creative process, it was business as usual. With years of experience working on the Peppa brand, we were confident in our ability to deliver – just as we always have. We're proud to have partnered with Hasbro on this project and to be part of all the excitement since the reveal. We can't wait to see products hit the market and watch how little baby Evie connects with fans everywhere.

You've worked with Hasbro before, Debs. Do you have any 'north stars' in terms of guaranteeing fruitful partnerships with brand owners?

Debs: The team at Hasbro are genuinely lovely people. For me, this is essential when partnering with clients, as it creates a safe space where we can be open, honest, and authentic with one another.

Our core guiding principle with every client is collaboration. We never dictate what we think should be done with their brands – after all, they know their brands better than anyone. By tapping into that knowledge and combining it with our creativity, we achieve stronger, more successful results.

And Demi, what made Wigwam the right partner for this brief?

Demi: Wigwam was the perfect partner for this pack – particularly because of the level of confidentiality required around its development. We trusted them implicitly, and that trust is essential when you're working on a brand evolution as significant as this one.

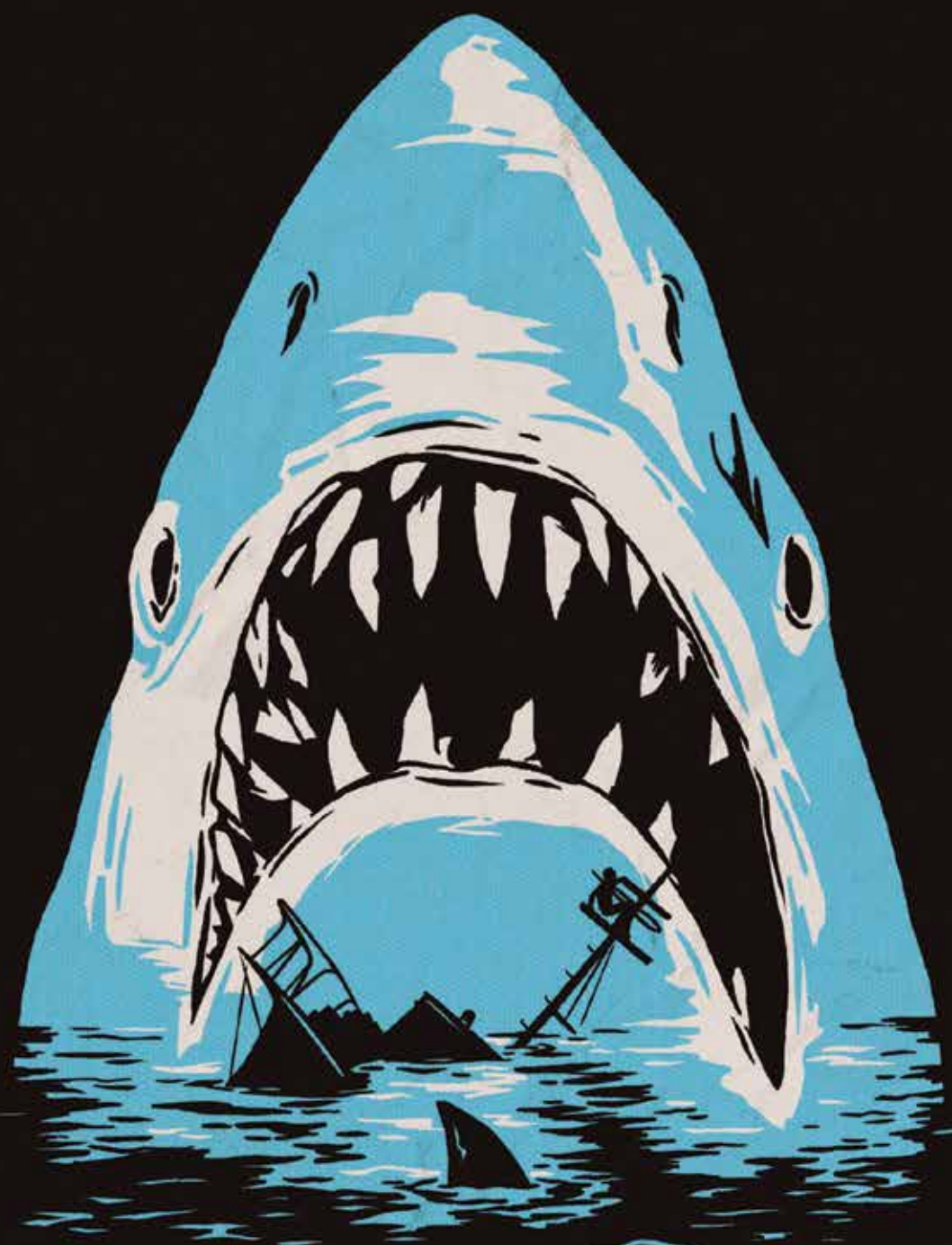
Debs and the team have been long-time collaborators and bring deep institutional knowledge of Peppa Pig. Debs also has an intuitive understanding of the brand's design DNA. From translating assets straight from the animation to refining colour treatments and file build, she works with care, precision and a true eye for detail. Wigwam consistently go above and beyond; their creative output never misses the mark.



"The introduction of Evie is a game-changer, both creatively and commercially."

SHARK TALE

Mike Johns – Creative Director at Analogue – takes us inside the development of a style guide celebrating 50 years of Jaws.



JAWS
50TH ANNIVERSARY

“To encapsulate an iconic franchise into one celebratory guide, you’ve got to look at the brand in a scalable way.”



Mike, Analogue’s worked on lots of exciting things with Universal. Were you a Jaws fan before taking this project on, though? And does being a fan matter when you work on

this sort of brief?

I am a fan – and I think it does matter. I think you’ve got to have some kind of attraction to these brands to produce beautiful and lasting creative. Growing up, I was a massive fan of blockbuster horrors like Arachnophobia, Jaws, Jurassic Park... I love the sensibility of that era.

So yes, we feel it’s important for our designers to have some connection to the brands they’re working on. In fact, it’s a massive consideration when we plan out the studio’s workload... We’ll ensure designers are working on IP they love. That means they’ll have ideas straight from the get-go. With Jaws, we chose an illustrator that loves the brand and one whose style we knew would suit what the client wanted to achieve.

This guide celebrates the film’s 50th anniversary, so there’re plenty of iconic aspects of the brand to draw on. How did you approach marking the milestone through this guide?

Celebrating an anniversary like this is a huge thing to be a part of. To encapsulate an iconic franchise into one celebratory guide, you’ve got to look at the brand in a scalable way...

What works on packaging? What works on large-format marketing? And for the anniversary logo, it came down to distilling that iconic poster into a mark. Then we’ve got all the additional assets in the guide that tap more into the emotions and feeling people attach to the film.

The guide is full of great-looking icons – from the shark itself to an Amity police badge. How did you assess what would work effectively in a style guide?

You’ve got to think of the application of the assets. Let’s say, for example, we can highlight the mayor’s suit pattern... Can we lift and reinvent that so it not only works for product, but also provides a fun nod to the fans that recognise it? Also, the location – Amity

Island – is vitally important in the film, so we created a map graphic... That was a great way to capture so many important aspects of the film in one image. That’s since been blown up into an all-over-print Hawaiian shirt by RSVLTS.

Then, as well as the Amity Police badge, we have the ‘No Swimming – Beach Closed’ sign. We wanted to present them in a more rugged, natural style of illustration.

The unconnected lines and loose edges tap into the style of that era. We found a lot of inspiration from the 70s – the fashion, the colours, the content... The film itself is very ‘practical’ – there’s no glamour there whatsoever! We really wanted to bring that sensibility through into the guide.

I also wanted to pick your brain on the patterns in the guide. What steered where you went there?

Patterns are always key because, if done right, licensees can use patterns in so many different ways. You might break it apart and use an image of the shark with an image of something else for a pattern on Hawaiian shorts... Or you can go more subtle, like a pattern we have that nods to the mayor’s jacket. We also have a scarf image that taps into Ellen Brody’s head scarf. Of course, it makes sense that a Jaws range covers beach product, so we looked at all-over Hawaiian prints that would suit towels, flip-flops and products synonymous with that category.

One last question before we wrap up – what do you think is key to creating an effective style guide?

Commerciality is top of the list. Everything needs to look great, but it also has to connect with the consumer in a clear and concise way... Telling a compelling story that the fans love and want to be a part of. That’s the top consideration when we’re putting assets together – always have the end product in mind. It’s ultimately about creating usable assets and giving licensees whatever they need to engage with their fans.

See more of Analogue’s work at www.madebyanalogue.co.uk

“My Little Pony has really grown into a full entertainment universe. It’s a brand that now lives everywhere.”



Hot to Trot

Esra Cafer, Senior Vice President of Global Brand Strategy and Management at Hasbro, on 15 years of My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic – and why it’s still a franchise benchmark.



My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic turns 15 this year. For anyone not familiar with the show, can you give us a topline overview of it – and its importance relative to recent

‘Pony’ history?

My Little Pony has been enchanting fans for more than 40 years across five generations, yet few eras have left a greater cultural mark than Friendship is Magic. When it premiered in 2010, it reintroduced the brand to a whole new audience with sharper humour, more vibrant animation and stories built around timeless values like friendship, kindness and individuality. Millions of fans joined the world of Pony through Friendship is Magic, and many still see it as the benchmark for the franchise today. 15 years on, it’s still shaping the way fans connect with Pony and continues to influence how we tell stories today.

Where has this iteration of the brand thrived over the years?

Friendship is Magic quickly became a catalyst for product innovation and a touchstone for fans who connected deeply with its characters. Publishing programs from Scholastic and Story House Egmont carried the storytelling into books and magazines, while toys, collectibles and digital games kept audiences engaged between episodes. Everyday products like

plush, blind boxes, magnets and even PEZ dispensers brought the Mane Six into households all over the world.

The brand also found a natural home in fashion. The most recent Hot Topic collection offered playful graphic tees, pyjamas and cropped hoodies, alongside fashion-forward pieces like miniskirts and denim overalls, reflecting how Friendship is Magic continues to resonate with those who grew up with the show and now want to wear that connection proudly.

The show – and wider brand – is notable for having a broad audience, beyond what might be expected as strictly young girls. Does this mass appeal shape where you go licensing-wise? Are there opportunities to tap into an fanbase outside of young girls?

Absolutely. Friendship is Magic proved that My Little Pony is so much more than a girls’ franchise. It’s a brand with universal themes that resonate across ages, genders and cultures. That broad appeal is central to how we think about licensing. It’s why we can confidently lean into fashion, beauty, gaming and collectibles for adult and crossover audiences, while also supporting family offerings that are at the heart of the franchise.

That diversity of fans is a huge strength. It means there’s room for playful, age-appropriate ranges for kids, alongside elevated products and experiences for



older fans who embrace the brand as part of their lifestyle. Our job is to make sure every fan – whether they’re kids, parents or adult collectors – finds a way into the world of Pony that feels authentic to them.

To wrap up, what are some recent licensing highlights on the broader My Little Pony brand?

My Little Pony has really grown into a full entertainment universe. It’s a brand that now lives everywhere. Fashion has proven especially exciting. Our collaboration with Reebok put Pony-inspired colourways on classic sneakers while Irregular Choice leaned all the way into whimsy with statement heels and boots. This year’s Lola + The Boys collection introduced twirl-ready dresses, sparkling boots and collectible denim jackets for the next generation of fans.

We’ve also seen great traction in the world of promotions, particularly when it comes to food and beverage. Joyground Coffee gave adult fans a fresh way to reconnect with the brand through character-inspired blends like Applejack’s Caramel Apple, while Nowwa Coffee in China rolled out a Friendship is Magic campaign across more than 1,500 stores. Burger King even paired My Little Pony with

Transformers in a licensed book program across Scandinavia – a fun example of the crossover potential we’re starting to unlock.

Play and collectability remain a huge driver. The debut of the My Little Pony Trading Card Game, developed with Kayou, was a real milestone for us. It launched first in China and is already expanding globally with multilingual versions and a tournament system on the way. It’s a completely new way for fans to experience Pony and it sits beautifully alongside Kayou’s broader trading card programs.

And of course, digital continues to play a big role. Outright Games’ My Little Pony: A Zephyr Heights Mystery put fans into an open-world adventure on all major platforms, and music has been another real growth engine. DJ Pon-3: The Remixes Vol. 2 hit over one-million monthly listeners and pushed the franchise past one-billion lifetime streams – a reminder that music is one of the most powerful ways we stay present in fans’ daily lives.

All of this shows just how far My Little Pony has come. 40 years in, it’s not slowing down. The brand keeps finding new ways to show up for fans, connect with culture and open the door to fresh opportunities.

Dressed to Kill

Robyn Cowling – Head of Licensing at Aykroyds – on the development of their Traitors apparel... And why the brand resonates.

Aykroyds recently did great work with All3Media International's Traitors brand. Why does this IP appeal?

Well, the deal was done before I joined the company so I can't take any credit! But as a business, we've worked with family shows in the past and – with The Traitors – we have an opportunity to create for a family television moment when fans are at home, connecting with this brand... They can wear our night or loungewear for example! That's why it made sense for us. I know it's the talk of the playground and our dinner table whenever the show is on the telly in my neighbourhood!

We had visibility of the content that's now coming through to screens. The Traitors now has two content beats a year and there's been a year of product in market, so retailers are starting to feel more connected with it. It's really coming into its own from a consumer product perspective.

There's many different aspects of the brand that resonate, so – design-wise – on what strings did you pull?

It all depends on which retailer is supporting it as we design to order. That said, we're very much leaning into the cloak, as well as creative like the roundtable. We've used that icon on some all-over print for PJ bottoms, as well as a background print for some wordplay-centred items. And that's the other thing... There are now catchphrases attached to the brand that we've embraced – things like '100% faithful' and 'sleep well'.

We'd love to include some of Claudia's unique fashion sensibilities into a few of

the designs, so a pinch of tartan, a rollneck or a dramatic colour palette – but we're not quite there yet! As the brand becomes more established, we're hoping that we can lean more into that. The same goes for the US version of The Traitors with Alan Cummings. He's an absolute icon and the international viewing figures speak for themselves.

You mention designing for different retailers. How is that set-up at Aykroyds? Do your designers focus exclusively on different retail accounts?

Absolutely. We have daywear designers and nightwear designers across most major accounts as well as in-house graphic designers. Everyone focuses uniquely on their accounts and department: being so focused on that customer pays dividends. Our designers know their accounts inside out, which gives us the confidence to push boundaries with the licensors. Certain retailers prefer certain shapes, poses, trends... So the possibilities are endless – and none of our work looks the same, which is a great strength.

We've spoken before about how brand decisions at Aykroyds are made with the involvement of salespeople, design people and you...

What do you see as the value of including design in those conversations?

The term 'handwriting' is something I've become very familiar with since joining the company from a toy background! It's essential that we can translate a retailer's design handwriting from the assets. And while a brand might be a huge success, with great content and engagement, if the assets aren't good or the rights'

"There are catchphrases attached to the brand that we've embraced – like '100% faithful' and 'sleep well'."

owner isn't flexible, then that can be the end of a project, sadly. It simply won't see light of day if we can't modify it appropriately...

So somewhere between what the licensor and retailer want – and what our design, tech and costings department know – lies the truth! That's an art, not a science – and an art that we need our design team's invaluable insights into. It's a huge advantage having design and commercial at the table for those onboarding conversations. I couldn't make those all-important decisions without group input.

The lovely Jason Easy is the VP of Licensing at All3Media International. What was Jason and his team like to work with?

I absolutely love Jason! He's an 11 out of 10. I imagine if someone other than Jason pitched this concept to Aykroyds, it might never have happened... But because of his industry experience and the moves he's made, their brand portfolio is really moving and shaking. They keep us abreast of other collabs or things they're working on as a TV production company. And because they're quite a small, agile team, we get a lot of information that might otherwise not be shared. Jason and Katie Podesta are dreamy to work with.

Before we wrap up, what other recent highlights can we tell people about?

We're very excited about our ongoing extension into daywear. We've just expanded our Hello Kitty rights into daywear and are trying to get people out of the habit of perceiving us as a nightwear partner. We'll never turn our back on pyjamas, but given where we're going with trends and sales, it makes sense for us to be offering a full apparel service. We've also just expanded our Magic Light Pictures rights to include Gruffalo daywear. We've got full apparel on Paramount, Warner Brothers, Hasbro, Mattel... It's all very exciting stuff!



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“Our characters’ distinctive designs and strong brand identity make them instantly recognisable – even when adapted into entirely new worlds.”

Roz, it’s great to connect. This year sees Miraculous celebrate its 10th anniversary. What has been key to the brand’s longevity?

The key to the longevity of Miraculous lies in its unique blend of heartfelt storytelling, rich mythology and universal relatability. For 10 years, the series has balanced thrilling superhero adventures with the emotional reality of teenage life, creating characters that fans see themselves in.

Does an anniversary year give you license to do partnerships that you otherwise might not have? And what have been some highlights?

Yes, it’s the perfect opportunity to share this success with our amazing partners. Globally, the celebrations span the 10th anniversary and Miraculous Day on September 27th, with promotions, immersive experiences and retail activations that truly bring the brand to life. Highlights include the theatrical premiere of season six across Latin America, a capsule clothing collection in Mexico, retail promotions across Europe with partners such as Smyths, La Grande Récré, King Jouet and Rofu.

There’s also a loyalty campaign in Romania with Profi and location-based experiences in multiple countries... In the US, we’ve launched multiple new products for the fall alongside a high-profile Miraculous brand activation at the legendary FAO Schwarz in New York City.

And which recent launches highlight how creative licensees can be with the brand?

One standout is the 10th anniversary limited-edition Ladybug Collector Doll from Playmates Toys. It beautifully encapsulates a decade of storytelling through intricate costume design, premium materials and accessories drawn from iconic moments in the series. For younger fans, Playmobil has crafted a highly detailed construction set of the boulangerie, one of the most beloved locations in the series.

In publishing, Insight Editions has brought the culinary side to life with The Miraculous Ladybug Cookbook, featuring recipes like macarons, croissants and croque monsieur that transport fans straight to Paris. In fashion, Mikotaku seamlessly blends style and fandom, creating innovative, trend-driven streetwear that channels the characters’ energy and flair. Meanwhile, jewellery brand Gnoce has elevated Miraculous into the world of fine charms and accessories.

And in digital?

Yes, even in digital spaces, creativity shines... This summer’s announcement of a year-long collaboration with Outfit7’s Talking Tom and Friends not only introduces an inventive crossover in-game event but also marks the franchise’s first-ever appearance in a Roblox game.

Why do you think Miraculous suits collabs so neatly?

Our characters are highly relatable kids who happen to be globally recognised superheroes! Their distinctive designs, vibrant personalities and strong brand identity make them instantly recognisable – even when adapted into entirely new worlds. In the case of Talking Tom, Ladybug and Cat Noir seamlessly took on the style of this mega-hit game while remaining unmistakably themselves – resulting in one of the most creative and perfectly balanced mashups I’ve ever seen.

Before we wrap up, what else are you excited about in the near future for the brand?

As we head into BLE, we’re so excited to have recently announced our very first Miraculous universe spin-off series: Miraculous Stellar Force. This 2D, anime-inspired series – acquired by Disney Branded Television – will launch in 2027. We’ll be unveiling more about this series at BLE! Also, a one-hour special airing later this year – Miraculous World: Tokyo Stellar Force – will serve as an introduction to the new series.



Miracle Worker

As Miraculous turns 10, **Roz Nowicki** – Global Head of Consumer Products at Miraculous Corp – discusses recent highlights... And what’s next.

AYKROYDS

EST 1918

THE
TRAITORS



Step into style and comfort with the Traitors & Faithful pyjama collection, featuring delicate script embroidery on the pocket and a striking bold foil print across the back. Complete the look with the novelty zip-front robe, finished with a touch of luxury through gold embroidered logos on both the front and back - these PJs bring a little mystery to your downtime.

Button-Up Pyjamas and Novelty Zip-Up Robe Available Now at **PRIMARK**



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FEATURE: LICENSED TRAILS



Walk on the Wild Side

With licensed trails on the rise, we explore some recent success stories in the space – and look at which sort of brand suits them best.

The world of trails is proving to be a creative and engaging avenue for brands to showcase IP at some of the UK's most striking destinations. This past year has seen English Heritage team up with Taskmaster for summer activities across their sites; Forestry England work with Magic Light Pictures on Stick Man trails... And Aardman continue to roll out AR-infused interactive trails for its brands.

Elsewhere, The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Horrible Histories both starred in their own trails at National Trust sites. Meanwhile, Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity is teaming up with RG Live and Culture Creative to develop immersive Neverland trails in the UK and internationally. The first of these is set to open at Kenwood on London's Hampstead Heath later this year.

"Location-based experiences are a great way for us to give our fans additional touchpoints to engage with their favourite characters in the real world," says Alexandra Sanson, Senior Brand Manager at Magic Light Pictures.

It's a sentiment echoed by GOSH Charity's Jenny Martin, Senior Partnership

Development Manager for Brand Licensing. She says: "Neverland is a wondrous land of magic, imagination and adventure which makes for a thrilling destination when reimagined in an events space – who wouldn't want the chance to be transported to such a place?"

Molly Van Den Brink, Senior Attractions and Live Experiences Manager for Aardman tells us: "We have a rich history of using our IP to create engaging and immersive art trails for fans to enjoy and see their favourite characters up close and 'in real life'. These include public, charity and licensed sculpture trails in partnership with The Grand Appeal and Wild in Art."

Molly continues: "The experiences offer a completionist opportunity for fans to engage with, and with such success in the UK, these art trails have been rolled out internationally."

Wild in Art has helped pioneer the concept of public art trails featuring licensed characters, creating trails based around a series of sculptures installed in public spaces. Individual artists and other creative partners decorate sculptures, and the trails are



“Trails and live experiences work really well when they’ve been built in partnership with, and bespoke to, each location.”

generally staged in city centres or locations like National Trust properties.

“An art trail is a living, walking brand activation – one that connects emotionally with families, fans and communities in a way few other formats can,” says Wild in Art Founder Charlie Langhorne.

“They allow IP owners to put their character or property right at the heart of the public realm, generating earned media, social buzz and authentic engagement. Add to that the opportunity to support local causes, reach new audiences and leave a lasting legacy and they become a powerful extension of your brand story, values and impact.”

LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

So the role the brand plays in all this is, of course, vital. But another key component is the location of the trail – and its connection to the IP.

“Trails and live experiences work really well when they’ve been built in partnership with, and bespoke to, each location,” says Alexandra Sanson from Magic Light Pictures.

“Every site has logistical considerations that need to be taken into account... Capacity, visitor numbers, dwell time, accessibility and weather constraints, for example. But they also have ‘soft’ considerations! Many of our sites have their ‘special places’ that are areas of interest for visitors.

“There’ll also be themes or values that are common both to the site and to our brands. We sit down and identify those shared values, pulling out themes like nature, teamwork, courage or discovery... We use those as a springboard for developing the overall offering. You can have the glossiest apps, or the wildest special effects, but if it doesn’t speak to



“Experiences are a great way to give fans additional touchpoints to engage with their favourite characters in the real world.”

your audience or fit its physical home, the experience just won’t ‘land’ in the same way.”

There’re also benefits to the wider community around a trail location... Especially when it comes to the city-wide art trails that Wild in Art specialise in.

According to Wild in Art’s Charlie Langhorne, “Trails can help regenerate neighbourhoods, celebrate identity, promote inclusivity and boost mental health. From city centres to coastal towns, we’ve seen first-hand how they create shared experiences that bring people together – and often leave a lasting legacy through fundraising for local causes.”

TRAILS & TECH

The space has embraced various innovations in recent years, with brands utilising apps and AR to ‘level up’ the trail experience. In 2017, Magic Light launched

a Gruffalo Spotter App at Forestry England sites – an augmented reality experience which allowed visitors to discover characters along the trail and bring them to life digitally.

A further AR experience was developed for Zog in 2021. Aardman has also embraced AR for its trails, most recently launching the All System Go app that allows partner venues to host their own Wallace & Gromit themed trail, complete with challenges and photo opportunities.

“These digital experiences offer a simple, turnkey package for visitor attractions to use the IP... And to create impactful campaigns and enhance and vary their on-site public event programming,” says Aardman’s Molly Van Den Brink.

And while innovations are being embraced, Wild in Art’s Charlie Langhorne believes the core appeal of licensed trails lies firmly in the real-world experience. He



“Trails can help regenerate neighbourhoods, celebrate identity, promote inclusivity and boost mental health.”

tells us: “While we expect to see continued growth in areas like gamification, augmented reality and digital storytelling, we firmly believe the enduring power of art trails lies in their simplicity.”

Charlie continues: “In an increasingly digital world, the magic of walking a trail – discovering sculptures, sharing moments, bumping into friends – is only becoming more valuable. The future of trails isn’t about replacing that experience, but enhancing it thoughtfully, while keeping the heart of the trail focused on creativity, community and connection in the real world.”

CAN EVERY BRAND WALK THE WALK?

Do certain brand types suit trails more than others? Some sculpture-focused activations lean heavily on beloved characters. Others, like English Heritage’s Taskmaster partnership, centre on challenges from the show.

“Relevance and resonance are key,” says Wild in Art’s Charlie Langhorne, adding that – for their art trails – “the IP needs to spark instant recognition and emotional connection.”

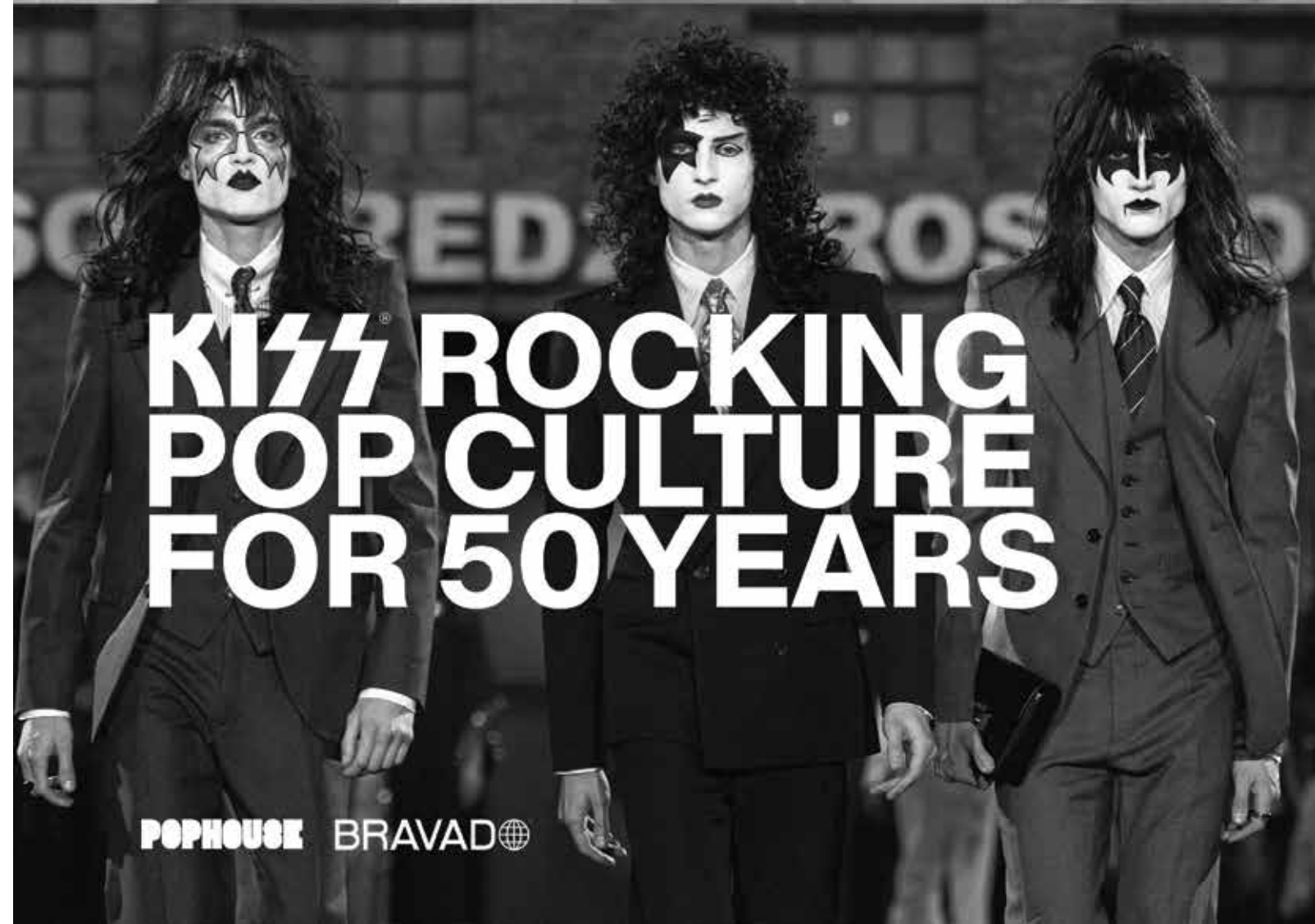
Aardman’s Molly Van Den Brink believes the look of the studio’s characters is a key factor in the success of their trails. She tells

us: “Our characters are unique; they all hold the recognisable hallmarks of an Aardman IP as they’re all handcrafted – generally out of clay. The shapes which form their bodies and parts tend to be quite simple and rounded. As a result, they lend themselves to being instantly recognisable when created in life-size sculpture format... Even when decorated with unique designs which move away from their ‘classic’ style.”

For brands grounded in publishing – like The Gruffalo – trails that embrace storytelling hit the right notes. As Alexandra Sanson tells us: “Children love the trails from Magic Light Pictures because they can take on the part of their favourite characters... Being brave like Mouse or the Gruffalo’s Child; being kind and hardworking like Zog...”

Alexandra continues: “Children feel empowered to engage with the story on their own terms, and parents love the trails because they spark curiosity and combine learning and nature appreciation with physical activity.”

With licensed immersive experiences on the rise in the industry, the interactive trail space shows no signs of slowing down... Its appeal continues to grow among licensors and consumers alike.





INTERVIEW: **CHRISTA MAVROUDIS** AND **PAULA RICH**, DOT DASH DESIGN



Grand Designs

Dot Dash Design's **Christa Mavroudis** and **Paula Rich** take us inside three recent projects with London Zoo, Peppa Pig and Tulipop.



Let's dive into the Souvenir Asset Pack for London Zoo. What was the brief?

The brief was to create a versatile asset pack for the London Zoo brand, commissioned by a London souvenir licensor. The aim was to develop a design system that blended the Zoo's unique identity with the broader visual language of London tourism.



Creatively, this meant combining the charm of the Zoo's animal inhabitants with iconic London landmarks in a playful yet cohesive way... So things like giraffes peeking over Tower Bridge, or meerkats atop red buses.

We delivered two hero placement prints and a repeat pattern, all built from standalone vector elements to ensure maximum flexibility across product formats. The result was a robust asset library that can easily be adapted across apparel, gifting, stationery and homewares – visually engaging, brand-aligned and commercially ready for the souvenir market.

Can creative like this help London Zoo 'own' a theme as broad as animals?

Creative like this plays a crucial role in helping London Zoo carve out a distinctive space within such a broad and universally appealing theme. The challenge here was to create something that felt uniquely London Zoo – not just a generic animal range.

CLIENT CORNER

Abbie Taylor,
Brand Licensing Manager,
London Zoo

Dot Dash completely understood our brief, gave us a variety of design directions to choose from and were an absolute pleasure to work with. They delivered a wonderful set of assets – and we're excited to see these designs come to life through product ranges at souvenir outlets.

Signý Kolbeinsdóttir,
Creative Director &
Co-Founder, Tulipop and
Tulipop Studios

Dot Dash Design was such a great fit for this project. I'm usually really attached to my designs, so it's always hard for me to let go and approve someone else's work... But they made it easy. Their creativity and use of colour brought our ideas to life in a way that felt fresh, vibrant, and completely on point.

Demi Patel
Global Creative Lead –
Fashion & Preschool,
Hasbro

Dot Dash bring a real depth of experience in infant and kids' softlines and they know exactly how to tailor trend insights into creative that truly speaks to this space. Their ability to analyse cultural and design shifts, then translate those into thoughtful, story-driven directions that feel both commercially relevant and emotionally resonant, is a big part of why we trust them with projects like Grow with Peppa.

Their styling choices from palette refinement to texture and form are always intentional and beautifully executed, perfectly pitched for the 0–2 audience. And they consistently strike that sweet spot between brand authenticity and modern parenting trends.

Add in their calm, clear communication and proactive, can-do approach, and Dot Dash feel less like an external agency and more like an extension of our creative team.

"We start by understanding the consumer: what they want, how they shop and what they connect with emotionally."

By blending their iconic wildlife with unmistakable London landmarks, we developed a visual identity that's instantly recognisable and deeply rooted in both place and purpose. It helps position the Zoo not only as a destination but also as a key part of the London experience. This kind of creative gives them ownable visual language; something that's both commercially appealing and brand authentic.



You also recently worked with Hasbro on Peppa Pig infant trend guides. What was important to get right here?

We absolutely loved being part of the Peppa Pig creative at such an exciting moment, preparing for a new arrival! What could be more joyful?! It reminded me a lot of my own experience with my daughter, Gabriella. Buying baby clothes and setting up the nursery was such a special time, so I knew the creative needed to capture that feeling. Having said that, it also had to include the whole family, especially big brothers and sisters. We wanted to make sure it reflected how exciting a new baby is for everyone, not just the parents.

For SS26, we developed four creative directions: Sibling Snuggles, Cosmic Cutie, Three Little Hugs and Let's Play. Each theme was gentle, story-rich and full of warmth. We explored bedtime routines, storybook-inspired graphics, playful moments, and the unique bond between siblings, all designed to reflect those cherished, everyday family moments. Visually, the look leaned into minimalist design and gender-neutral palettes,

aligning with modern parenting preferences and emerging trends in the infant space.

Moving onto your work with Icelandic lifestyle brand Tulipop, what were the key aims for this trend guide?

Our main goal was to translate Tulipop's whimsical 'shiny magical world' into fresh, commercially relevant fashion concepts for young children, blending fantasy with real-world wearability. We created two distinct themes for babywear and toddler, featuring exclusive graphics and custom all-over prints inspired by Tulipop's beloved characters and their enchanted universe. The colour palettes mixed soft, shiny pastels with juicy brights, finished with playful accents like shimmer, iridescence, and glow-in-the-dark, capturing that magical Tulipop tone.



Did your experience with art licensing come into play with these projects?

It played a big role across all three! We're always tracking trends and exploring new ideas and techniques. I think that's true for most designers, though: whether you're working in art licensing, brand licensing or anything in between.

One of our strengths is blending strong colour direction and market awareness with brand authenticity. We're always mindful of staying true to the brand while keeping things relevant to the consumer. And our team's illustration skills really help, especially when we're adapting or redrawing character artwork to align with a specific trend or story.

What are some north stars for ensuring your creative does what it needs to do commercially?

For us, it's always about balance – being creatively exciting while still grounded in what works commercially. We start by understanding the consumer: what they want, how they shop and what they connect with emotionally. From there, we build concepts that not only look beautiful but also have purpose and retail relevance.

NETFLIX STRANGER THINGS

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CHARACTER & ILLUSTRATION
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Built for Success

Hanna Willis, Head of Consumer Products for Minecraft, on surprising collaborations – and how playing the game shapes her approach to licensing.



A Minecraft Movie was a huge success. What impact did it have on your licensing activity?

The Minecraft movie was nothing short of a global phenomenon – and our existing partners immediately saw the impact, with increased visibility and renewed relevance for their products. At the same time, we experienced a surge of new interest across categories and markets.

The success of the film further solidified Minecraft's position not just as a game, but as a cross-generational entertainment brand – exactly the kind of momentum that drives large-scale licensing growth.

Do you play Minecraft? And does that matter in terms of how you approach your role?

Yes, I do play Minecraft when I have downtime – and now that my kids are reaching the age where they're starting to explore the game themselves, it's become even more special. I won't claim to be the world's most skilled builder, but I'm improving! And more importantly, I'm experiencing the game the way our community does.

Playing firsthand offers an invaluable perspective. It's easy to see why people fall in love with Minecraft: the freedom to create, the joy of discovery and the shared adventures that bring players together. That experience is core to how we approach everything – from product development to brand partnerships. If an idea doesn't evoke that same sense of creativity and joy, it won't resonate with fans.

Staying close to the game helps ensure every extension of the brand feels authentic,

meaningful and true to what makes Minecraft so beloved.

Recent partnerships span everything from apparel to Swarovski collectibles. What gives Minecraft that kind of licensing 'elasticity'?

Minecraft's licensing elasticity stems from the brand's unique ability to transcend categories, cultures and generations. At its core, Minecraft is a platform for creativity and self-expression – values that resonate universally and allow the brand to authentically stretch across everything from high-end collectibles to everyday apparel.

How important is it to surprise and delight fans through product?

We know we've done our job if we've surprised and delighted our fans in ways they never saw coming. Whether it's a Swarovski Creeper shimmering in crystal, or a Minecraft ice-cream bar at their local store, these unexpected moments spark emotion, curiosity and connection across our global community.

How do you know when left-field is too left-field?

The key is balance. We seek partners who can interpret Minecraft's DNA in ways that are both authentic and inventive. If a product brings joy and remains true to the brand's spirit of creativity and discovery, that's when we know we've found the right kind of 'left field.'

What's next for Minecraft?

We're not ready to share specifics about our 2026 plans just yet, but our momentum in consumer products is stronger than ever, with new categories and opportunities unlocking across global markets.



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Street Party

Gabriela Arenas – SVP of Global Licensing at Sesame Workshop – looks at why recent collabs with Line Friends and Care Bears make perfect sense for the brand.



Before we dive into your recent Care Bears and Line Friends collaborations, what are some key considerations that steer Sesame Street partnerships?

For us, collabs need to have shared values and be authentic, like-minded, unique – and also unexpected. Care Bears is a multi-generational, evergreen brand, and the pairing with both of these IPs' beloved characters was seamless and natural. Line Friends resonates with a fan demo that we're very strong with. We love their unique art style and how the collaboration expanded to live integrations, making it really special for fans.

How would you pitch the Care Bears collaboration? And what was key to making sure it 'clicked'?

The collaboration is nostalgic-meets-now and retro play. It has a feel-good approach centred around friendship. Working with Cloudco, we developed perfectly matched pairings, from Big Bird and Funshine Bear to Elmo and Cheer Bear, Oscar the Grouch and Grumpy Bear, and Cookie Monster and Share Bear. Both brands are also relevant around the world with strong fan connections.



"Partnerships like this have to be unexpected and unique, yet authentic."

What's the key to ensuring a partnership like this feels balanced?

Both IPs need to stay true to who they are and not dilute themselves. Partnerships like this have to be unexpected and unique, yet authentic. Our characters cannot be who they are not.

Perfect. Can you talk us through some key product launches so far to come from Care Bears x Sesame?

The programme kicked off with the launch of Posh Peanut in July with the cutest – and softest! – clothing for littles and their parents. That was followed by adult-targeted launches with Typo & CottonOn, Cakeworthy and Sonix. There are more co-brands in the line up from Puma, Blank Tag, Monogram, TeeTurtle and Loungefly, as well as product from everyday licensees Centric, MJC, Isaac Morris, Franco and Silver Buffalo. The unique creative makes this collaboration irresistible and we worked to ensure coverage for pretty much every type of item for kids, parents and adult-fans.

Moving on to Line Friends, what made this collab appeal?

Both brands have strong global appeal and feature iconic and expressive characters that share positive values such as kindness and friendship. Line Friends has deep roots in the trendy digital world, especially in Asia, complementing Sesame Street's multi-generational fan base in the market. The range centres on Line Friends characters 'wearing' the costumes of the Sesame characters – and vice versa.

How did you come to that design decision, rather than having Line Friends 'versions' of the Sesame characters?

We liked the idea of the brands coming together in a sweet and visually appealing way, with the subtle blending of colour palettes. It's a design mash-up that offers consumers the opportunity to see both brands in a reimagined, fun way.

Away from collabs, what have been some other notable licensing milestones for Sesame?

We've had huge success in toys and a very strong year with master partner, Just Play.

Following that, Sesame continues to grow in the Kidult space, with lines from leading collectible companies like Funko, NECA and Super7 – including two all-new items at Walmart Collector Con. September saw TeeTurtle launch a brand-new line of reversible plush and – furthering our success with adult-fans – we've partnered with Gilson Snow on a new line of snowboards. Beyond that, there's a joy-meets-style fashion collection from Samii Ryan that merges Sesame Street with Smiley on female-targeted clothing and accessories.

And we should mention healthy habits...

Yes, we're reinforcing healthy habits through partnerships with Gotham Greens lettuce, a continued kids' menu at Just Salad, expanded distribution of 100% juice boxes with Apple & Eve, and new seasonal packaging of 'better for you' snacks with our long-standing partner Earth's Best. We've also expanded offerings in drinkware and the back-to-school space with key partners Simple Modern, Skip Hop, NUK and Zak, and are looking forward to another successful season with Spirit Halloween's costumes for the entire family. All in all, we have a lot of exciting moments and partnerships to celebrate, from key anniversaries next year to presence at top sporting events around the world... And, of course, the global launch of Sesame Street on Netflix!



“All our creative projects start with the philosophy that licensing is an innovative way to reach new audiences..”

Cool for Cats

Concept, character and more: British Museum’s **Craig Bendle** joins Skew’s **Oliver Dyer**, **Sara Bignardi** and **Alexandra Baldwin** to discuss bringing a brand to life...



Great to see you Craig. For those unfamiliar with Bastet, how has she become such an important part of the British Museum brand-extension program?

Craig Bendle, Manager, Product Licensing at the British Museum: Thanks Oliver. As you know, Bastet is inspired by the Gayer-Anderson Cat, an ancient Egyptian masterpiece of metal craftsmanship. For many, its elegant form, gold jewellery and elaborate necklace encapsulates the beauty and mystery of Ancient Egypt. We wanted to find a way to tell the many stories of our vast collection to new, younger audiences and had been developing the Bastet character for several years... But then we began working with Alfilo Brands – our licensing partners in China – to extend it into various product categories.



That’s been a great testing ground to develop the character. It was very well received so we pushed the IP further, developing the character and its story in new directions. That’s where Skew came in!

We needed to bring together a number of teams, build on what had been done, then develop a Master Style Guide. The IP’s positioning is for younger audiences, but with a Gen Z sensibility... Skew focused the art direction, product development and packaging with that in mind.

You have a long-standing relationship with us here at Skew. What qualities do you look to bring to creative projects?

All our creative projects start with the philosophy that licensing is an innovative way to reach new audiences. Our goal is to create new ways of looking at a collection and appeal to audiences in a commercial context. Skew has an extraordinary capacity to bring deep market insights and a full, rich understanding of longer and shorter consumer market trends...

They also have a deep understanding of the Museum and its collection. That potent mix brings fresh, on-point ideas to all our projects, ensuring a collaborative approach and an effective delivery of outputs. Skew is also collaborative in style, so we knew that – for this assignment – they’d work perfectly with our other partners: Alfilo brands and Planarama, our fantastic visual merchandising agency.

You recently briefed us to design a retail experience at the Museum. What was your vision for that?

The vision was to create a vibrant, engaging on-site home for Bastet in the Children’s Shop. This is a crucial retail space situated in the Museum’s bustling Great Court. We needed to elevate the space into something new while working with existing fixtures, features and layout. We transformed the space into ‘Bastet’s Children’s Book Shop’ by implementing the style-guide work in store, bringing in elements of storytelling and theatre.

And Sara, you’ve seen many briefs across the industry... What were your creative objectives for the space?

Sara Bignardi, Creative Director, Skew: We wanted the shop to feel like a story. We designed every visual element to tell a little tale and spark curiosity. Playfulness was key – we chose colours, shapes and layouts to feel lively and dynamic, so kids could explore in their own way.

It was also important to connect the shop back to the Museum, creating a natural link between what children see in the galleries and what they find here. Finally, we enjoyed ‘breaking the frame’! Bastet’s head pops above panels, hangers interact with signage... Lots of small touches that turn the design into part of the storytelling.

Alex, you helped bring everything to life as part of a group of companies. What characteristics did you want to shine through?

Alexandra Baldwin, Design Project Lead on the British Museum, Skew: Bastet is all about fun! We wanted those little surprises around the shop to capture the cheekiness of the character and make you smile. Like most cats, Bastet doesn’t always stick to the rules of where she should and shouldn’t go! That’s why we wanted to show footprints on the Museum’s floor and have the design break the edges of shelves and cupboards...

So Bastet strolls around the Museum at night, interacting with objects and getting up to adventures! We wanted the pop outs to feel a little like she can’t be contained. We also worked with Alfilo, art directing lots of illustrations that used costumes and props to make her more vibrant and inviting for kids. She takes them on adventures through history and showcases the breadth of the Museum’s artefacts.

Thanks, Alex. And to wrap things up, Craig, what kind of reaction has the space had?

Craig: Firstly, we’ve had a fantastic reaction from visitors! It’s also heartwarming that our retail staff love the transformation. It’s elevated our Bastet plush to a best seller, which is fantastic. And, finally, brief fulfilled: we’ve created an on-site home for our Bastet!



Photo: Skew Bastet Master Guideline



Photo: Skew Bastet Master Guideline



Photo: Skew Bastet Master Guideline

Tela

CELEBRATING



2025 marks a milestone in our journey as a creative collective.

Through unique combinations of skill sets and a multigenerational creative vision, our team works to design and create solutions that connect with audiences.

We are deeply grateful for the incredible people and brands who empower us to celebrate creative thinking every day. With strategy, exploration and diverse perspectives, we see the world through an innovative, value-based lens.

Together, let's celebrate human connection and the positive change it can inspire.



THANK YOU

FROM OUR TEAM.

"We're not inventing things – we're using authentic stories and looking at how we retell these in a way that's relevant today."

KISS and Tell

Pophouse Entertainment's **Jon Spalding** on the importance of storytelling... And what's coming up for KISS.



Is now a good time to look after music IP? It seems a big thing right now, especially with the recent buzz around KPop Demon Hunters...
KPop Demon Hunters is interesting because it combines

music with IP-driven storytelling. People keep coming back to it because the story itself is engaging – that is exactly what we're doing at Pophouse, whether it's KISS and their 50 years of stories, starting with Marvel, or Avicii, Cyndi Lauper and Mamma Mia! The Party. We bring the music to life through a franchise-driven approach to storytelling.

Yes, KISS have been fighting monsters in comics for years!

Exactly! You just need an authentic story and great writing. It all comes back to storytelling and that, along with music, is at the centre of our approach.

On that, what are the core storytelling 'beats' to explore?

We always start with music. We aspire to give fans of our artists new ways to enjoy it

– whether that's new releases or remixes. Within the music, there's great stories such as 'Dressed To Kill', released in 1975, which saw KISS wearing suits in New York City. In 2026, Destroyer – the album that launched KISS as true global megastars – turns 50, as well the 50th anniversary of their arrival in the UK.

What KISS did by collaborating with the likes of Marvel, Scooby-Doo, dark KISS horror comics and even Hello Kitty was ahead of its time. We're using all of that source material to build new KISS narratives. We're not inventing things – we're using authentic stories and looking at how we retell these stories in a way that's relevant today.

With Cyndi, we have a true icon of both music and fashion – someone who exploded onto the New York and pop-culture scene in the 1980's with timeless hits like 'Girls Just Want To Have Fun', 'True Colours' and 'Time After Time'.



"I think designers at licensees can really get creative with what we have access to."



How would you sum up your approach to licensing at Pophouse?

We dive deep into the DNA of the artist, the music and the fandom. We talk to fans because KISS is their band and their memories for over 50 years. We listen to them and we try to elevate products – new partnerships, ideas and stories.

This summer, we activated a new partnership with Tomorrowland and Avicii – an incredible immersive experience, with exclusive merchandise and new music released. We were drawn to Tomorrowland, not only because they are pioneers in the music space, but also because of their long and beautiful history with Avicii.

With KISS, there are four key pillars to what we're working on. First there's lifestyle, with elevated KISS-inspired products – such as DSQUARED2 – that new audiences embrace and share on TikTok. Since launching earlier this year, KISS TikTok has gone viral a number of times with over one million followers, reaching a younger, more female demographic. We're focused on expanding into beauty, accessories, home and food & beverage.

The second pillar is play, with toys and collectibles. We're starting with high-end collectibles and have a great relationship with the likes of NECA, Funko and Weta Workshop. The third pillar is digital and gaming – a space which allows us to tell

stories in innovative and interactive ways. And, of course, the fourth pillar is experiences – across LBE, hospitality, events, sports and music. We want to put KISS in places you wouldn't expect.

Have you got an example of how you mine the history of the band for impactful assets and launches?

One example is upcoming apparel we're planning for Halloween. It has a real B-movie style to it, mixed with authentic images of the band which were used on their 1970s releases. So it's authentically KISS – starting with the music, but then focusing the story around Halloween. I think designers at licensees can really get creative with what we have access to.

Before we go, what are some key things coming up for your brands?

Lots of tentpole content releases are planned – a KISS biopic movie, a documentary, early developments on an animation, gaming and, of course, the KISS Avatar Show – think Abba Voyage but KISS!

We also have a number of projects and partnerships with Cyndi Lauper and Avicii, details of which we cannot wait to publicise!

Each tentpole moment will have licensing programs. We treat our moments like movie releases – with a core 'classic' collection alongside new visuals and styles.



“We’ve become more global in our outlook, more inclusive in our practices and more intentional about our values.”

Creativity, Consistency and Culture

As Blue Kangaroo prepares to celebrate its 20th anniversary, MD **Jason Knights** reveals the secret of the studio’s longevity.



Blue Kangaroo celebrates its 20th anniversary next year, Jason. As we approach the milestone, what are some of the biggest evolutions the company’s gone through?

Hitting the 20-year mark is both exciting and humbling. Over the past two decades, the company’s gone through some incredible transformations. In the early days, we were a small, scrappy team focused on delivering creative solutions with limited resources...

Since then, we’ve evolved into a much more strategic and full-service agency. Culturally, we’ve also grown – not just in size, but in maturity. We’ve become more global in our outlook, more inclusive in our practices and more intentional about our values.

What do you think is the key to longevity as a creative studio?

It comes down to three things: adaptability, consistency and culture... Adaptability, because the creative landscape is always shifting. New platforms emerge, consumer behaviour changes and technology evolves. A studio lasts if it embraces change rather than resists it. Consistency relates to the quality of work and how you show up for clients. Trust is built through reliability. Clients need to know you’ll deliver not just once – but over and over again.

Finally, culture is the people behind the work. We’ve worked hard to create an environment where we nurture talent, respect ideas and help people feel they’re part of

something meaningful. If we can keep our team inspired, supported and aligned with our mission, everything else tends to follow.

You’ve worked with a whole host of different brand owners over the years. What’s the key to fruitful relationships with brand owners?

I’d say trust, clear communication and a shared understanding of the brand’s vision. We need to really listen, respect brand guidelines and bring creative solutions that add value rather than just ticking boxes. At the same time, licensors who are open, collaborative and willing to share insights about their audience help create space for the best ideas to come through. Ultimately, it’s about treating the relationship as a partnership, where both sides are working towards the same goal.

There’re many strings to Blue Kangaroo’s bow these days. I understand it all started with illustration and creative, though. Is that still a core focus?

Absolutely! Illustration and creativity have always been at the heart of what we do. It’s where we started and it’s still a core focus today. Over the years we’ve expanded into retail design, experiential, content, strategy and much more – but everything we do is rooted

in that same creative foundation. Illustration remains a real point of pride for us, not just because of the heritage, but because it continues to be a huge differentiator in how we help brands bring their stories to life.

Have there been key projects over the years that’ve shaped Blue Kangaroo?

Early on, working with Disney Store was a huge breakthrough. It gave us the chance to show we could handle global-scale creative, and it set the tone for the quality and ambition we’ve carried forward. Another turning point was moving into retail and experiential design. Projects with the likes of Mattel and NBCUniversal pushed us to grow our capabilities beyond illustration and style guides. Each of those stages has added a new string to our bow, but they all come back to the same foundation: creativity and collaboration.

Fast-forward to today, how has 2025 been for Blue Kangaroo?

2025 has been an incredibly busy and rewarding year so far for Blue Kangaroo. Highlights include multiple activations at festivals like Gloworm, retail installs for



partners such as Spin Master and The Walt Disney Company, and ongoing creative work that keeps some of the most loved IPs fresh and engaging. What’s been most exciting is seeing the variety of ways brands want to connect with audiences – whether that’s through digital-first content, physical experiences, or big storytelling campaigns.



STUDIO GRIGGS

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Brand in Bloom

Claire Potter of Metrostar, Christa Boeke of New York Botanical Garden and Una Joyce of Reiss explore the latter's collaboration...

Before we dive into the Reiss collaboration, for the uninitiated, can you speak to the values of New York Botanical Garden?

Christa Boeke, Vice President of Retail, E-Commerce & Brand Licensing, New York Botanical Garden: At the heart of the NYBG brand is a deep respect for nature, science and storytelling. Everything we do – from our exhibitions to our products – reflects a commitment to celebrating the natural world and inspiring people of all backgrounds to engage with it. We're rooted in the beauty and rigour of our 130-year-old institution... But we're also future-facing; constantly exploring fresh, creative ways to connect with audiences.

Then, when it comes to creative, we're incredibly fortunate. Our licensing and retail teams have access to NYBG's extraordinary archival collection. This is one of the world's great repositories of rare botanical books, historical manuscripts and fine botanical artworks. In short: if you're working with NYBG, you're not just tapping into a brand: you're unlocking access to a living legacy of nature, knowledge, and creativity.

How did this Reiss partnership come about?
Claire Potter, Founder, Metrostar: It was a wonderful combination of so many elements! Crucially, the process involved the Reiss team visiting the Garden to view the library's archive of rare books in person. That's something we encourage

as many partners as possible to do because it's so mesmerising and impressive – and because the warmth of the welcome is wonderful. Shortly after that visit, we were able to agree terms with Reiss.

Amazing. And Una, can you speak to the design process at Reiss? What aspects of the rare book collection inspired this range?

Una Joyce, Womenswear Director, Reiss: Taking inspiration from 16 plates of detailed botanical illustrations of exotic and tropical flora, our in-house designers manipulated, overlaid and re-designed the original prints. The collaboration combines our modern Reiss-design aesthetic with bold, colourful blooms – harmoniously blending style and nature into luxurious summer wardrobe staples – and offering our customers unique pieces that celebrate both fashion and flora.

Christa, what is it about the NYBG's archive that lends itself to this kind of fashion execution?

Christa: Our vast collection of botanical art lends itself to this kind of execution because it offers so much more than surface-level beauty... It also offers authenticity, richness, and narrative – qualities that align perfectly with a brand like Reiss.



NYBG

“I can’t think of another US institution which has had such a high-profile international launch with a European brand.”

Is there a piece in the collection you’re especially happy with in terms of how it utilises your artwork?

Christa: One of the patterns that really stands out for me is the tropical floral that appears across several looks in the collection. It’s based on over 20 different plates from NYBG’s rare book archive, meticulously layered to create something entirely new.

What’s remarkable is how the Reiss creative team took these historic botanical illustrations – each originally crafted for scientific study – and reimagined them into a modern, almost camo-like tropical print. The result feels both elevated and unexpected. It’s lush, intricate, and sophisticated, with a contemporary energy that’s perfect for resortwear.

Reiss is a British brand, but the collection resonates here and globally... Is this unusual for a brand that’s so strongly associated with a location not on our doorstep?

Claire: Actually, I think it might be a first! I can’t think of another US institution which has had such a high-profile international launch with a European brand. It’s been wonderful to see Reiss’s customers picking up the range in so many markets around the world – and to see the pieces being worn by women and girls of so many nationalities.

Christa: The ‘New York’ in New York Botanical Garden carries tremendous weight, and it’s a key part of why

NYBG resonates so strongly on a global stage. At its core, NYBG is a place-based institution, rooted in the Bronx and deeply connected to the natural rhythms of the region. But what makes it exceptional is that it combines that local grounding with a truly international sensibility. The ‘New York’ in the name is more than geography – it’s shorthand for energy, style, innovation and cultural relevance. The place gives the brand authenticity, the city gives it power, and the art gives it global creative reach.

Great answer. And I understand you don’t have a style guide to lean on for NYBG?

Claire: We have very well-produced brand guidelines, but you’re right! We don’t have a style guide in the traditional licensing sense. Of course, having a style guide makes life easier: it’s what most licensees and retailers expect so it’s in the plan moving forward. But we’ve been intrigued by the way partners have taken time to properly consider what’s on trend in their category, and compile mood boards and briefs for the NYBG team to respond to. We feel this leads to imaginative and exciting design work, truly informed by the consumer.

Looking ahead, where else do you see opportunities for NYBG?

Claire: We’re still building. I’d like to see more brand collaborations and licensed ranges in fashion, nightwear, accessories and homewares – and I’d love to develop collections in kids and menswear too. The opportunities are endless because the asset suite is so vast.

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Rock and Roll

Vize's Adam Colp and James Oddy on heavy-metal-inspired creative for Dungeons & Dragons – and the importance of multi-generational appeal.



Guys, it's always great to catch up. We're here to talk about some recent work you did for Hasbro's Dungeons & Dragons brand. Talk me through what the brief was here.



Hey Billy, always a pleasure and loving the momentum with brands untapped – really appreciate the exposure and recognition you're giving to the creatives in our industry.

Wizards of the Coast came to us with 3 compelling briefs ... The first one was to take a selection of original characters from the game and turn them into epic rockstars! We took inspiration from bootleg T-shirts and retro rock tour posters to create a hell-raising range of artwork! We deep dived into old Iron Maiden album covers and really pushed the illustration style taking D&Ds classic painted style and turning them into vector almost B-movie style film illustrations. It really was one of our most fun briefs from the last year!

How did you get under the skin of D&D? Were you fans of the game – and does that matter when it comes to how you create for brands?

We grew up with the D&D brand and were always aware of its immense fandom. To do the work justice, we had to immerse ourselves in that world and, in a sense, become huge fans ourselves. That process of discovery and research was key to getting the creative right and making sure it resonated with both the brand and the players.

D&D has become a wider cultural phenomenon beyond the game, with appearances in global popular culture shows and live game streaming platforms. Did you play with that wider pop culture perception of the brand?

Definitely. The creative direction took cues from D&D's emergence in contemporary media and its resonance across genres—from tabletop roots to modern-day storytelling on screens. Characters like the Demogorgon and Vecna have become icons not just for long-time players, but also for a new wave of fans discovering D&D through broader media. By applying bold grunge typography and rock-inspired themes, we were able to tap into both the game's legendary roots and its evolving place in the cultural spotlight.

Speaking of players, D&D celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, so it's fanbase spans generations. How do you approach capturing that multi-generational appeal in your creative? And do different generations need different creative?

The multi-generational side of D&D is what makes it so special. Creatively, it's about balancing heritage with freshness — honouring the lore that long-time fans connect with, while reimagining it in ways that feel exciting for new audiences who might have discovered the brand through pop culture. We focus on the timeless symbols and themes that unite everyone, then build a visual language flexible enough to resonate across generations.

Why is it important to take a multi-generational approach like this to create – and to licensing in general? And are there other examples of work you've done recently where you've tapping into a generation-spanning audience?

Taking a multi-generational approach is key because it gives a brand real longevity — it's about keeping loyal fans engaged while bringing new ones in. With licensing especially, you want products and stories that different generations can connect over together. We've seen that with other Hasbro brands too, like Transformers, where the nostalgia of the originals combines with new films and series to bring in a fresh audience. That mix of heritage and reinvention is what makes the work feel both timeless and relevant.

What made rock inspirations a natural fit for D&D?

There's always been a significant overlap between D&D and the world of rock, especially classic & heavy metal—both embrace fantasy, epic storytelling, and a bit of rebellion. Lately, the rock theme has snowballed, with the steamrolling Oasis world tour and the unfortunate death of legendary Ozzy Osbourne, which has brought a magnitude to the genre. Combining the attitude of 80s metal and the imagination of D&D just works—it's like peanut butter and jelly!

Each side amplifies the other, creating something that feels iconic and completely fresh at the same time.

You've worked with Hasbro before – what makes this team good to work with? And generally speaking, what is the key to fruitful studio/brand owner relationships?

Hasbro are a great team to work with because they really trust the creative process. They come to us with strong briefs but also give us the freedom to push ideas into new spaces, which is where the magic usually happens. They know their brands inside out, but they're also open to fresh perspectives, which makes the collaboration feel like a genuine partnership. In general, the key to any good studio-brand relationship is that balance of trust and communication — knowing when to guide, when to listen, and always keeping the shared goal of building something exciting for the audience.



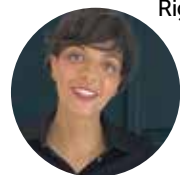
SHELBY & CO. BAR + KITCHEN

BUILDING AN EMPIRE

David Christopher and Leila Loumi of Banijay Rights on a big year for Peaky Blinders – and what's still to come.



To kick us off, how has 2025 been so far for the Peaky Blinders brand?
David Christopher, Director of Licensing and Merchandising, Banijay Rights: it's been an incredibly exciting year. We've entered it with strong momentum across multiple categories. From hospitality, immersive experiences and gaming to gambling, board games, poker sets fashion, accessories and more!



Each of these categories continues to expand the way fans connect with the brand in their daily lives. With so much energy across licensing and fan engagement, 2025's been a year of growth and excitement for the Peaky Blinders brand – with more to come.

There're plenty of strings to pull when bringing the brand into consumer products and experiences. What've you found resonates with licensees?

Leila Loumi SVP, Licensing and Merchandising, Banijay Rights: Over the past decade, the brand has sustained global interest, proving its longevity and relevance across all markets. The beauty of the Peaky

Blinders IP is its incredible richness and versatility. Licensees are consistently drawn to the brand's distinct style, grit and authenticity – and its rich characters. All qualities that translate seamlessly into fashion, accessories and lifestyle products.

Beyond the aesthetic, there's a deep cultural resonance with the themes of family, loyalty, ambition and resilience. These give products and experiences real emotional weight for fans.

On that: the Shelby & Co. Bar + Kitchen launched at Birmingham Airport last year. Can you talk us through some of the venue's immersive elements?

David: Our aim was to create an environment that speaks to both fans and non-fans. Customers can walk in as a Peaky Blinders fan and feel connected to the show – or they can walk in as a non-fan and have a great experience in an award-winning bar and kitchen. Subtle nods to the style of the Peaky Blinders, an extensive food and drinks menu that showcases local breweries and gins, and set imagery dotted around all combine to create authentic taste of Peaky Blinders – and Birmingham itself.

We're seeing an emphasis on experiential based licensing, with fans wanting new and exciting ways to celebrate and engage with

their favourite brands. Giving people travelling through Birmingham – the home of the Peaky Blinders – a place to do this felt like a no-brainer.

How important was it for Banijay Rights to 'own the Peaky Blinders look' through licensing?

Leila: The look is central to the brand's identity. Being able to 'own' it through a licensing programme is hugely important. The sharp tailoring, flat caps and distinct styling associated with the Shelby family are iconic, extending beyond the screen into popular culture.

Securing partnerships with high-end fashion brands for suiting as well as casualwear was a crucial step in establishing the Peaky Blinders look in the fashion space. By starting with premium ranges, we were able to build credibility and authenticity around the brand's iconic style. From there, extending into more accessible casualwear allowed us to broaden the appeal and make the fashion relevant to a younger Gen Z audience – ensuring the Peaky aesthetic resonates across all generations.

And theory11 is launching playing cards this year. What made them a neat fit for Peaky Blinders?

David: As you may know, theory11 is renowned for creating luxury playing cards in collaboration with some of the world's biggest entertainment brands. Their focus on storytelling through intricate design and craftsmanship makes them a perfect fit for the stylish and immersive world and characters of Peaky Blinders.

Last question... What untapped areas do you feel are ripe with potential for Peaky Blinders?

David: We see untapped potential for Peaky Blinders in areas that really lean into the brand's immersive and lifestyle appeal. Hospitality remains a powerful growth driver, and additional live experiences allowing fans to step directly into the world of the Shelbys. We also see scope to grow within publishing, homeware, spirits, food, grooming, accessories, which are another exciting avenue.

"Licensees are consistently drawn to the brand's distinct style, grit and authenticity."

“Every time I travel for work, I make a video that looks at the retail trends.”

Talking Shop

SBC's **Sophie Bloomfield** details her approach to retail trend forecasting – and shares three trends to keep an eye on...



Sophie, you've recently started making videos about retail trend forecasting. What's brought that about?

As you know, most creatives in our industry do a lot of research. Sometimes that's useful right across the board, sometimes it's useful just at that time... And sometimes nothing happens with it! A client might decide to drop a project, for example, or change direction. When that happened to me recently, I knew I could do something useful with all the research. So I decided to start making videos – partly for fun, but partly because my brain recalls things better when I do them visually.

So it evolved from there... What's your process?

In short: every time I travel for work, I make a video that looks at the retail trends. How, for example, should you approach retail research? First, it's got to be the prep! If I'm going store checking, I always make a list of retailers I want to look at. You can't do every retailer in a day – you'd be exhausted! So I do narrow it down a bit... Then I list some key product categories. Of course, if you know the retailers you're looking for, you most likely know the categories you're interested in – you're ready!

What's next?

I take a lot of images! These include storefronts, interesting visual merchandising, exciting graphic compositions or applications, new ranges and so on... As you move between stores, you can investigate whether or not there's any correlation of trends between them. We all want creative that lasts and really resonates with the consumer and the

brand – so this really is key when it comes to identifying long-term trends versus more in-and-out fast fashion.

And with that said, what are your three retail trends to watch right now?

The first is about bringing consumers back to bricks and mortar stores. How? By focusing on experiences. A great example of that right now is in the brand new Space NK store in London's Oxford Street. Called 'Play', the focus of the in-store experience is all about trying product. This is really is key for the beauty space and, here, they even have their own dedicated Space NK Jellycat plush!

My next pick is illustrated by Marks & Spencer. They have a great approach to making food launches go viral. Just look at their Red Diamond Strawberry & Crème sandwich! That got a lot of interest; it's such a smart take on the viral Japanese fruit sando. So what I think M&S is doing really well is harnessing the power of influencers. They're also creating compelling reasons for regular people to review and create content around food launches... Take a look at their 'mukbangs' on TikTok.

Mukbangs?!

Right, Online broadcasts in which a host interacts with viewers while eating food on camera. And the last retailer trend I want to highlight is the growth of full collections, merchandised really well at retail. Primark's Wednesday Addams range is a perfect example. It's a fantastic range that Colleen Atwood – the show's costume designer – was involved in creating. As a result, it feels like a truly elevated collaboration – and goth grunge is going to be an all-year round trend that grows and grows.



“We create guides that aren’t just visually striking, but are truly empowering tools that invite play, experimentation and fresh possibilities.”

Studio Noel

Inside the Studio

We catch up with the talented bunch at **Studio Noel** to learn about recent projects, creative techniques – and studio superpowers...



MICHELLE NOEL,
Strategy Director & Founder, Studio Noel

Michelle, tell me... What do you find exciting about crafting creative for brands?

For me, it’s the interplay between structure and imagination. A good style guide should give every licensee the confidence to create something engaging, while also giving highly inventive teams the freedom to push boundaries. I love building systems that unlock both.

What are the studio’s biggest strengths?

We create guides and products that aren’t just visually striking, but are truly empowering tools that invite play, experimentation and fresh possibilities. I see it most vividly in our work with museums and cultural institutions. These projects hold incredible depth... Our role is to capture that richness in a way that feels alive, giving brands the freedom to evolve without ever losing their essence.

KATIE EDMUNDSON,
Senior Designer & Illustrator, Studio Noel

Katie, what is Studio Noel’s superpower?

As a studio we have such a great set of skills in house. Our illustration work is one of the places we shine... This really came through in the work we did for the Natural History Museum, both in the Memory Lane trend guide and the Core Licensing guides.

Memory lane allowed us to explore themes of nostalgia – illustrating key animals and the museum itself with a romantic, old-fashioned charm. The core style guides on the other hand were tackled with a more technical approach. That ensured we could build out a functional system which would work across all Natural History Museum licensing packaging for all ranges of ages. This let us explore completely different illustration styles around the same subject matter, really homing in on what would be most exciting and appropriate to each market.



ROSIE ATKIN,
Project Manager, Studio Noel

Rosie, what do you find most exciting about crafting creative for IP?

What excites me is how no two brands are ever the same. Each one brings a new rhythm, a new challenge, and a new way of thinking. That constant shift keeps the work fresh and makes every project feel alive.

And what fuels creativity for you?

Creativity for me is fuelled by variety. It could be sparked by a colour, a sound, a texture, and suddenly ideas start to flow. My role as a project manager has taught me how to channel that energy, to streamline the rush of inspiration without ever compromising it.

HATTIE HOLMES,
Designer & Illustrator, Studio Noel

Hattie, thanks for stepping out of the design zone to chat! Can you talk me through a recent piece of work that resonated for you?

A couple of the projects I’ve really enjoyed recently are the design of character IP books. For me, the joy of this work is in bringing characters off the page and into something tangible. It’s about capturing the essence of who they are and translating that into layouts, illustrations and details that feel authentic and engaging.

It highlights a real strength of the studio... Being able to move from deep brand understanding through to the design of the final licensed product that feels true to the character and exciting for the fans.



NOOR BALOCH,
Business Development Manager, Studio Noel

What’s exciting about the impact of the work produced by Studio Noel?

Seeing how a great idea can completely shift perception, shape narratives, and open up new opportunities. It’s that sweet spot where strategy meets storytelling, and when it’s done right, you can feel the impact not just visually, but commercially too.

Great answer! And what fuels creativity for you?

I’m a chronic café hopper, and with so many unique spots popping up around London, being surrounded by other people’s creativity always fuels my own creative spark.

What is your role at Studio Noel?

It’s about connecting the dots, spotting new opportunities, and keeping a pulse on the latest industry trends. I spend a lot of time keeping up with what’s happening across design and licensing, which helps us stay sharp.



Bear Necessities

James Hinton – Head of Creative and Marketing at STUDIOCANAL Kids & Family – on developing Essential Paddington... And why it resonates with partners.



Before we dive into Essential Paddington, what makes for an effective style guide, James?

An effective style guide should be both inspiring and practical. It's there to unlock creativity for licensees, while ensuring the brand's identity stays consistent and authentic. For Paddington, that means giving partners the tools, assets and inspiration they need to tell his story in a way that's unmistakably 'him' – while still leaving room for innovation. A good guide doesn't just show logos and colour palettes. Rather, it helps partners see the brand's personality, tone of voice and narrative opportunities.

How have the needs of style guides evolved in recent years?

In the past, style guides were often seen as static 'rulebooks'. Today, they're much more dynamic – almost like creative springboards. Licensees need adaptable assets that work across digital, physical, experiential and global markets. Style guides now have to keep pace with trends, cultural moments and consumer expectations, which means building in flexibility while staying true to the brand's DNA.

What were some of the key aims for Essential Paddington?

With Essential Paddington, we wanted to develop a creative system that's inspiring as well as comprehensive... Something that speaks to major global players as well as existing partners. It's important to meet the creative and technical needs of our collaborators, and I think these assets are all you need to make Paddington shine. Our aim was to celebrate everything people love about Paddington while giving licensees the flexibility to meet today's market demands. That meant

introducing fresh poses, props and seasonal packs, as well as highlighting iconic elements like marmalade and London landmarks. We also opened up new creative territories, from playful humour and seasonal trends, to apparel inspiration drawn from Paddington's 'Hard Stare' and vintage charm. The result is a guide that can fuel bold, imaginative product lines for any territory, while keeping the heart of Paddington front and centre.

'The Hard Stare', London, Marmalade... Do these different IP aspects suit different categories?

Definitely. Marmalade, for example, works brilliantly for food gifting and kitchenware. London landmarks and vehicles naturally lend themselves to travel accessories, stationery and fashion. 'The Hard Stare' and vintage vibes have huge appeal for apparel where a knowing wink or humorous reference can connect with adult fans as much as children.

The guide also brings 32, Windsor Gardens to life in some terrific ways, from a more collegiate style to brand-new illustrations.

Yes! Windsor Gardens is Paddington's home, but it's also the heart of his story. It's a place full of warmth, community, and adventure. We realised it could be much more than a backdrop. By creating dedicated seasonal illustrations and developing vehicles, trees and flowers to accompany it, we've turned it into a versatile design asset. It can lend itself to apparel, stationery, homeware... Anywhere you want that feeling of belonging and British charm!

Can you talk me through how the creative captures the classic side of the brand in a way that feels fresh?

We wanted to respect the timeless qualities that make Paddington so beloved: from his iconic duffle coat and hat to that uniquely gentle yet adventurous spirit... Yet we also wanted the guide to feel modern and dynamic. That's where our partnerships with a number of incredible creative agencies really contributed. For example, Wigwam's talented illustrators helped us reimagine

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LONDON



PADDINGTON
BIG CITY - SMALL BEAR



"We wanted to respect the timeless qualities that make Paddington so beloved, yet we also wanted the guide to feel modern and dynamic."

traditional elements, revisiting classic poses while placing Paddington in fresh, vibrant contexts. More recently, we worked with Red Central to develop our new brand-packaging guide and a bespoke Paddington typeface. Zedig Design also created beautiful packs alongside the logotype itself.

To wrap up, can you tell us some ways in which the guide's already been applied?

Of course! This look and feel has really resonated with our partners – particularly those creating lines aimed at Gen Z, who connect with the blend of heritage, humour and trend-aware styling. We've already seen it come to life in exciting collaborations with Jo Malone London last year, followed by Dr.

Paw Paw, Wild Cosmetics, and SkinnyDip London. They each bring their own spin while staying true to Paddington's charm. We've also embraced it ourselves with the launch of our exclusive Essential Paddington capsule collection for The Paddington Store...

At Paddington Station?

Right, and online. It's been flying off the shelves! Beyond that, we've seen licensees using the seasonal packs to create standout Christmas, Halloween and Spring ranges. They're also tapping into assets like Windsor Gardens and the London sights to bring freshness to apparel, accessories, and lifestyle products. You'll be able to discover these very soon!





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Hats Off

Ellie Terveen, EVP of Operations at Dr. Seuss Enterprises, on The Cat in the Hat activity – and the untapped potential of Dr. Seuss Babies.



To kick us off, Ellie, is there a recent launch that comes to mind as a good example of how creative licensees can be with Dr. Seuss' brands?

It's hard to narrow down recent launches because there've been so many standout moments across categories! It's exciting to see how licensees bring their own creative lens to the brand. The most impactful products often come from partners who either tap deeply into the brand's DNA or take a unique, bold design approach that feels fresh but authentic. That's where we see the most creativity: when a licensee isn't just applying the brand to a product but thinking about how to reimagine it for a new audience, format, or context.

Does a licensee's approach to design have a big impact in whom you decide to partner with?

A licensee's approach to design is always a key consideration for us, especially as we look to tap into different consumer bases and deepen fandom. Design plays a critical role in how the brand shows up in the world – it's often the first touchpoint for fans, and it needs to reflect both our identity and the evolving tastes of our audience.

We're constantly looking for unique, creative ways to surprise and delight our fans, and strong, thoughtful design is essential to making that happen. It's not just about product – it's about storytelling, connection and bringing the brand to life in ways that feel fresh and authentic.

There's a new The Cat in the Hat movie on the way next year – and the brand turns 70 in 2027. How do you see these moments opening new opportunities for the brand?

The Cat in the Hat is a brand that's loved around the world, with a legacy that resonates across generations and cultures. A major film release can definitely create a meaningful boost in fandom, not only reigniting passion among existing fans but also helping us tap into entirely new markets. The storytelling power of film has a unique ability to expand a brand's reach and emotional connection.

And as we look ahead to the 70th anniversary in 2027, we're already seeing new opportunities open up with partners who are excited to be part of this next chapter. It's an exciting time for the brand, and we're focused on leveraging this momentum to build even deeper engagement with fans – both old and new – across the globe.

There's a certain level of whimsy to The Cat in the Hat – and a lot of Seuss brands. Does that open up 'left-field' opportunities?

That's the power of Dr. Seuss. It has so much depth – rich with art, storytelling and cultural relevance... It opens the door to an incredible range of creative expression. Whether it's direct character licensing or avant-garde fashion, the brand has the versatility to show up in ways that are both unexpected and authentic.

That's why it's so important for us to pursue collaborations and partnerships that truly surprise and excite fans. When we lean into the brand's full potential, we're able to create moments that not only honour its legacy, but also push it into new, inspiring territory. Those are the kinds of experience that deepen fandom and keep the brand fresh and culturally resonant.

"We're constantly looking for unique, creative ways to surprise and delight our fans, and strong, thoughtful design is essential to making that happen."

Licensing-wise, is there a brand in the portfolio that you feel remains untapped?

Dr. Seuss Babies is still largely untapped in the licensing space, which makes this a particularly exciting time. We're in the early phase of bringing the brand to market, and it truly feels like the beginning of a bold new chapter.

This is the brand you launched last year featuring baby versions of classic Dr. Seuss characters.

Yes! There's so much potential to build something meaningful from expanding into new categories to forging strong partnerships with brands, licensees, and retailers. The opportunity to shape how the brand shows up in the world is energising. We're focused on creating thoughtful, strategic collaborations that not only drive growth but also reflect the brand's unique identity and connect with fans in fresh, impactful ways.

Last question! What fuels your creativity?

My creativity comes from all different places and it's rarely ever a straight line. Sometimes it's sparked by a conversation, other times by visiting new places or simply observing the world around me. I find that inspiration often comes when I least expect it, which is why making space for creativity is so important. Whether it's carving out quiet time to think or allowing room in the process for ideas to evolve, giving creativity the time and space it needs is key.



Toy Stories

Kim Boyd, President of Global Toy & Licensed Consumer Products at Hasbro, on new launches and vault opportunities.

Kim, you've been in your expanded role for nearly a year; overseeing Global Licensed Consumer Products in addition to Hasbro's Toy & Game portfolio. How's it been?

It's truly been an energizing year! Stepping into this broader role has only reinforced how powerful our brands can be when we take a unified, global approach across toys and licensed consumer products. We've focused on aligning teams, tools and storytelling across the business to open up new opportunities... That includes sharpening our franchise-first strategy and creating more connected, culturally meaningful licensing programs.

From celebrating Monopoly's 90-year legacy to scaling 'retailtainment' through immersive destinations like our Transformers and Peppa Pig stores in London, we're building across every aisle and experience. It's all about playing to win with intention, creativity and focus.

The introduction of Baby Evie to the Peppa Pig brand was a huge story. How do you see Evie shaping brand opportunities? And how big a risk is it for companies to 'reshape' the status quo of a brand as you have here?

It's always a risk to evolve something beloved – but it's an even bigger risk not to. Peppa Pig turned 20 last year and ended 2024 as the number one children's show on Netflix. Rather than rest on that success, we saw it as the right time to refresh the brand for a new generation of parents while continuing to engage preschoolers in meaningful ways.

Evie's arrival has brought new energy to the franchise. She's opened the door to fresh storylines and product innovation as well as expanded emotional connections with families. We've already seen licensees respond across publishing, apparel, live experiences, promotions, music and more. By expanding Peppa's world thoughtfully and authentically, we're laying the foundation for the next 20 years with

storytelling and design choices that reflect today's families, while staying rooted in what makes Peppa so enduring.

And from new additions to heritage opportunities... What makes the Hasbro vault an exciting prospect for licensees?

With over 1,900 associated brands, our vault is packed with potential. Mr. Potato Head is a standout. It's universally recognised yet still feels like a wide-open canvas. We're currently exploring new expressions of the brand that tap into fashion, design, and character-led storytelling. There's real potential for it to re-emerge in unexpected, joyful ways. With new entertainment on the horizon, let's just say there's plenty more in store for our favourite spud.

Nicely teased!

We're also seeing strong momentum behind other heritage brands that continue to capture cross-generational attention. Jem and the Holograms is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, for example, and Stretch Armstrong turns 50 in 2026. There's always a nostalgia factor, but we're focused on reintroducing these worlds in bold, fresh and culturally relevant ways. Similarly, through our licensing agreement with Just Play, Easy-Bake and Playskool have relaunched with refreshed lines exclusively at Walmart...

Meanwhile, Tonka also holds huge potential. Its themes of grit, strength and outdoor adventure still connect with today's kids. We're also actively exploring new ways to bring those values into categories like ride-ons, outdoor





"With over 1,900 associated brands, our vault is packed with potential."

toys and lifestyle partnerships. So the vault is exciting not just because of its history, but because of the new ideas we can build from it – especially when combined with the right cultural insight and creative vision.

Is there a brand in the portfolio that you feel remains relatively untapped licensing-wise?

We're excited about several – each with distinct strategies and strong potential for growth. Let's start with Littlest Pet Shop! Since its toy relaunch last year with Basic Fun!, the brand's been on an incredible trajectory. In Q2 2025, it ranked as the number one growth property in G10 collectibles, cementing its position as a category leader and must-watch IP. We see clear opportunities across lifestyle, fashion, publishing and digital – especially for older Gen Alpha and Gen Z fans engaging with the brand through nostalgia and content.

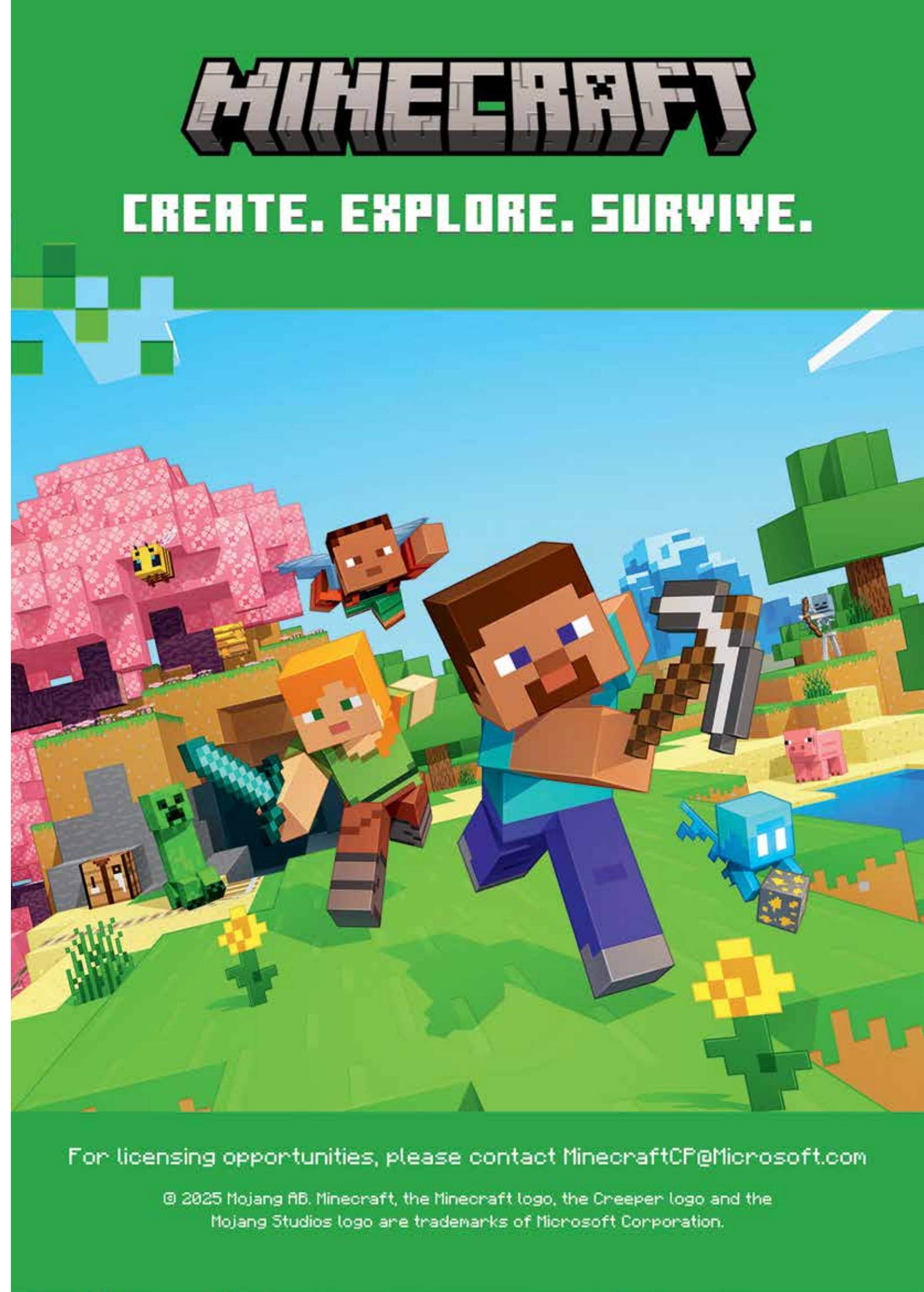
Skelanimals is another property we're excited about. It has a distinctive look, a devoted cult following and a tone that

lends itself to fashion, accessories, publishing and pop culture collaborations. With today's creepy-cute trend continuing to resonate, Skelanimals is incredibly timely – and we're actively looking for partners who can tap into that energy.

Exciting. Any others?

We're also energised by what's ahead for Power Rangers. With Playmates Toys on as our new master toy licensee, the franchise is evolving for today's consumer. There's strong potential across fashion, collectibles, publishing, digital content and experiences... All grounded in the brand's legacy of teamwork, friendship and action.

Finally, I'd be remiss not to mention Play-Doh – and there's still a great deal of untapped potential when it comes to licensing. We see strong opportunities to extend its identity into adjacent spaces like wellness, home and design-led lifestyle categories. As we approach its 70th anniversary next year, it's a perfect moment for partners to join us in evolving the brand.



For licensing opportunities, please contact MinecraftCP@Microsoft.com

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Spilling the Creative Tea

Studio Griggs's **Stephanie Griggs** and Aardman's **Ilona Sunderland** pour tea and pore over core guides for Wallace & Gromit and Shaun the Sheep.

REFRAMING THE CORE

Stephanie Griggs, Creative Director & Founder, Studio Griggs: We've been working for months together on these guides, so it's a lovely moment to reflect on it all. To kick things off – why was this the right time to commission us for these guides? And I'm delighted you did, by the way!

Ilona Sunderland, Creative Services & Product Development Manager, Aardman: Ditto! It feels like both brands are going through quite a shift. Historically, the guides were structured around content drops, and leaned heavily on a film-first approach – particularly for Wallace & Gromit. But our audience has grown and evolved... We've seen huge growth globally, particularly across Asia, and a new wave of younger, Gen Z consumers engaging with the brands in fresh ways.

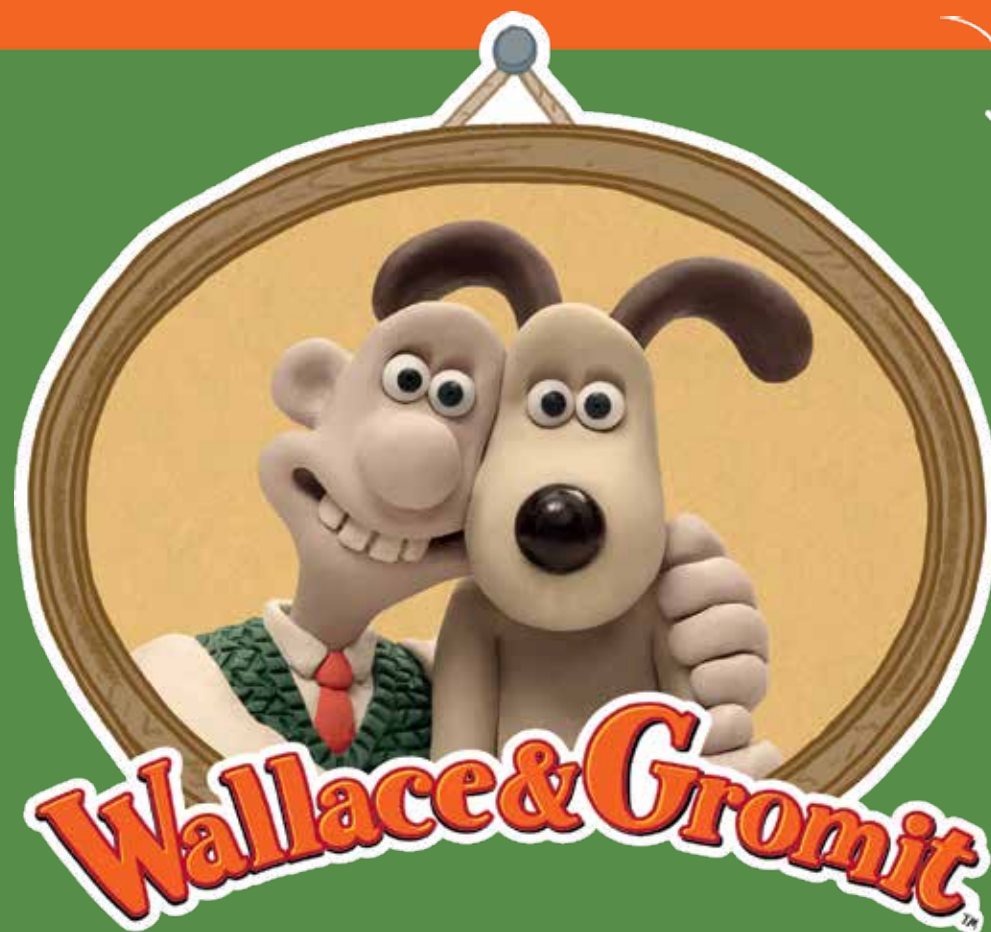
That meant this was the perfect moment to reframe what 'core' really means. Instead of a single, rigid toolkit, the guides now act as a kit of parts... Assets that partners can use flexibly to build product ranges while keeping that consistent visual language.



STUDIO
GRIGGS



AARDMAN



STRIPPING BACK TO WHAT MATTERS

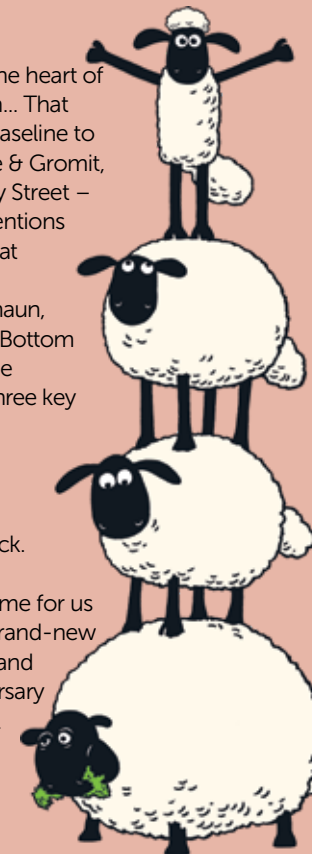
Steph: With so much heritage to draw from, the goal was stripping it all back to the heart of each of the two brands... Then rebuilding a kit of parts that feels timeless and inspiring while serving the commercial strategy and audience-led purpose.

Ilona: Right. The new guides create a stronger bridge between creative and commercial. By expanding our asset bank, especially for categories like food and beverage, we can confidently support partners and open new opportunities. The guides act as a framework – helping us spot gaps, unlock new categories and give retailers the tools they need to tell richer stories while staying true to the brand.

LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

Steph: Finally, I think the heart of both guides is location... That serves as the perfect baseline to the assets. For Wallace & Gromit, that's 62, West Wallaby Street – centre of the mad inventions and home comforts that underline their companionship. For Shaun, we zoom in on Mossy Bottom Farm! We then distill the goings-on there into three key spaces that feel right: Mischief and humour, nature and the great outdoors, and the relationships of the Flock.

Ilona: It's an exciting time for us with the release of a brand-new Shaun the Sheep film and Aardman's 50th anniversary celebrations next year. I'm so excited for our partners to use the new guides!



Shaun
the
Sheep

DIGGING INTO THE ARCHIVES

Ilona: For me, one of the most exciting parts of the process was exploring the archives. We've looked through our huge archive to unearth forgotten gems and bring older assets up to date with colour regrades... Ultimately, we've given them a new lease of life.

Steph: We've also developed a whole suite of bespoke typefaces for both brands, including one of my favourites... It's inspired by Wallace's own handwriting, as if he'd picked up a biro to jot down notes on a scrap of paper. It's about adding those little storytelling details that make the assets come alive in use. As I say this, I'm realising that I have an obsession for peeking into Wallace's note and sketchbooks... I promise I don't do that in real life!

Ilona: Ha! Yes, type definitely shapes the visual language and adds character to everything we create. Also, because the new fonts are owned by Aardman, partners can use them freely without licensing headaches. They're part of that broader aim: giving partners more tools and more freedom, while creating a more consistent visual language.

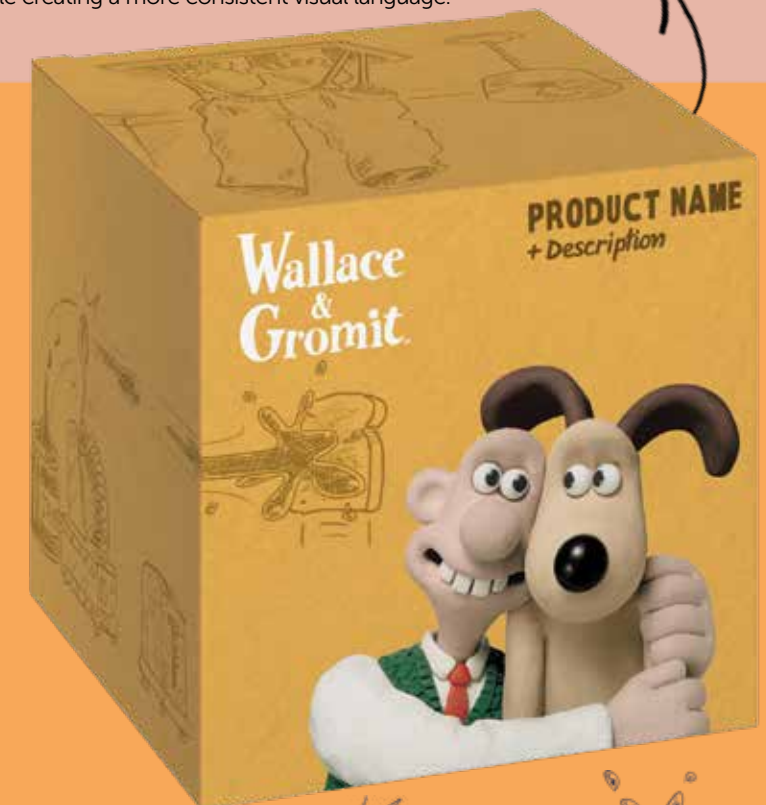
BUILDING FOR TODAY'S AUDIENCE

Ilona: We also needed to make sure the guides could flex for different consumers. Shaun, for example, resonates with everyone from preschoolers and young female fans in Japan to adult collectors in Europe. Instead of producing separate audience-led guides, we now have one core guide with the scope to adapt to each audience through colour palettes, character focus and tone.

So it's about freedom within consistency... Partners can dial elements up or down. Play up the humour for kids, lean into premium textures for adults – but everything still feels authentically Shaun or authentically Wallace & Gromit.

Steph: Yes, and I think the packaging approach for both brands compliments this too. Moving away from a single, templated look and colourway, we've built a modular, character-led system which allows partners to flexibly create ranges that feel fresh and relevant... All while staying true to the brand's DNA.

Also, a real 'pinch me' career highlight was collaborating with Nick Park to create brand-new sketches for the Wallace & Gromit packaging range. The idea came from imagining peeking into Wallace's sketchbook and seeing the doodles he might make before he formalises inventions in his iconic blueprints... It was inspired by a wonderful hand-drawn blueprint I found in the archive from A Grand Day Out. It was signed 'Drawn by Wallace!' Nick did such an amazing job creating new, story-led illustrations for each of the character-led designs.





IT'S MORPHIN TIME

Visit Hasbro at Stand #A211

Go Go Power Rangers!

Those four words have electrified fans across generations since 1993, and are taking '90s kids back to the era when a colorful, seemingly ordinary children's show—MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS—first premiered.

Outlandish action, jaw-dropping spectacle, unstoppable teamwork, diversity, fun, and physical and emotional fitness make Power Rangers one of the most aspirational, feel-good hero brands on the planet.

Unveiled earlier this year, the MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS: Re-Ignition toy line from Playmates Toys brings the action to life with articulated figures, combinable Dinozords forming the legendary Megazord, and fan-favourite role-play items like the Power Morpher and Blade Blaster.

From early retail excitement to Fortnite and influencer collaborations, enhanced 4K streaming, new comics, music streams, and lifestyle drops, POWER RANGERS is everywhere kids and adult fans live, play, and engage—reigniting the legacy and inspiring a whole new generation to more unforgettable moments to collect, dress, experience, (or morph) into extraordinary heroes.



Scan to Relive the Power Rangers Beats



“We’re seeing movements and shifts, particularly linked to generational dynamics.”

Social Cues

Tela CEO **Gabi Drew** looks at how engaging with societal trends can lead to creative that builds brand loyalty and longevity.



Can you talk me through the different trends TELA engages with when crafting creative?

Our current process looks at lifestyle trends through several lenses. There are societal trends – cultural shifts in values, lifestyle and rituals. Then there are consumer trends – visible in retail and digital spaces – alongside category-specific trends in areas like fashion, food or beauty. And, of course, we live and breathe graphic and aesthetic trends – the shapes, palettes and styles that give brand stories their visual texture.

Why is it key to factor in societal trends?

We’re seeing movements and shifts, particularly linked to generational dynamics. For example: with Millennial audiences, we lean into value-based storytelling, whereas with Gen Z there’s a greater need to pay attention to broader cultural shifts. These help us uncover the deeper ‘why’ behind their behaviours. For Gen Alpha – and soon Gen Beta – we take a dual lens: their own emerging identities and the purchasing influence of their parents.

Are societal trends ‘sturdier’ than other types of trends? Or just as fast-moving?

Our aim is to create meaningful brand connections through engaging experiences with consumers. Our objective is not simply to drive mass sell in or sell out – the world has seen enough unnecessary brand slapping! Instead, we focus on the depth of the connections we can create. Through this depth, we build brand loyalty and – consequently – longevity.

It’s like a long-term relationship: you need to be invested in where the other person is at and what matters to them. These shifts are in continuous evolution, as are brands, so we’re constantly exploring how they interconnect, and the relevance they hold – shaping storytelling that resonates today and tomorrow.

Could you share some thoughts on what the ‘spirit of the time’ currently is? And how you see that shaping what happens in the licensing industry?

The current zeitgeist is evolving around authenticity, convergence of cultural and digital/physical, and playfulness. People want to engage with brands and stories that feel genuine, reflect their values and give them a sense of joy and community. In licensing, we need to consider these cultural shifts in context: the audience, the brand’s industry and the specific areas of brand extension. What we’re focused on is pushing brand experiences beyond surface appeal, so they truly resonate culturally and emotionally.

The beauty of brand extension is that it lets us move brands into new spaces, categories and audiences, while staying true to core DNA. The DNA is fixed, but the storytelling can flex. For example, an automotive brand can stand for the importance of time outdoors... A fast-food brand can become a catalyst for friendship and connection... A racing brand can become a way to teach kids about teamwork and tenacity through play.

Interesting! And TELA is based in Milan... This might not be the first place people expect a global creative agency to be based. How does Milan shape your perspective on trends?

Being based in Milan is a big part of who we are, creatively and culturally. Thanks to design and fashion, we’re in one of the world’s true melting pots of trends and inspiration. At the same time, we’re not fully immersed in just one key market, which gives us a broader, more global perspective.

I think that’s why we’ve seen more and more US and UK clients come to us: we’re able to look above and beyond, spotting what’s next rather than just what’s around us. In fact, we’ve tripled our US projects in the past 18 months, proof that brands wanting to reach further are seeking partners who can see ahead through a unique lens.



CAN YOU SEE?

THE VISION



CREATING YOUR BRANDSCAPE.

Introducing the

BRANDS UNTAPPED AWARDS

Thursday, November 12th, 2026

Billy Langsworthy details next year’s inaugural Brands Untapped Awards, designed to celebrate the industry’s creative community.



Next year, Brands Untapped is launching an event to celebrate the achievements of the licensing industry’s incredible community of creatives, designers and product developers...

The Brands Untapped Awards categories are divided into five sections: accolades for creative agencies, licensors,

licensees, a retail-focused award, and three categories that are open to all. The event aims to celebrate teams, creative leaders, style guides and retail activations. Nominations are to be judged by panels on creative execution and commercial impact.

The inaugural Brands Untapped Awards will take place on Thursday, November 12th, 2026, at London’s Under the Bridge. More information to follow!

CATEGORIES



CREATIVE AGENCIES

Style Guide of the Year
(Character & Entertainment)

Celebrating style guides – and the creative agencies behind them – for character and entertainment brands across core guides, trend guides, asset packs and DTR kits.

Style Guide of the Year
(Heritage)

Celebrating style guides – and the creative agencies behind them – for heritage brands across core guides, trend guides, asset packs and DTR kits.

Style Guide of the Year
(Corporate)

Celebrating style guides – and the creative agencies behind them – for corporate brands across core guides, trend guides, asset packs and DTR kits.

Creative Agency of the Year

To celebrate creative agencies that deserve recognition for exceptional work over the past 12 months.

“The inaugural Brands Untapped Awards will take place on Thursday, November 12th, 2026, at London’s Under the Bridge.”

LICENSORS

Creative/PD Team of the Year
(Entertainment Licensor)

Celebrating in-house PD and Creative teams that achieved extraordinary things for entertainment licensors over the last year.

Creative/PD Team of the Year
(Heritage Licensor)

Celebrating in-house PD and Creative teams at heritage licensors that have excelled over the past year.

Creative/PD Team of the Year
(Corporate Licensor)

Celebrating in-house PD and Creative teams at corporate licensors that have thrived over the last year.

PD/Creative Leader of the Year

Celebrating an inspiring PD or creative leader at a licensor that has impressed over the past year.

LICENSEES

Design Team of the Year
(Apparel)

Celebrating in-house design teams at apparel licensees that have achieved extraordinary things over the last year.

Design Team of the Year
(Consumer Products)

Celebrating in-house design teams at licensees across all consumer products categories that have excelled over the last year.

Design Team of the Year
(Experiences)

Celebrating development teams at experiential licensees that have launched noteworthy experiences in the past 12 months.

Design Leader of the Year

Celebrating a design leader at a licensee that has impressed over the past year.

RETAIL

In-Store Activation

Celebrating the design and creative execution of a retail activation for a licensed launch.

OPEN TO ALL

Community Champion

Celebrating those who go above and beyond in championing and supporting the industry’s creative community.

Rising Star

Celebrating fresh creative talent working in the areas of design and product development, across licensors, licensees, creative studios and agencies.

Icon

Celebrating an iconic figure in the industry’s creative community who consistently demonstrates excellence in the design, development or creative space across their career.

“We created around 100 concepts that were slimmed down to the final 16 – each with different applications and innovations!”



It's a Date!

Danilo's **Dan Grant, Corrina Cartlidge** and **Bradley Green** discuss the design process behind the company's cards and calendars.

Let's dive into the design process behind Danilo's licensed cards and calendars. What kicks things off?

Corrina Cartlidge, Head of Design, Cards, Danilo Promotions: For cards, if it's a new licence, we'll have conversations about where we could go with it, as well as factoring in what the sales teams, licensors and retailers need from a range. There's lots of different stakeholders. We might have a tight brief, like 'an Xbox Son birthday card' or the other extreme of 'We need new Christmas concepts across all brands'. There're always key factors: Who's it for? What's the occasion? It needs to resonate emotionally and make sense – to both the receiver, but also to the person buying it. As 80% of card buyers are women, that comes into it too.

Is there much crossover in the process when it comes to calendars?

Bradley Green, Head of Design, Calendars & Diaries, Danilo Promotions: There is crossover, but because we're more seasonal, we have kick-off meetings with licensors at specific times of the year. That's important because with a lot of brands, we're doing multiple calendars and diaries – I think we have 10 with Liverpool FC this year! So we'll meet and lock down the products and the content needed – is it just going to be image-led? Will there be editorial? We might be using a style guide, or if a style guide is limited, we'll look at creating assets ourselves. Then the design team will talk about ideas, themes and who the right designer is for a particular project. For example, I handle the Star Wars jobs because I'm a huge fan and know the brand inside out.

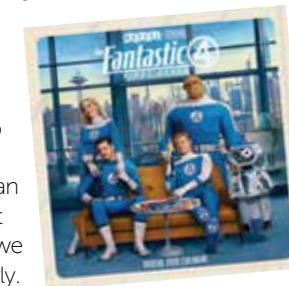
Being a fan is important?

Bradley: We all do our research, and style guides are comprehensive, but I think it can be important. Fans will know if something doesn't make sense. And if there are gaps in our knowledge, we'll always lean on our licensor – especially if we're working on a calendar for a new film. They'll know what we should focus our efforts on creatively.

What makes a great licensed calendar?

Bradley: It needs to have multiple elements – it can't just be an image, that's boring! They need some editorial, like a nice quote from a character. I'll always push for the best creative possible. A good recent example is our

Fantastic Four calendar. Disney is wary of spoilers, so their early style guide was grounded in graphics, more than stills from the movie. We took the decision to hold back development of the calendar until after the film was released, so we can utilise shots of the actors from the film. It led to a far superior calendar than what we otherwise would've had if we'd gone early.



Corrina, what makes a great licensed card?

Corrina: With juvenile cards, you want a great character prominently on there and it needs to be easy to see what the sending occasion is. Bright colours, attractive top third to catch the eye in store and the brand message must be conveyed clearly and authentically.

We also add innovation like stickers, badges, colouring in and pop-ups that have gone down well – and some of the pop-ups can be quite complex! We did a Grinch Showcase range for Tesco last year that featured badges, fur, moving cards and detachable elements that doubled as Christmas decorations. We created around 100 concepts that were slimmed down to the final 16 – each with different applications and innovations.

What does innovation look like in calendars?

Bradley: A good example is our deluxe calendars. With those, we can use more unusual art from exciting trend guides and each page can also be removed to become a poster. We've got some nice finishes in there.

Dan Grant, Licensing Director, Danilo Promotions:

Calendars tend to have two uses: functional or as wall art. With the deluxe calendars, you're really getting 12 posters and that will attract a different consumer to the standard calendars.

What does a brand need to have in order to suit cards and calendars?

Dan: Brand awareness is important, but everything ultimately comes down to sentiment and emotional attachment. Whether it's a football club, or The Grinch, or The Traitors – the emotional pull is key. One other thing is for the brand to be somewhat trend-proof. It potentially takes a year for us to get a greetings card from the development stage and onto a shelf. In that time, a trend could easily have gone, or a fleetingly popular brand could've faded. It's a big risk for our categories.





Getting to Know You...

We talk creativity, style guides and chocolate biscuits with the talented team at Dynamo who are celebrating 20 years of providing full creative services to the entertainment, licensing, product and publishing industries.



Steve Richards

Specialist skills: **power tools, biscuit supply**



Gill Richards

Most likely to: **be carving sculptures out of stone**



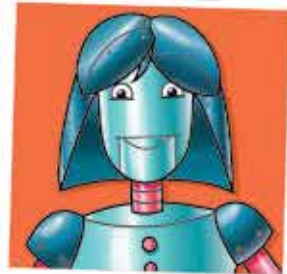
Alex Flounders

Specialist skills: **shark diving, guess the intro...**



Claire Lister

Superpower: **absorbing new subjects at lightning speed**



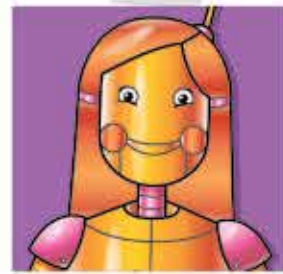
Maggy Harris

Specialist skills: **digging up new business, gardening**



Jeremy Marshall

Most likely to: **be watching films or paddleboarding**



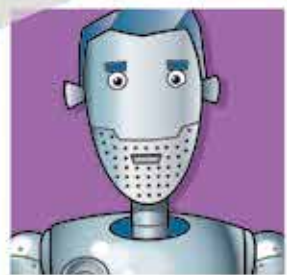
Abby Richards

Specialist skill: **making pretty things out of clay**



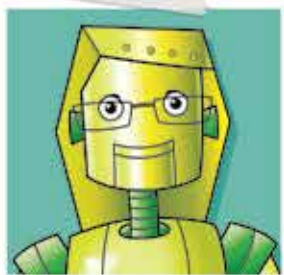
Simon Oliver

Special ability: **obscure font recognition**



Dan Cox

Specialist skills: **breaking bones, carving pumpkins**



Lou Kelly

Special ability: **making a logo 'pop'!**



Kathy Duckworth

Specialist skills: **climbing, planning D&D campaigns**



Steve Sims

Superpower: **speedy scribbles**



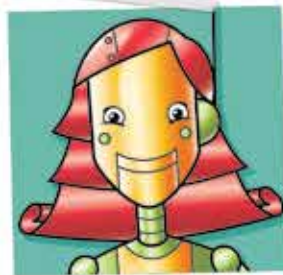
Kate Ford

Superpower: **designing books at warp speed**



Matt Taylor

Most likely to: **scare you with a sneeze**



Alicia Williamson

Specialist skill: **dinosaur facts**



Sara Tayford

Specialist skill: **finding perfect words for preschoolers**

STEVE RICHARDS

What's Dynamo's superpower?

Dynamo's superpower is the amazing people that make up the team. They're the unsung heroes, whose experience, skill, dedication, attitude and abilities make for great results. They're also great, genuine people – which makes it easy to work together as a team – and helps us build collaborative, longterm relationships with our clients.

ALEX FLOUNDERS

What's a recent licensed launch that impressed you?

I've been impressed by the licensed collaborations at Bath & Body Works. Their Bridgerton and Emily in Paris ranges had a trend-driven charm. And their recent Disney Princess and Disney Villain fragrances showcase the brand's strength in design.

JEREMY MARSHALL

What fuels your creativity?

Communication, talent and always being open to learning.

DAN COX

To date, what's been your favourite project to work on?

One that comes to mind is an animated walking backpack that would unzip itself, turn inside out, and become an animated Koala. The cloth simulations and physics involved were incredibly complex – but very satisfying to overcome.

KATHY DUCKWORTH

What was the last licensed product you bought?

A Lord of the Rings rubber duck.

ALICIA WILLIAMSON

How would you sum up the creative culture at Dynamo?

The Dynamo team is full of problem-solvers who have the flexibility, enthusiasm, creativity and experience to say 'yes' to a huge variety of projects... From toy kits to style guides, picture books to multi-volume reference series.

MATT TAYLOR

What aspect of Dynamo do you feel not enough people know about – and should!?

We do a lot more than you think.

STEVE SIMS

What was the first project you worked on at Dynamo?

Technically, it was the design of the robot that's been our mascot for the past 20 years! But I think the first actual project I remember working on was illustrating a book of paper-plane designs that you pressed out... You made them into models of planes throughout the history of flight.

KATE FORD

What's been your favourite project to work on?

Anything video game related. It's a lot of fun – and even if it's a game I haven't played, there's always something fun to get into.

GILL RICHARDS

What fuels creativity at Dynamo?

Chocolate and biscuits!

ABBY RICHARDS

What was the last licensed product you purchased?

A Frozen-themed inflatable pool ring for my goddaughter!

MAGGY HARRIS

What would you like to see more of from the licensing industry?

I'd love to see more licensors embracing the need for great creative and investing in it. The better the assets, the better the product.

CLAIRE LISTER

Is there a 'dream brand' you'd love to work on?

I'd love to work on Critical Role. As with Dungeons & Dragons and other TTRPG systems, I love exploring collaborative storytelling.

SIMON OLIVER

What fuels creativity?

Early morning swimming. I quite often solve design problems in the pool.

LOU KELLY

What's been your favourite project to work on?

I've particularly enjoyed working on the style guides for Rocky Horror and Historic Royal Palaces. Plus, the many Octonauts, Peppa Pig and PJ Masks trend guides. It's great to design new styles for established brands.



Bluey
THE MOVIE
Launching in 2027!

#1 SHOW*
Disney+ CBeebies BBC iPlayer

#3 PRESCHOOL TOY LICENSE**

NEW CATEGORY LAUNCHES
LEGO Kellogg's Colgate CONVERSE

4 BRAND NEW SHORT-FORM SERIES FOR '25/'26
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Bluey's BIG PLAY RETURNS TO UK & IRELAND FROM DEC '25

BLUEY TM and BLUEY character logos TM & © Ludo Studio Pty Ltd 2018

BBC STUDIOS Kids&Family

For further information please contact Andrew Carley – Licensing Director (UK, EMEA & Asia): Andrew.Carley@bbc.com



"It arrived at exactly the right time – the market was primed for a fresh wave of creativity."

Soaring Success

We explore the success of Superman – and what's next – with **Jo Broadfield**, Group Vice President Warner Bros. Discovery Global Consumer Products, EMEA, Regional Franchise Management and Marketing, and Regional Category Management.



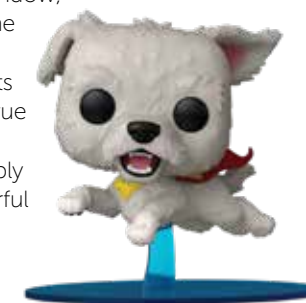
Superman has been a big success. Can you talk us through a few key launches that accompanied the movie?

The extensive consumer products programme that accompanied the movie really demonstrates the Superman franchise's creative and commercial ability to evolve – all while staying true to its heritage.

We saw wonderful interest and success in a surprising category – pets! An example to offer is Pets + People, a new launch that created a line of Krypto and Superman-inspired dog toys which were really embraced by fans. It showed how the brand naturally expands into new categories tied to Krypto's debut in a live-action feature film.

Krypto also captured hearts across generations! Play was key here: Spin Master's Flying Krypto became a best-seller at mass retail, while Funko's Pop! figure vinyl inspired by Krypto connected instantly with collectors. These products underlined how a supporting character can widen the universe and bring in new audiences.

Our core Superman business has seen substantial growth in the lead up to the movie, and through the movie window, with the iconic S-Shield leading the way. For example, the iconic Kryptonian symbol on t-shirts, in its bold primary colours, remains a true retail hero. We see the S-Shield resonate across all ages – irresistibly cute for infants, yet equally powerful as a fashion staple embraced by kids and trendsetters.



“We’ve empowered partners to deliver products that feel both original and true to Superman’s heritage.”

This duality was amplified with high end fashion collaborations with the likes of MMC and Maria Escoté, both of whom applied the most iconic and recognisable aspects of Superman to their own unique style. Together, these launches show how Superman flexes across categories.

Why do you feel the film captured the enthusiasm of licensees?

I think a big part of it is because it arrived at exactly the right time – the market was primed for a fresh wave of creativity. It’s a property that can stretch effortlessly across categories, from fashion to collectibles to toys, with each partner able to find their own authentic angle.

Many licensees are themselves fans who grew up with the brand, and that passion shows. Combined with our flexible, collaborative approach, we’ve empowered partners to deliver products that feel both original and true to Superman’s heritage – a balance that has unlocked real excitement across the programme.

How did you approach getting licensees and retailers excited about the return of this brand?

Superman has been a key focus not only for

WBDGCP, but for the entire WBD organisation. We’ve had phenomenal support across the business, which enabled us to excite licensees and retailers about the new Superman movie – and the franchise as a whole.

Last year, during the filming of the movie, we had the opportunity to take over 100 licensee and retail partners to visit the Superman movie set in Atlanta, Georgia, which gave unprecedented access to live sets, behind-the-scenes of the production, as well as direct access to filmmakers and the extensive crew.

For partners who were not able to join the Atlanta set visit, we were able to share movie storytelling walkthroughs which provided deep levels of detail to aid product development, as well as early footage showcasing the size, scale and tone of the film. Additionally, we kept our teams involved and engaged. We ran bespoke ‘Superman Summits’ across multiple EMEA markets a year out from the movie release, with hundreds of partners attending events in London, Paris, Madrid, Milan and Warsaw.

Looking ahead at the DC slate, I imagine each movie will have its own flavour and tone, depending on the character and creative team behind it. Does this mean the licensing strategies for each will differ?

Absolutely, DC Studios has a clear strategy to connect storytelling across all platforms with all audiences. Superman has very wide audience appeal, and you can expect a similarly broad blockbuster audience for Supergirl next summer too, with a sassy, cool and rebellious streak featuring prominently in the Supergirl licensing programming.

Hot on the heels of Supergirl is the Clayface movie coming to cinemas September 2026 – it’s an adult-targeted horror movie set in the world of Gotham City. This movie will have a very distinct target audience, and our licensing strategy for this movie will reflect the adult audience, as well as the movie genre.



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