

THE LICENSING LETTER

February 2026



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The UK's 'Jab-uary' Event Heralds a Revolution in Food and Beverage Licensing

The need to quickly launch food products appropriate for GLP-1 users has spawned a wave of licensing deals. Mark Ryder, CEO of Applied Nutrition, recently signed a major deal with the UK supermarket brand Morrisons for a range of diet-friendly options.

By Gary Symons
TLL Editor in Chief

A new food marketing program in the United Kingdom called 'Jab-uary' is highlighting major changes in the food and beverage industry due to the rising popularity of GLP-1 weight loss drugs.

It's also a trend that demands attention from the licensing industry, as major players are quickly signing deals to launch new food and beverage products that meet the needs of GLP-1 users.

"There's a revolution underway in food and it's being driven by something you won't

GLP-1 Users in ~20% of US Households



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Lourival Monaco, a researcher and expert on agribusiness, says GLP-1 drugs herald a long-term shift in consumer buying habits that food companies need to address in order to maintain market share.

find in the grocery aisle or on a restaurant menu," writes Anne Palermo, a writer-researcher for the Food Institute. "Demand for GLP-1 medications like Ozempic and Wegovy have exploded in popularity thanks to their effectiveness in supporting weight loss. As millions of Americans embrace these drugs, we're witnessing a category-defining shift in how and what people eat."

Palermo adds, "The food industry is scrambling to keep up," as manufacturers and retailer rush to launch new product lines.

Peter Cross, a food and beverage licensing specialist with Broad Street Licensing Group, says brands are quickly adapting to the trend.

"The era, or the trend, of GLP-1 is in full swing, and with household penetration approaching 20% — up 15% in just the last year alone — the food and beverage industry is starting to take notice," Cross says. "Food and beverage brands have been adapting to this shift by introducing

healthier alternatives, offering smaller portion sizes, items higher in protein, and even changing formulations of current products to meet the demand of healthier options.

"Restaurants are already seeing a decrease in alcohol and dessert consumption and we're starting to see that decline in other food and beverage areas."

Despite the dramatic changes in consumption over the past year, Cross cautions that one shouldn't assume those changes are here to stay. Side effects and reports that GLP-1 users are seeing their weight come back quickly after they stop using the drug could result in a decline in use.

As well, Cross points out that the drugs are expensive, and that may prevent more widespread or long-term use.

"Brands that are more health conscious are going to have their time in the spotlight," he says. "In the meantime, GLP-1 is still expensive for most consumers. If the pricing for GLP-1 shifts to be more

Major British Retailers Launching GLP-1 Dietary Products

accessible to more people, that will be the difference between changing the industry as a whole or just representing a trend. Definitely something that we're going to keep our eye on for the rest of 2026."

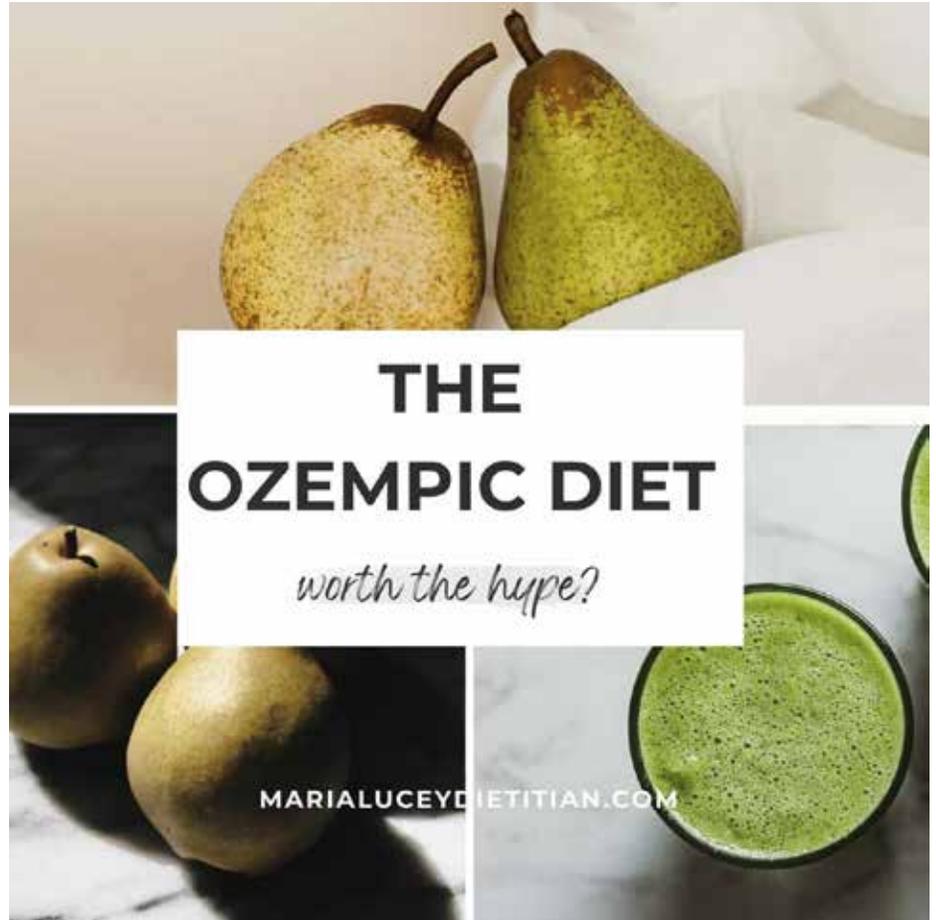
For now, though, marketing is already changing radically to align with the weight-loss craze, including the Jab-uary campaign that is sweeping the UK food industry right now.

Marks & Spencer, Morrisons, Asda, Ocado and the Co-op are among the big names targeting British shoppers who use weight-loss injections, known as GLP-1 agonists.

"For customers using these products, we're seeing more of that switch into healthier choices, into fresh food, into fibre," said Sainsbury CEO chief Simon Roberts.

According to the British newspaper The Guardian, Ocado's new virtual "weight management" aisle includes a "curated range of GLP-1-friendly products" that runs the gamut from tiny 100 gram (roughly 3.5 ounce) portions of steak costing £3.50, to a "powdered greens" supplement, called AG1, at £107 a pack.

The online supermarket says there's strong demand for protein-rich staples such as steak, chicken, cottage cheese, health drinks, fibre-rich foods, and vitamins



Users of weight-loss drugs like Wegovy and Ozempic also need to make a number of dietary changes to ensure success, and dietitians like author Maria Lucey have come up with comprehensive diet plans that are creating a major shift in consumer buying habits.

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GLP-1 Trend Creating a 'Tsunami of Licensing Opportunities'

and supplements that support health and weight loss.

The trend has resulted in a tsunami of licensing opportunities for savvy companies that were able to quickly adapt to the change in consumer buying habits.

One example saw Morrisons, the fourth-largest supermarket in the UK, partnering with Applied Nutrition on what is seen as a landmark licensing deal. The partners have launched 53 new high-protein products, including the UK's first GLP-1 friendly supermarket ready meals.

The three-year exclusive licensing deal with Applied Nutrition allowed Morrisons to become the first UK supermarket to launch a dedicated range of GLP-1 ready meals. Under the agreement, Morrisons will formulate, produce and sell Applied Nutrition-branded meals and food products. The first wave launched across more than 400 Morrisons stores nationwide in early January ... or, in this case, Jab-uary.

"We're excited to be partnering with Morrisons for our first out-licensing deal, a testament to the strength of our brand and the growing consumer demand for convenient, high-protein food choices," said Applied Nutrition CEO Thomas Ryder. "This is a great opportunity to reach new audiences and enable existing customers to deepen their engagement with our brand.

"We've enjoyed working with Morrisons, combining their expertise in food development with our deep customer understanding to create a unique product range designed to support people in achieving their wellness goals."

The changes to food consumption isn't just happening in the UK, obviously; it's a global phenomenon that is seeing the



Conagra's Healthy Choices line (bottom) now includes products specially designed for users of GLP-1 weight-loss drugs, while Nestle has launched a GLP-1 nutrition division (top).

largest players in food manufacturing jump onto the bandwagon of GLP-1 oriented food products.

Millions of people are now using weight-loss drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy, so the demand for high-protein meals and fiber-rich snacks is rising. A recent study found that over 9 million U.S. adults now take GLP-1 medications, which is changing how they eat and shop.

The reason for these huge changes

in consumption is based on how the medications work.

GLP-1 receptor agonists, including Ozempic, Wegovy, and Mounjaro, were originally developed to manage diabetes, but they also promote weight loss because they slow digestion, reduce cravings, and increase feelings of satiety, or, in other words, you feel like you're full after eating much less food.

As a result, people taking these



Nestle Created a Dedicated Website for GLP-1 Users

medications eat less, are less interested in sugary or salty snack foods, and tend to focus on nutrient-dense foods that keep them fuller longer. This has driven the demand for appetite-suppressing diets, where high-protein meals and fiber-rich snacks are preferred.

Brands like Conagra, Nestlé and Supergut are now meeting the demand by introducing new products to support appetite control and balanced nutrition.

Conagra was among the first major food companies to launch a GLP-1-friendly foods label, which debuted on 26 newly developed Healthy Choice frozen meals, which are high in protein, rich in fiber, and portion-controlled. Healthy Choice has typically focused on those types of meals; the major change is in how those benefits are being communicated to consumers.

Nestlé not only launched new product lines, but also unveiled a dedicated website for GLP-1 users in 2024 to guide consumers on the best diet for weight loss and controlling diabetes symptoms.

The new website, www.glp-1nutrition.com, serves as a hub for nutritional

support of individuals on a weight management journey, including those on GLP-1 therapy. It offers nutrition information and a wide range of product options to support the unique nutritional needs of individuals on this treatment. In addition, glp-1nutrition.com offers expert nutrition insight, product bundling, and convenient.

“The launch of this new innovative tool marks an important step forward in the mission and focus of our business,” said Nestlé Health Science CEO Anna Mohl. “With this offering, we reaffirm our commitment to empowering healthier lives through targeted, personalized nutritional solutions. We are excited to continue redefining health and wellness solutions and enhancing the quality of life for those seeking effective weight management strategies.”

The food brand Supergut is taking a different approach, as it focuses on prebiotic fiber to help consumers naturally boost their GLP-1 levels. Supergut produces nutritional shakes, bars, and GLP-1 Boosters that are designed to

curb cravings, stabilize blood sugar, and support gut health.

Fiber intake is closely linked to increased GLP-1 production, and for people who are not taking the weight loss drugs, increasing consumption of foods high in prebiotic fiber is an effective way to lose weight in itself, which is just amplified by using GLP-1 injections. Essentially, Supergut is out to show that food-based solutions can work alongside the pharmaceutical solutions, or instead of them.

The food and beverage research company Tastewise recently released the GLP-1-Friendly Foods & Weight Management Trends report, based on consumer survey data, that provides insights into what people are looking for when choosing products that support their health goals.

Among the most important results, Tastewise found that:

- 92.65% of respondents take GLP-1 medications primarily for weight management.
- Consumers associate GLP-1-friendly



Cornell Study Predicts GLP-1 Use Will Continue to Grow

foods most with beverages (69.48%) rather than plant-based meals or desserts.

- Prebiotic and gut health benefits (60.17%) rank higher than protein (26.17%) as a priority for weight management.
- 50% more consumers prefer to buy these products online over traditional grocery stores.
- Price is a major concern—61.58% of respondents say GLP-1-friendly foods tend to be more expensive.

A year-old study from the Cornell SC Johnson College of Business Research (January 2025) indicates that the impact of weight loss drugs will grow over time as adoption increases.

That study found that GLP-1 drug adoption increased from an estimated 5.5% of the U.S. population in October 2023 to 8.3% in July 2024. It's also worth noting that these drugs are relatively new, and the rate of adoption is increasing, and the market value of GLP-1 drugs is expected to double by 2030.

If that plays out as expected, Lourival Monaco, a Research Assistant Professor and research manager at Purdue University's DIAL Ventures, says it will result in a lasting decline in food purchases, as the study found that

“households with at least one GLP-1 user reduced grocery spending by approximately 5.5% within six months of adoption.

“In financial terms, with an average monthly grocery spend of about \$630, this 5.5% decline corresponds to a \$416 reduction in annual food purchases for each household,” Monaco noted. “Higher-income households, earning over \$125,000, cut their grocery spending by 8.6%, equating to an annualized decrease of \$690 – more than double the 4.2% decline (\$270 annually) observed in households earning less than \$125,000.”

It's also worth pointing out that the drop in food spending impacts some categories more than others. The biggest drops in spending impacted on ultra-processed, calorie-dense items like chips, savory snacks, sweet bakery goods, side dishes, and cookies. For those items, reductions ranged from -11.1% to -6.7%.

Cross says the challenge for food producers is to create products that support the weight loss and health objectives of GLP-1 users.

“The first thing is for food and beverage brands to first really understand what is going on with their consumers and GLP-1,” Cross says. “While we believe that most food and beverage brands are looking into it, for the first time in a long time we are seeing consumers changing their fundamental behaviors, and most food and beverage companies are not equipped for that.

The Covid pandemic proved that the food industry as a whole was not ready to quickly pivot, and this will be a good opportunity for food and beverage brands to show that they can adapt and can pivot to consumer's needs,” Cross adds. “So, the real opportunity right now is for food and beverage brands and restaurant brands to take a step back and fully understand their consumer's needs and where they can fill



Dietitians are helping shape consumer buying habits, providing consultations to clients on how to best support their weight-loss goals with nutrition that supports the effects of GLP-1 drugs.

in the gaps and enhance their products for those on drugs like GLP-1.”

Cross agrees the GLP-1 trend presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the food and beverage licensing industry, and cautions that new products or marketing campaigns must be well thought out and based on solid science.

“The opportunities that restaurant and food brands have in terms of GLP-1, is to be an educational resource for how to navigate GLP-1,” Cross argues. “Marking food products as “GLP-1 Friendly” can be helpful, but only if done authentically.

“Food brands and Restaurant brands can also use GLP-1 friendly items to release new items as well,” he adds. “Initial data shows that consumers who are taking GLP-1 are shifting away from QSR (Quick Service Restaurants) and moving toward more casual dining, so the big takeaway for brands, especially restaurant brands, is how can they enhance the experience for GLP-1 users?”

“It's not an easy thing for restaurant and food brands to figure out, but an investment that they should make for the long term.” ■



LEGO Unveils Future of Play With High-Tech 'Smart Brick'

By Gary Symons
TLL Editor in Chief

The Lego Group has unveiled a new technology called the Smart Brick that will redefine how kids and kidults alike will play with the popular building bricks.

Lego unveiled the new LEGO SMART Play system at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, displaying a typical 2X4 Lego brick containing a tiny computer that interacts with other Lego elements through Near Field Communication (NFC) technology.

"LEGO SMART Play represents one of the most significant evolutions in the LEGO System-in-Play since the introduction of the LEGO Minifigure in 1978," the company said. "Designed to inspire children, LEGO SMART Play turns their imaginative ideas into reality, bringing their creations to life with moments of surprise and discovery.

"The combination of LEGO SMART Play's platform elements - the LEGO SMART Brick, LEGO SMART Tags and LEGO SMART Minifigures - react in real time to



bring an interactive play experience to kids that is full of exploration and imaginative storytelling."

Lego also said the new Smart Bricks and the other elements of Smart Play will start sales on March 1, embedded into new Star

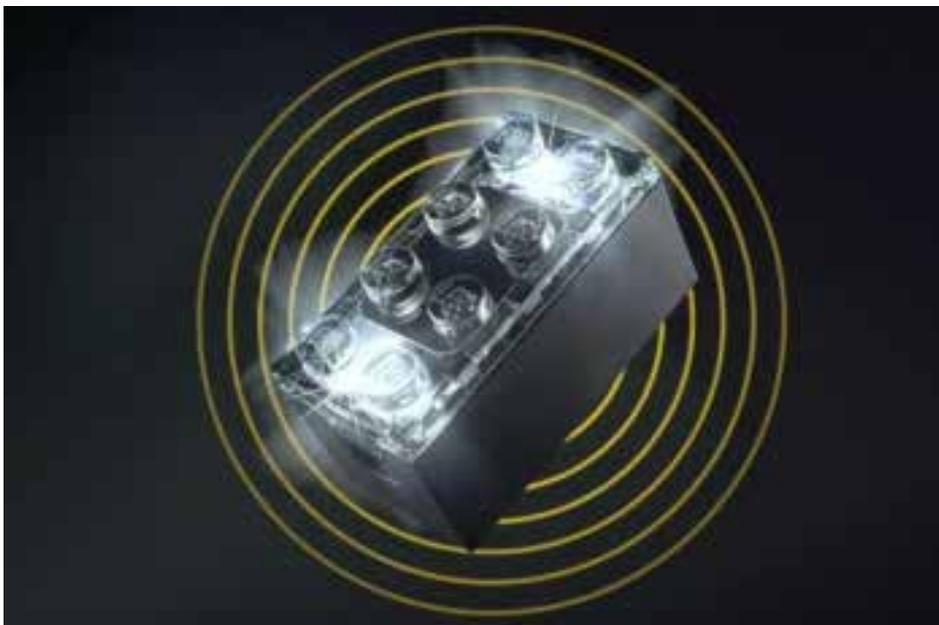
Wars sets released in partnership with brand-owners LucasFilm and Disney.

"We've worked with our incredible friends at Lucasfilm for over 25 years, and our focus has always remained on creating original, unique experiences for the fan community through our sets," said Julia Goldin, Chief Product & Marketing Officer of the LEGO Group. "With LEGO SMART Play, legendary stories and characters of the Star Wars galaxy will come to life like never before."

How the Smart Play System Works

The center of the Smart Play System is the computer embedded in the tiny Lego 'Smart Brick', which can interact with other Lego pieces or minifigures if they have an embedded NFC tag.

The technology has been developed by the LEGO Group's Creative Play Lab team to enable responsive physical play, breathing new life into builder's LEGO creations through advanced, invisible technology. When the Smart Brick detects one of those NFC tags, it can trigger a multitude of different actions. For example, a minifigure's light saber may hum to life and light up, blasters will appear to fire,



LEGO's 'Smart Brick' contains computers that allow Lego components to interact with each other.

LEGO Smart Bricks Herald a New Era of Interactivity

engines will roar, or Star Wars theme music may start playing.

The new platform features more than 20 patented world-firsts within its technology, and the LEGO SMART Brick is powered by a custom-made chip, measuring smaller than a standard LEGO stud. In addition to the computer, the SMART Brick includes sensors, accelerometers, light sensors and a sound sensor, as well as a miniature speaker driven by an onboard synthesizer, and much more, in addition to easy wireless charging.

“The launch of LEGO SMART Play brings creativity, technology, and storytelling together to make building worlds and stories even more engaging, and all without a screen,” explained Tom Donaldson, Senior Vice President & Head of Creative Play Lab at the LEGO Group. “We truly believe we are setting a new standard for interactive, imaginative experiences, and can’t wait to see this innovation in the hands of kids when we launch this year.”

Top Disney executives joined the Lego team for the announcement at CES, including Asad Ayaz, Chief Brand Officer of The Walt Disney Company and President of Disney Entertainment Marketing, and Dave Filoni, Chief



Creative Officer of Lucasfilm. They led the announcement that the first LEGO SMART Play building sets announced for fans will feature Star Wars, which they described as the perfect playground for the types of storytelling and play the SMART Play will afford when it launches in March.

“Our teams work hand-in-hand with best-in-class licensees to bring technology and innovation to products that continue our storytelling in new and

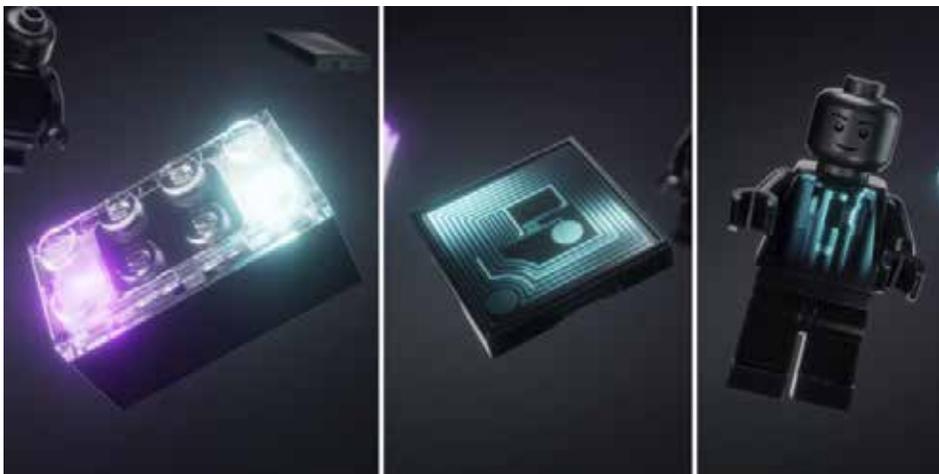
unexpected ways,” added Paul Gitter, Executive Vice President of Global Brand Commercialization at Disney Consumer Products. “This milestone in our long-time collaboration with the LEGO Group adds a new dimension to this legacy, continuing to help fans express their creativity and imagination by extending the Star Wars story through play.”

Three LEGO Star Wars Galaxy Sets To Be Launched With SMART Play Technology

Lego and Star Wars fans will be able to interact with the story like never before as the LEGO SMART Play system makes its debut with three ‘All-In-One’ LEGO Star Wars building sets.

Each of the three ‘All-In-One’ LEGO Star Wars sets will come with a LEGO SMART Brick with charger and at least one LEGO SMART Minifigure and LEGO SMART tag.

They will include Luke’s Red Five X-Wing building set; a highly detailed 584-piece set, including SMART Minifigures of Luke Skywalker, in his iconic pilot suit, and Princess Leia, as well as Luke’s trusty companion, R2-D2, and Rebel Crew and Stormtrooper Minifigures.



A Smart Brick (left) uses miniaturized chips (centre) to interact with similarly equipped mini-figures.

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Gotta Build 'Em All: LEGO's First Pokémon Collection

By Gary Symons
TLL Editor in Chief

The LEGO Group has partnered with The Pokémon Company on its first ever Pokémon Lego sets.

It's a brand licensing match made in marketing heaven, as the deal combines the world's most popular toy product, with one of the world's top entertainment and video game brands.

"Pokémon has always inspired discovery and connection and partnering with the LEGO Group brings those qualities together with creativity and imagination into a new form," said Gaku Susai, Chief Product and Experience Officer at The Pokémon Company International. "By combining Pokémon's sense of adventure with the thoughtful design and attention to detail of the LEGO Group, we're giving fans the chance to build, play, and tell their own stories in ways they've never experienced before; something we're thrilled to see come to life."



A promo shot from LEGO Group shows the Pokemon character Pikachu in the wild.

LEGO has now unveiled the first three sets featuring five of the most popular characters from the Pokémon universe.

Based on some of the most iconic Pokémon from the brand's 30-year history, the first LEGO x Pokémon sets allow fans to build and display their favorite Pokémon in LEGO brick form.

They include one set featuring the iconic Pikachu character who has been at the heart of the Pokémon story line for over 30 years; the popular character Eevee in another set, and the trio of water, fire and plant Pokémon that started it all—Venusaur, Charizard and Blastoise—represented in a larger third kit.

"Bringing the world of Pokémon to life in LEGO bricks is both an exciting opportunity and a great responsibility," said Julia Goldin, Chief Product & Marketing Officer of the LEGO Group. "We've worked to combine our worlds in a way that truly celebrates the creativity, adventure, and wonder that Pokémon represents.

"This partnership opens up a whole new range of possibilities for Trainers and

builders alike, and we can't wait for fans to experience these new LEGO Pokémon sets."

The LEGO Pokémon Pikachu and Poké Ball set lets fans recreate one of the most iconic scenes from the franchise: Pikachu jumping out of the Poké Ball ready for battle. The brick-built Pikachu showcases trainer Ash's favorite Pokémon in a dynamic pose, leaping out from a Poké Ball.

The 2,050-piece set features a black lightning rod shaped base, with lightning energy emitting from the Poké Ball as Pikachu exits, ready for action. Key Easter eggs include a "25" displayed on the base, signifying Pikachu's Pokédex number.

Celebrating the iconic Electric-type Pokémon, fans will be able to pose the build in a dynamic battle stance launching from the opened Poké Ball, as well as in a seated pose, with a closed Poké Ball.

The largest set by far rings in with 6,838 pieces, as the LEGO Pokémon Venusaur, Charizard and Blastoise set is now one of the LEGO Group's largest ever display sets. The set features three Kanto first

Three Pokémon LEGO Set Among Largest Ever Created

partner Pokémon evolutions, for the first time, in LEGO brick form.

Each of the three figures faithfully capture the original designs with remarkable authenticity and with their own unique articulation. These Pokémon can be displayed individually or together on the action base, which hides easter eggs for fans to discover as they build. The base features design details inspired by each of the featured Pokémon's biomes, adding further depth to the display.

The third set celebrates fan favorite Eevee's irresistible charm, with LEGO Pokémon Eevee, a 587-piece set that brings the Pokémon to life in dynamic detail. Eevee's expressive face, movable tail, head and limbs allow builders to pose the fan-favorite, either at rest or ready to jump into action.

With LEGO's innovative Build Together app, this set presents fans with the ability to build together with friends and family.

"As a lifelong Pokémon fan, it's been an incredible honour to help bring these Pokémon to life in LEGO brick form for



the first time," said Siddharth Muthyala, Design Director on LEGO Pokémon. "Pokémon has inspired generations of fans around the world, so our team approached the design of these sets with immense care and passion, ensuring every detail and pose truly celebrates what makes these characters so beloved.

"I hope fans will love building them, as much as we did designing them."

The partners have also launched a global

competition with a prize worthy of die-hard Pokémon fans.

Scavenger Hunt - Find & Catch Them All! are available until February 27, with LEGO Pokémon fans able to look for hidden Pokémon clues across digital channels. Aspiring 'trainers' will be challenged to find clues hidden throughout LEGO's digital content and Pokémon digital content.

Success in the Pokémon hunt will unlock exciting rewards and the chance to win The Grand Prize: experiencing PokémonXP and the 2026 Pokémon World Championships in San Francisco. The ultimate prize for true Pokémon fans will include access to Championship Sunday at the Chase Center, as well as all three new LEGO Pokémon sets.

The new LEGO Pokémon sets are now available for pre-order starting via [LEGO.com/Pokemon](https://www.lego.com/Pokemon), and Pokémon Center, the official online Pokémon retailer, the US, UK & CA. Products will be available for immediate purchase starting on February 27 on [LEGO.com](https://www.lego.com), LEGO Stores, Pokémon Center US, UK & CA. ■

LEGO 'Smart Brick'

Continued from page 8

This set includes an Imperial turret, transporter and command center, all of which unlock interactive features, such as laser-shooting sounds, engine sounds and lights plus refueling and repair sounds, through the use of the included LEGO SMART Brick, two LEGO SMART Minifigures and five LEGO SMART Tags.

That set will be balanced out on the Dark Side with Darth Vader's TIE Fighter building set, as one of the galaxy's most iconic villains joins the battle.

This 473-piece set features a brick-built Rebel Outpost and an Imperial Fueling Station, as well as a SMART Minifigure featuring Darth Vader and a Rebel Fleet

Trooper Minifigure. The roar of the twin ion engines comes to life, among other interactive features, with the LEGO SMART Brick.

The final set of the first three to be released is the Throne Room Duel & A-Wing building set.

Fans will be able to re-enact one of the most memorable moments from the original Star Wars trilogy, the final lightsaber duel between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader at the end of Star Wars: Return of the Jedi.

The 962-piece set is the largest of the three, and comes with three SMART Minifigures featuring the characters Darth Vader,

Emperor Palpatine, and Luke Skywalker.

Additionally, the set comes with a brick-built A-Wing Fighter and Pilot Minifigure, two Royal Guard Minifigures, and a SMART Tag-enabled cannon turret to defend the Emperor's Throne Room.

While the sets won't be sold until March, they are available for pre-order at www.lego.com.

The Lego Group says more sets will be available soon, and adds that new technologies will be built into the Smart Play system in the near future as well, offering more ways for users to interact with their favorite kits. ■



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Warner Bros. Sticks With Netflix, Rebuffs Paramount Bid

By Gary Symons
TLL Editor in Chief

The takeover battle for Warner Bros. Discovery has more twists and turns than a Netflix mystery drama.

The latest plot twist sees Netflix staving off a competing but hostile bid from Paramount Skydance by offering an all cash offer to buy out WBD for \$82.7 million.

Netflix and Warner say the revised agreement simplifies the transaction structure, provides greater certainty of value for WBD stockholders, and accelerates the path to a WBD stockholder vote.

The two companies add that the all-cash transaction continues to be valued at \$27.75 per WBD share, unchanged from the prior transaction structure. WBD stockholders will also receive the additional value of shares of Discovery Global following its separation from WBD.

Netflix revealed the transaction will be financed through a combination of cash on hand, available credit facilities and committed financing. That sounds pretty dry, but it's an important point, as the WBD board criticized the offer from Paramount as being too highly leveraged, raising doubts the deal will successfully close.

WBD points out Netflix is a far larger company than Paramount Skydance, and can rely on strong revenues and profits to help fund the deal, while maintaining a healthy balance sheet, with more cash on hand to fund major productions or to continue capitalizing on future strategic options.

"Today's revised merger agreement brings us even closer to combining two of the greatest storytelling companies in the world, and with it even more people enjoying the entertainment they love to watch the most," said David Zaslav, President and CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery. "By coming together with Netflix, we will combine the stories Warner



Netflix viewers may soon gain a massive increase in content, as the Warner Bros. Discovery Board is urging shareholders to accept its amended acquisition offer.

Bros. has told that have captured the world's attention for more than a century and ensure audiences continue to enjoy them for generations to come."

Ted Sarandos, the co-CEO of Netflix

"The WBD Board continues to support and unanimously recommend our transaction, and we are confident that it will deliver the best outcome for stockholders, consumers, creators and the broader entertainment community," said Ted Sarandos, co-CEO of Netflix.

"Our revised all-cash agreement will enable an expedited timeline to a stockholder vote and provide greater financial certainty at \$27.75 per share in cash, plus the value from the planned separation of Discovery Global."

Sarandos also argues that a merger with Netflix will be better for the film industry and for consumers.

"Together, Netflix and Warner Bros. will deliver broader choice and greater value to audiences worldwide, enhancing access to world-class television and film both at home and in theaters," Sarandos argued.

"The acquisition will also significantly expand U.S. production capacity and investment in original programming, driving job creation and long-term industry growth."

His co-CEO Greg Peters echoed that sentiment, promising a Warner Bros. acquisition would result in new, major investments in the U.S. film industry.

"Over the last decade, when much of the entertainment industry has contracted, Netflix has grown and invested tremendously in the business of film and television in the U.S. and abroad," Peters pointed out. "This transaction will further fuel that growth and investment."

"Not only does our transaction provide superior stockholder value, it is also fundamentally pro-consumer, pro-innovation, pro-creator and pro-growth."

Warner Bros. Discovery is enthusiastically backing the amended bid, as board chair Samuel Di Piazza Jr. said the WBD team was able to extract more concessions from Netflix in their quest to improve the deal for shareholders.

Netflix Tries to Seal the Deal With New, All-Cash Offer

“Our amended agreement with Netflix is a testament to the Board’s unrelenting focus on representing and advancing our stockholders’ interests,” Di Piazza said. “By transitioning to all-cash consideration, we can now deliver the incredible value of our combination with Netflix at even greater levels of certainty, while providing our stockholders the opportunity to participate in management’s strategic plans to realize the value of Discovery Global’s iconic brands and global reach.”

Di Piazza says management will be reaching out to shareholders as they prepare for an accelerated shareholder vote. Both companies have also engaged with the relevant authorities for regulatory approval, including the U.S. Department of Justice and European Commission.

Amended Offer Follows WBD Rejection of Paramount Bid

The amended offer from Netflix is just the latest twist in a long-running battle over the future of Warner Bros. Discovery. Just a week earlier, the board of Warner Bros. Discovery voted unanimously to reject a bid from Paramount, and urged shareholders to vote against it as well.

Paramount Skydance isn’t out of the fight though, despite the amended offer. The company insists its \$108.4 billion bid for the entire WBD business is superior to that made by rival Netflix, which is offering \$82.7 billion for the studio and streaming businesses alone.

Paramount also argues it has a better chance of gaining regulatory approval, relying on the somewhat troubling argument that it has a strong personal relationship with U.S. President Donald Trump.

The outcome of this battle will have a massive impact on the global entertainment and licensing industries. WBD’s rich catalog of entertainment IP includes evergreen treasures like Harry Potter, the DC Universe, the Lord of the Rings, Game of Thrones, Scooby Doo, and



Looney Tunes, among many others.

WBD’s Global Brands, Franchises, and Experiences division is among the largest and most successful licensing organizations in the world, with thousands of licensed activations in consumer products, toys, location-based entertainment, and video gaming.

Analysts have come down on both sides in the battle between Netflix and Paramount. Some argue that Netflix ownership will hurt the box office film industry, as Netflix will focus on moving big budget films into its streaming operations as soon as possible. Others note that Netflix has a much higher market cap, and greater resources to help grow the WBD business.

It’s that latter view that the Warner Bros. Discovery Board holds. In fact, the WBD board called the Paramount bid ‘illusory’ in a January presentation to shareholders. They said the offer requires an “extraordinary amount of debt financing” and other terms that make it less likely to be completed than a Netflix merger.

The board argued that a Paramount bid would be the largest leveraged buyout ever, “with \$87B of total pro forma gross

debt,” and is “effectively a one-sided option for PSKY [Paramount Skydance] as the offer can be terminated or amended by PSKY at any time.”

The Warner Bros. presentation also pointed out the financial strength of Netflix, compared to the relatively small \$14 billion market cap of Paramount, which they said suffers from a “junk credit rating, negative free cash flows, significant fixed financial obligations, and a high degree of dependency on its linear business.”

In contrast, the board said the strength of Netflix is worth a lot more than the higher offering price from Paramount, arguing Paramount may not even be able to pull off the acquisition, let alone have the resources to grow the company over time.

It pointed to Netflix’s “market capitalization of approximately \$400 billion, an investment grade balance sheet, an A/A3 credit rating and estimated free cash flow of more than \$12 billion for 2026.”

Moreover, the deal with Netflix provides Warner Bros. with “more flexibility to operate in a normal course until closing,” the letter to shareholders said.

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“Truly Seen and Heard:” Mattel’s First-Ever Autistic Barbie

By Gary Symons
TLL Editor in Chief

Mattel has smashed an important barrier for autistic children by introducing its first-ever autistic Barbie doll.

The new doll is part of the ever-expanding Barbie Fashionistas line. It was developed in collaboration with the autistic community and designed to reflect a range of lived experiences associated with autism.

In creating the new Barbie, Mattel went to great lengths to ensure the doll accurately reflects the lived reality of autistic people. It was developed over more than 18 months in partnership with the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), a nonprofit disability rights organization run by and for autistic people.

According to Mattel, the initiative is intended to broaden representation within the Barbie brand and allow more children to see themselves reflected through play.

“Barbie has always strived to reflect the world kids see and the possibilities they imagine, and we’re proud to introduce our first autistic Barbie as part of that ongoing work,” said Jamie Cygielman, global head of dolls at Mattel. “The doll, designed with guidance from the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, helps to expand what



A new autistic Barbie has joined Mattel’s inclusive Fashionista line of dolls, created in partnership with the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network. Image credit: Mattel.

inclusion looks like in the toy aisle and beyond because every child deserves to see themselves in Barbie.”

The autistic Barbie joins the Barbie Fashionistas collection, which includes dolls representing a wide range of skin tones, hair textures, body types, and disabilities. The line currently features more than 175 looks and includes dolls representing conditions such as type 1 diabetes, Down syndrome, and blindness.

Mattel said the design process for the autistic Barbie was guided closely by ASAN to ensure authenticity. The doll includes articulated elbows and wrists to allow for hand movements such as ‘stimming’ and hand flapping, which some autistic individuals use to process sensory input or express excitement. The doll’s eye gaze is positioned slightly to the side, reflecting the experience of some autistic people who may avoid direct eye contact.

Accessories include a finger clip fidget spinner that spins, noise-cancelling headphones intended to reduce sensory overload, and a tablet displaying symbol-based Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) apps to support everyday communication.

The doll is dressed in a loose-fitting,

purple pinstripe A-line dress designed to minimize fabric-to-skin contact, paired with flat purple shoes for ease of movement.

“As proud members of the autistic community, our ASAN team was thrilled to help create the first-ever autistic Barbie doll,” said Colin Killick, executive director of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network. “It is so important for young autistic people to see authentic, joyful representations of themselves, and that’s exactly what this doll is.

“Partnering with Barbie allowed us to share insights and guidance throughout the design process to ensure the doll fully represents and celebrates the autistic community, including the tools that help us be independent,” Killick added. “We’re honored to see this milestone come to life, and we will keep pushing for more representation like this that supports our community in dreaming big and living proud.”

As part of the launch, Mattel is collaborating with autism advocates and creators, including mother-daughter duo Precious and Mikko Mirage, autism advocate and creative entrepreneur Madison Marilla, and autistic fashion



Mattel Donating 1,000 Autistic Barbies to Pediatric Units

designer and visual artist Aarushi Pratap. A video featuring the participants and their reactions to seeing the doll for the first time is available on Mattel's YouTube channel.

"Dolls have always brought me comfort, stability, and joy. I've been collecting Barbie dolls since I was four years old, and now this autistic Barbie will be one of my favorites," said Madison Marilla, autism advocate and creative entrepreneur. "My good friend said these words to me, let yourself out and don't hold yourself in, and it taught me how to educate people about autism.

"This autistic Barbie makes me feel truly seen and heard," Marilla added. "I hope all the kids I've mentored feel the same when they see her, and I hope people who aren't autistic feel educated and gain a better understanding of autism when they see this doll."

Mattel also highlighted its ongoing research into the impact of doll play.

Since 2020, the company has worked with researchers at Cardiff University on a multi-year study examining the short- and

long-term benefits of doll play, including findings related to empathy and social processing skills.

Recent research suggests doll play may help support social skill development for children, including those with neurodivergent traits commonly associated with autism.

To mark the launch, Mattel will donate more than 1,000 autistic Barbie dolls to pediatric hospitals that provide specialized services for children on the autism spectrum, including Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C., Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and Rady Children's Hospital Orange County.

The release was met with praise from the autistic community in the U.S. and around the world.

Deepa Singal, scientific director of the Autism Alliance of Canada, said the new Barbie release is important because under-diagnosis of girls is a serious issue, and one that wider representation could help to rectify.

"That's not because there are more



autistic boys, but girls have just been under-diagnosed over the years because it's been missed," she said. "And some moments like this really helps shift that understanding."

The autistic Barbie doll is now available through Mattel Shop and major retailers. ■

Warner/Netflix

Continued from page 13

The board warned shareholders that the offer puts them in a more hazardous position.

"WBD stockholders will not receive cash for 12-18 months and you cannot trade your shares while shares are tendered," the board said.

As well, the board doesn't agree that the Paramount offer is really higher, because the acquisition would include the Warner cable business, including CNN, TNT, and Discovery Channel.

WBD plans to spin off that business this year, and Netflix's offer would only include the remaining divisions of the Warner Bros. Discovery empire.

In other words, the WBD board said the two offers are not 'apples to apples'.

Paramount responded to concerns, primarily by having Larry Ellison, father of Paramount boss David Ellison, provide an irrevocable personal guarantee of \$40.4 billion of the equity financing for the offer and any damages claims against Paramount.

Di Piazza says that simply isn't enough to tip the balance when measured against the financial capacity of Netflix.

"Larry Ellison stepped up to the table and the board recognizes what he did," Di Piazza said in an interview on CNBC, but added, "ultimately, he didn't raise the price. So, in our perspective, Netflix

continues to be the superior offer, a clear path to closing."

There is, however, another element looming over the entire transaction in the form of US President Donald Trump.

The Ellisons are close friends with the president and also major donors to his campaign.

The Ellisons and others in the Paramount camp have described that relationship as their 'Trump card', arguing to WBD shareholders that they are more likely to get regulatory approval thanks to Trump's promise to "get involved." ■

Kevin Hart Becomes Partner and Investor in ABG

The Hollywood actor and comedian Kevin Hart has entered into a deep partnership with global licensing giant Authentic Brands Group.

A joint statement says the partnership has two primary facets.

Through the agreement, Hart and Authentic will co-own and manage the Kevin Hart brand, with the intention of scaling it across new verticals and markets through Authentic's highly successful brand platform.

Secondly, Hart is also investing directly as a major shareholder in the global sports, media, entertainment and lifestyle company, which includes more than 50 major brands, with nearly one billion social media followers, and \$32 billion in annual retail sales revenue.

"This partnership is about acceleration, growth and diversification. I've spent years building businesses and creating opportunities, and joining Authentic gives me the platform and global infrastructure to take my brand to the next level," Hart said. "Becoming a shareholder allows me to co-own some of the most recognizable IP of all time while building my own brand legacy.

"I want the Hart name to live on for generations to come and be something that



Kevin Hart (left) and ABG CEO Jamie Salter celebrate their new partnership.

my grandkids and their grandkids will be able to be proud of."

Hart began his career as an edgy comedian, but translated his humor into a Hollywood film career. Over the years Hart established himself as a popular entertainer with a large global following, and then branched out into commerce as a successful entrepreneur and investor.

His business empire includes blockbuster films, global tours, streaming platforms, consumer products, fitness partnerships and more, supported by an audience of 292 million social media followers worldwide. Hart's portfolio includes, successful ventures such as Hartbeat Productions, Gran Coramino, and Fabletics, among others.

"Kevin is one of the most dynamic entertainers and entrepreneurs of our time," said Jamie Salter, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Authentic. "His creative vision, business instincts and cultural impact are unmatched. Kevin

sees what we see: the power of brand ownership and the opportunity to build a global, long-term business.

"His investment in Authentic also reflects our mutual confidence and shared vision for that growth."

Corey Salter, President of Entertainment and International at Authentic, said the partnership marks another meaningful milestone for Authentic, which has established key partnerships both with leading companies and with globally influential celebrities.

Hart joins a roster of A-list celebrity partners in sports, culture and entertainment, including David Beckham and Shaquille O'Neal.

"Our strategy has always been to partner with visionary leaders who are building brands with long-term global relevance," said Corey Salter. "Kevin represents the future of entertainment-driven IP, and together we will expand his brand across new categories and geographies, strengthening the entire Authentic network."

Hart certainly brings a great deal of influence to his role as an ABG partner and client.

Hart has established a strong pedigree in Hollywood, having earned both Emmy and Grammy nominations, and his films have grossed more than \$4.23 billion in global revenue.

Hart is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Hartbeat, a global multi-platform media company and the Founder of HartBeat Ventures.

On the business side, Hart is a founding partner in three companies: the premium tequila brand Gran Coramino, the nutritional wellness brand VitaHustle and the premium dog food company Hartfelt.

Hart's brand partnerships include Qatar Airways, Fabletics, Netflix, NBCUniversal, JPMorganChase, DraftKings, Verizon, SharkNinja and C4 Energy. ■



Licensing Roundup: Zeberskys Step Down at Jazwares

Licensing Roundup Stories
by Gary Symons and Allison Watkinson

Founders Judd and Laura Zebersky Step Down As Leadership of Jazwares

Big news in the toy industry as the founders of Jazwares, Judd and Laura Zebersky, announced they are stepping down from their leadership roles.

Judd Zebersky is the founder and CEO at Jazwares, while wife Laura is the company's president. After nearly three decades building Jazwares into a top-tier global toy company, the couple will step down after their last day on March 20.

David Neustein, Chief Operating Officer and a key leader for the past 15 years, will be assuming the role of CEO.

"This planned departure comes as the company's foundation is stronger than ever," said Judd Zebersky. "We are incredibly proud of what the team has built, including turning Jazwares into a global leader in the toy industry and building Squishmallows into a culturally meaningful brand.

"We have complete confidence in David's leadership and vision as Jazwares enters its next chapter," Zebersky added.

Judd and Laura Zebersky also thanked the Jazwares team and the various partners they've worked with over the years in a joint written statement.



Jazwares founders Judd and Laura Zebersky.

"Our gratitude goes out to the entire team, the Jazmanians, for their passion, collaboration, and humility, which are the heart and soul of the company," they said.

"We also thank all our long-term partners—licensors, retailers, vendors, and factories, whose trust and consistency have helped us scale, diversify, and deliver experiences that touch the lives of millions. Finally, we thank Berkshire Hathaway, whose stewardship, trust, and shared principles have strengthened the company's future. Being part of the Berkshire family has been one of the greatest privileges of our careers."

Jazwares management thanked the Zeberskys for their vision and hard work, which not only built one of the world's top toy companies, but also made Squishmallows one of the world's top toy brands.

"We are incredibly grateful for Judd and Laura's vision, leadership, and the foundation that they built," the company said.

Jazwares was founded in 1997 in Sunrise, Florida, by Judd Zebersky, a former lawyer who left his legal career to start a toy company.

After spending months learning about

toy manufacturing in China, the company launched its first product, Big Sippers novelty cups, in 1998.

Jazwares later built its business around licensing entertainment properties, expanding into video games and digital creators. Laura Zebersky left her law practice to join the company in 2005, and is credited with helping accelerate the growth of Jazwares.

The company has secured major licenses over the years, including Sonic the Hedgehog, Minecraft, Fortnite and Halo, and has partnered with companies such as Hasbro, Epic Games and Mojang Studios. In 2019, Jazwares acquired Wicked Cool Toys and partnered with children's entertainer Blippi.

It expanded further in 2020 with the critical acquisition of Kellytoy, the creator of Squishmallows, which Jazwares quickly turned into a global phenomenon.

Jazwares added a costume division in 2021 and expanded its retail reach through partnerships with major chains. Alleghany Corporation made equity investments beginning in 2014 and took a majority stake in 2016. Berkshire Hathaway acquired Alleghany in 2022, making Jazwares part of its portfolio, and providing financial boost for even more accelerated growth.

In 2023, Jazwares moved its headquarters to Plantation, Florida, and continues to work on new licensing partnerships, including a recent deal with McDonald's to produce Squishmallows toys for Happy Meals.

Gibson Partners With Keith Richards on Limited-Edition ES-355 Replicas

Gibson has announced a new partnership with Rolling Stones co-founder Keith Richards, unveiling two limited-edition recreations of his iconic 1960 Gibson ES-355 guitar.

The collaboration introduces the Keith

Gibson Recreates Keith Richards' Legendary Guitar

Richards 1960 ES-355 Collector's Edition, Signed Guitar and Label, and the Keith Richards 1960 ES-355, Signed Label, both handcrafted by Gibson Custom in Nashville, Tennessee.

Developed in close collaboration with Richards, the guitars are designed as meticulous replicas of his black 1960 ES-355, one of his most recognizable instruments. Richards first used an ES-355 in 1969 during the recording sessions for *Sticky Fingers* and *Exile on Main St.*, and his original model has appeared on every Rolling Stones tour since 1997.

Only 50 units of the Collector's Edition, Signed Guitar and Label will be produced. These guitars are signed by Richards both on the f-hole label and on the back of the headstock and will be available exclusively via Gibson.com and at the Gibson Garage locations in Nashville and London. An additional 100 units of the Signed Label version, signed by Richards on the f-hole label only, will be available through authorized Gibson Custom dealers, Gibson Garage locations, and Gibson.com.



The Rolling Stones' legendary lead guitarist Keith Richards, seen here holding a recreation of the 1960 Gibson ES-355 guitar that helped propel him to global fame. Image credit: Gibson Custom.



Only 50 units of the Collector's Edition, Signed Guitar and Label will be produced. These guitars are signed by Richards both on the f-hole label and on the back of the headstock. Image credit: Gibson Custom

Gibson Custom used advanced 3D scanning, period-correct materials, and construction techniques to recreate the original instrument, with Murphy Lab hand-aging applied to realistically duplicate decades of wear. Each guitar features a multi-ply maple/poplar/maple body with red spruce bracing and a maple centerblock, along with weight relief requested by Richards for improved comfort.

The mahogany neck is shaped to a custom Keith Richards profile derived from scans of the original guitar, paired with a bound ebony fingerboard and mother-of-pearl block inlays. Hardware includes a Bigsby B7 vibrato tailpiece and Grover Rotomatic tuners, while custom unpotted pickups with Alnico 5 magnets are designed to match the sound of Richards' original instrument.

"This is my standard-tuning six-string; this is the other side of my thing," Richards said. "My six-string stuff has always been, you know, a great Gibson; that's where I

feel the most comfortable. And also with the sound."

Each guitar ships in a Gibson Protector Series case and includes a certificate of authenticity and a replica of Richards' strap. Gibson has also released a new interview featuring Richards and producer Andrew Watt on Gibson TV in support of the launch.

Richards, born in 1943 in Dartford, England, is one of rock music's most influential figures. As guitarist, songwriter, and co-founder of The Rolling Stones, he helped define the sound of modern rock with a blues-driven style and signature riffs that have influenced generations of musicians. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989 and continues to perform with the band more than six decades into his career.

Real Life Godzilla Stomps Into Tokyo's Haneda Airport

It was 1954 when the 'King of Monsters' first rampaged through Tokyo, crushing

Kinder, Gentler Godzilla Greeting Tourists at Haneda Airport

buildings and plucking aircraft out of the sky.

Now a much friendlier Godzilla is back, and welcoming visitors to Japan at Tokyo's Haneda Airport.

The Haneda Godzilla Global Project has launched a "mega-scale initiative" to broadcast Japanese entertainment to the world from Haneda Airport, through a licensed collaboration between three companies. Rights holder Toho Co., Ltd. is working with Japan Airport Terminal Co., Ltd., and Tokyo International Airport Terminal Corporation to create a truly monstrous display under the theme "Godzilla welcomes all visitors to Japan and sees them off as they depart."

As the centerpiece of the project, a colossal Godzilla statue, approximately 40 meters long and 9 meters tall, has been revealed inside Japan's international gateway at Haneda Airport Terminal 3.

Modeled after the original Godzilla, the monument surpasses the size of existing indoor installations and is designed to be viewed from multiple angles throughout Terminal 3.

Additional installations in the area include Godzilla: The Great Monster Advance Picture Scroll in the arrival lobby and a standing statue from Godzilla Minus One, further expanding the presence of



A gigantic statue of the legendary Godzilla peeks over a wall at Haneda Airport in Tokyo.

the popular monster across arrivals and departures.

A special event was held at Haneda Airport to mark the completion of the world's largest indoor Godzilla monument, with speeches from Keiji Ota, Senior Managing Executive Officer and Chief Godzilla Officer (CGO) of Toho Co., Ltd.; Masatoshi Akahori, President and Representative Director of Tokyo International Air Terminal Corporation; and special guest actress Riko Fukumoto, ambassador for the "Godzilla The Ride" attraction at Seibuen Amusement Park.

All of the guest speakers reflected on the cultural significance of the six-year project and Godzilla's role as a global symbol of Japanese entertainment.

"As travel ramps up for the new year, the Haneda Godzilla Global Project is set to leave a lasting impression on millions of international travelers passing through Terminal 3 with an encounter with one of Japan's most iconic cultural symbols," the partners said.

The first Godzilla film, along with the 1954 cinematic masterpiece *The Seven Samurai*, is credited with helping Toho become a leading global entertainment



studio. Godzilla and the 'Monsterverse' franchise remains one of the leading entertainment and licensing brands in the world, and has become a major influence on modern culture, particularly for anime.

Toho has also become a leader in the anime entertainment sector, with hits like *My Hero Academia* and *Jujutsu Kaisen*.

Blonde Sheep Signs Morrisons as First Licensee for Applied Nutrition

Blonde Sheep Licensing has brokered a long-term partnership between Morrisons and Applied Nutrition for a range of co-branded food products.

Morrison's and Applied Nutrition Create GLP-1 Meals

The multi-year licensing agreement grants Morrison's the exclusive rights to produce and sell meals and food products for the Applied Nutrition brand.

"We're excited to have partnered with Morrison's for our first licensing-out deal, a testament to the strength of our brand and the growing consumer demand for convenient, high-protein food choices," said Applied Nutrition CEO, Thomas Ryder. "This is a great opportunity to reach new audiences and enable existing customers to deepen their engagement with our brand. We've enjoyed working with Morrison's, combining their expertise in food development with our deep customer understanding to create a unique product range designed to support people in achieving their wellness goals."

Through the terms of the agreement, Morrison's has already launched its first collection of Applied Nutrition products across its network of stores and e-commerce shops.

"With an increase in the demand from consumers for great tasting high protein products the launch couldn't have been better timed," said Blonde Sheep Licensing CEO, Natasha Dyson. "Seeing the range successfully in market and resonating with consumers is a testament to the strength of both brands and the power of strategic licensing. We couldn't be more pleased to

have played a role in making this vision a reality and know we couldn't have found a more committed licensee than Morrison's."

This initial collection includes 53 products that span high-protein ready meals, pizzas, cheeses, pasta, ice cream, salads, bowls and GLP-1 friendly offerings.

"We know our customers are increasingly seeking high-protein foods that fit seamlessly into their everyday lives – at home, at work or on the move," said Morrison's brand director, Lizzy Massey. "The growing use of GLP-1s has further accelerated demand for convenient, nutrient-dense options that support balanced eating. Applied Nutrition is a highly trusted, fast-growing brand, and this exclusive partnership has enabled us to bring genuine innovation and choice to our customers."



Image Credit: Blonde Sheep Licensing logo.

Applied Nutrition is a sports nutrition, health and wellness company that offers a wide selection of nutrient-dense supplements through its portfolio of in-house brands.

First founded in 1899, Morrison's is a UK-based grocery and supermarket chain that operates over 400 store locations across Wales, England and Scotland.

Blonde Sheep Licensing is an international consultancy and agency that works with brands and manufacturers to increase their revenue through strategic licensing programs. Experienced at working across multiple product categories and retail tiers, the agency helps its clients launch new licensing programs, expand existing programs and extend their reach into additional categories.

Care Bears Make Their First Foray Into Location-Based Entertainment

Cloudco Entertainment is expanding the Care Bears brand into location-based experiences with the opening of its first official Care Bears Play Area in the United States.

The interactive play space is scheduled to debut in January at Barton Creek Square in Austin, Texas.

Developed in collaboration with retail real estate company Simon, the Care Bears Play Area is designed for toddlers through age

First Care Bears Entertainment Centre Opens in Texas

six and brings elements of the fictional Care-A-Lot setting into a physical, open-concept environment.

The installation features interactive play elements inspired by characters and settings from the Care Bears universe, including Cheer Bear, Funshine Bear, Good Luck Bear, the Forest of Feelings and Starbuddies.

“Care-A-Lot has always lived in the hearts of fans, and launching this first immersive play area is a monumental moment for us,” said Robert Prinzo, head of global licensing at Cloudco Entertainment. “We’re beyond excited to create a place where young families can explore, imagine, and share real-life Care Bears magic, something we hope to expand worldwide.”

Located near JCPenney Court 2, the Care Bears Play Area is designed to accommodate both children and caregivers. Amenities include lounge seating, mobile device charging stations and stroller-friendly access. Cloudco said the space is intended to encourage imaginative play while providing a comfortable experience for families visiting the mall.

Barton Creek Square’s management said the installation aligns with its strategy to enhance family-focused offerings at the property.

“Bringing a play experience like this to Barton Creek Square further enhances our ongoing commitment to offer Austin families a dynamic lineup of retailers and engaging amenities,” said Jana Griswold, area director of marketing. “We’re thrilled to be the home to the first-ever Care Bears Play Area and welcome this bright, joyful new addition to Austin’s family shopping destination.”

Barton Creek Square is Austin’s largest indoor shopping center, with more than 180 specialty stores and a mix of dining and entertainment options. The mall serves communities across the greater Austin area, including downtown Austin,



the University of Texas campus and surrounding neighborhoods.

Cloudco Entertainment, a portfolio company of IVEST Consumer Partners, manages a range of family and children’s entertainment and lifestyle brands, including Care Bears.

Introduced in 1982 through consumer products and greeting cards, Care Bears has since expanded across television, film and licensed merchandise, maintaining a multi-generational fan base and ongoing global retail presence.

Why Matthew McConaughey Trademarked the Phrase “All Right, All Right, All Right”

Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey has trademarked his image and voice, including the famous movie catchphrase “All right, all right, all right.”

The reason? McConaughey reportedly didn’t want people duplicating his voice and using quotes from his film work through the use of generative AI programs.

The line from the film *Dazed and Confused* is one of eight separate applications by McConaughey that were approved by the US Patent and Trademark Office recently, according to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*.

Those applications included the audio

clip of McConaughey saying “All right, all right, all right,” a film clip of the actor standing on a porch, and another sitting in front of a tree.

McConaughey explained the trademark strategy as a means to control his own brand in a world where AI content is becoming pervasive on social media.

“My team and I want to know that when my voice or likeness is ever used, it’s because I approved and signed off on it,” McConaughey said. “We want to create a clear perimeter around ownership with consent and attribution the norm in an AI world.”

The move comes as AI-generated images of actors and the characters they portray have become fodder for users of generative AI.

The irony here is that, while McConaughey wants to ensure he controls his own brand in the AI era, he is also a supporter of and investor in artificial intelligence technology.

Fellow actor Michael Caine and McConaughey both signed a deal with the AI audio company ElevenLabs to create an AI-generated version of their voices on a Spanish-language translation of his newsletter *Lyrics of Livin’*.

McConaughey is also an investor in

Why Matthew McConaughey is Trademarking Himself



Hollywood star Matthew McConaughey has been granted trademarks for audio, images and video, including the phrase “All right, all right, all right.”

ElevenLabs, which is valued at about \$6.6 billion.

McConaughey’s legal team say he personally has not had any issues with AI generated images or audio so far. However, lawyer Jonathan Pollack said the team wants to create more general protections to protect against trademark infringement in future.

“In a world where we’re watching everybody scramble to figure out what to do about AI misuse, we have a tool now to stop someone in their tracks or take them to federal court,” Pollack said.

Big Picture Tasked With Constructing Meccano Licensing Program

Libertas Brands has appointed Big Picture Licensing to represent Spin Master’s Meccano brand across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, as the classic construction toy seeks to bolt itself into new consumer product categories.

Under the partnership, Big Picture Licensing will pursue licensing opportunities for Meccano across a wide range of sectors, including apparel, accessories, back-to-school, electronic accessories, gift and novelty, health and beauty, consumer packaged goods, stationery, seasonal items, sporting goods,

publishing and location-based experiences.

The goal is to extend the brand beyond the toy aisle while staying true to its hands-on, build-it-yourself DNA.

Founded in 1898 in England by inventor Frank Hornby, Meccano is one of the oldest construction toy systems in the world, known for its metal parts, nuts, bolts and bespoke tools that encourage creativity, problem-solving and engineering skills.

Now owned by Spin Master, the brand was recently relaunched with Addo Play as its global master toy licensee, targeting multiple age groups as part of a broader growth strategy.

Mark Kingston, CEO and co-founder of Libertas Brands, said Big Picture

Licensing’s experience across EMEA positions it well to expand Meccano into new product categories, while respecting the brand’s heritage.

“We are delighted to partner with the team at Big Picture Licensing to help steward the Meccano brand into new product categories that celebrate creativity and innovation; values deeply rooted in its origins,” Kingston said. “Big Picture Licensing’s proven track record of bringing brands to life at retail across EMEA makes them the perfect partner to evolve and capitalize on Meccano’s unique heritage.”

Dan Frugtinet, managing director and founder of Big Picture Licensing, said demand for construction toy intellectual property is growing and that Meccano’s cross-generational appeal gives it great potential as a lifestyle brand.

“The global trend for innovative construction toy IP is stronger than ever, and we look forward to reintroducing Meccano to the EMEA market as a lifestyle brand with broad licensing opportunities,” Frugtinet said. “With its rich heritage and nostalgic cross-generational appeal – from Gen X to Gen Alpha – Meccano is a truly unique property, and we can’t wait to get started.”

For Meccano, the move represents another carefully measured step in its long-running evolution – proof that, more than a century on, the brand is still finding new ways to put the pieces together.



A Sweet Cosmetics Collection From Swizzels and Sunkissed

Swizzels and Sunkissed Sign Sweet Cosmetics Collaboration

Swizzels has launched a collaboration with the Sunkissed beauty label to create a product range based on its portfolio of confectionary brands.

Brokered by Blonde Sheep Licensing, the partnership grants Sunkissed the rights to manufacture and distribute Swizzels-inspired collections throughout the next three years.

“We are delighted to be partnering with Swizzels’ Love Hearts on this exciting collaboration,” said Rainbow Cosmetics managing director, Stephen Sharman. “Our brands are closely aligned in values, with a shared commitment to creating joyful, high-quality and affordable products. Both proudly based in Manchester, this partnership brings together Sunkissed’s beauty expertise with the iconic, playful spirit of Love Hearts, resulting in a collection that truly celebrates colour, positivity, and self-expression.”

The first co-branded collection to debut for the partnership offers a selection of bath and body products that feature imagery, fragrances and colors from the Love Hearts candy brand.

This includes products such as shower whip, body lotion, hand cream, body



Image Credit: Sunkissed/Swizzels courtesy of Blonde Sheep Licensing.



Surge Brands giving Bosco a licensing boost.

whip, soaps and scrubs in fruity fragrances like Lemon Sherbet, Blackcurrant and Pineapple.

“The Sunkissed products are perfect for Swizzels, their bright colours and fun eye-catching styles reflect the essence of the Swizzels brands,” said Blonde Sheep Licensing CEO, Natasha Dyson. “The Love Hearts range looks beautiful and the launch is perfectly timed to allow consumers to share the love around Valentine’s Day. I’m excited to see what’s next.”

Launched in January to line up with the Valentine’s Day shopping season, the Love Hearts x Sunkissed products are now available exclusively through Asda retail stores in the UK.

The collection will be available at additional retailers beginning in mid-February.

Owned by Rainbow Cosmetics, Sunkissed is a UK-based beauty brand that specializes in delivering high-quality, vegan and cruelty-free products.

Swizzels is a British-owned confectionery manufacturer that is known for popular candy brands like Love Hearts, Squashies, Drumstick, Refreshers and Parma Violets.

Blonde Sheep Licensing is an international licensing consultancy and agency that

works with brands and manufacturers to increase their revenue through strategic licensing partnerships.

Surge Brands Named Licensing Agent for Bosco Chocolate Syrup

Surge Brands has been appointed by Sea Breeze as the exclusive global licensing agent for its Bosco chocolate syrup brand.

Under the new partnership, Surge Brands will work to expand Bosco through a comprehensive licensing program that will reach additional customer demographics, retail markets and product categories.

“Bosco is a rare brand with both deep emotional resonance and tremendous commercial upside,” said Surge Brands licensing VP, Ari Freedman. “It has nearly a century of trust, instant recognition, and a visual identity that translates beautifully across categories. We see a powerful opportunity to thoughtfully extend Bosco into new aisles around the world while staying true to what consumers love about the brand.”

The program will focus on securing licensees for the brand across a range of key product categories.

These categories include desserts, baking mixes, frostings, frozen treats, refrigerated sweets, ready-to-drink beverages and more.

Launched in 1928 as Sea Breeze’s flagship brand, Bosco syrup is well-known across the United States for its rich chocolate flavor, nostalgic appeal and easy squeezable bottle.

The brand is currently available through major retailers and e-commerce platforms such as Walmart, Kroger, Whole Foods, Publix, Amazon and more.

“As Bosco approaches its 100th anniversary, this partnership with Surge Brands represents an exciting new chapter,” said Sea Breeze president, Josh Sanders. “Surge brings the strategic expertise and creative vision needed to

Hot New Looks With Sephora x Tabasco Lip Gloss

introduce Bosco to new generations of fans and new product categories, while honoring the legacy that has made the brand an American icon.”

A sister company to Surge Licensing, Surge Brands specializes in working to expand IP from the corporate, luxury, food and confectionery sectors.

The agency offers extensive experience in building global brand expansion programs through multi-platformed entertainment and consumer product licensing.

Founded in 1925, Sea Breeze is a product development and manufacturing company that produces a wide variety of syrups and beverages for food-service and retail operations.

Sephora and Tabasco Launch Spicy, Limited-Edition Lip Gloss Line

Sephora Collection has partnered with the Tabasco brand on a limited-edition beauty collaboration that brings the hot sauce maker into the cosmetics category for the first time.

The deal was facilitated by IMG Licensing.

The collaboration centers on Sephora Collection’s Outrageous Plump Volume Effect Lip Gloss, formulated with chili pepper extract and hyaluronic acid to deliver a visible plumping effect while helping to moisturize lips.



Sephora is bringing the heat to its new lip gloss, thanks to a collaboration with Tabasco.

The collection includes four shades inspired by Tabasco’s sauces and signature heat levels. Jalapeño is a clear green gloss designed to appear subtle once applied, while Sriracha offers a warm, translucent brown tone. Tabasco Red delivers a bright red shade with a glossy finish, and Extreme Heat features a clear black gloss with plum highlights aimed at more adventurous consumers.

Each lip gloss is packaged with a silicone travel case inspired by Tabasco sauce labels, along with a key ring and chili charm. A limited-edition set featuring all four shades will also be available.

The launch marks Tabasco’s entry into the beauty category and extends the brand beyond food through licensing partnerships that translate its bold flavor profile and visual identity into new consumer product categories. IMG Licensing manages Tabasco’s global licensing program.

The collection debuted on sephora.com on January 6 and rolled out to Sephora stores beginning January 12.

Tabasco is produced by McIlhenny Company, a family-owned business founded on Avery Island, Louisiana, more than 155 years ago. The brand’s sauces are sold in more than 195 countries and territories worldwide. Sephora Collection



is Sephora’s private-label brand, offering makeup, skincare, hair care, and body products positioned around accessibility, inclusivity, and innovation.

IMG Licensing is a global brand licensing agency managing programs for companies across food, fashion, entertainment, sports, and consumer products, and operates as part of WME Group.

VSP Vision Acquires Branded Eyewear Maker Marcolin

VSP Vision completed in December the acquisition of Marcolin, a global leader in eyewear design, manufacturing, and distribution.

VSP bought out the company from PAI Partners and other minority shareholders. The deal is significant for the licensing industry, as Marcolin is a major player in the sector.

Marcolin’s portfolio of luxury and lifestyle brands include TOM FORD, Guess, adidas Sport, adidas Originals, Christian Louboutin, Max Mara, Zegna, GCDS, MAX&Co., MCM, Pucci, BMW, K-Way, Kenneth Cole, Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister, rag & bone, Timberland, GANT, Harley-Davidson, Marciano and Skechers.

The company also produces its own house brands. Founded in Northern Italy in 1961, Marcolin distributes its eyewear collections in more than 125 countries.

The deal is also interesting because VSP Vision is America’s first national, not-for-profit vision benefits company. VSP has operated for 70 years as a leader in health-focused vision care, offering vision benefits, eye care services, eyewear solutions, and optometry practice solutions. VSP already owns the large eyewear company Marchon.

The company’s goal – which Marcolin can certainly support – is to provide affordable access to eye care and eyewear for millions of members through a network of more than 42,000 doctors.

Continued on page 31

Who's News Stories by Gary Symons and Allison Watkinson, TLL

Funko Appoints Night CEO Reed Duchscher to Board

Funko says Night CEO Reed Duchscher has joined its board of directors, as longtime director Mike Lunsford steps down.

Duchscher is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Night, a talent management and venture platform that partners with influential creators, artists, and brands.

"I'm excited to be joining Funko at a time where the culture, entertainment, and IP landscape is evolving as significantly as it has in decades," said Duchscher. "Funko has always been a beloved brand in the world of pop culture fanatics, and there's a bright future in being able to connect both its brand and products with the next generation of fans.

"I'm looking forward to working alongside Josh and the rest of the Board to fulfill their vision of the business."

Duchscher is credited with pioneering a disruptive business model that turns creators into founders and operators, including the representation and scaling of YouTube star MrBeast and snack brand Feastables.



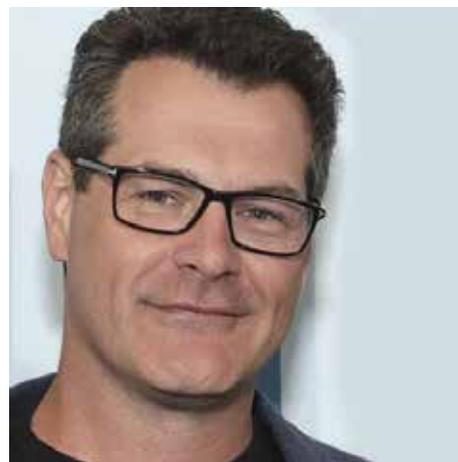
Night CEO Reed Duchscher.

Night's mission is to amplify the voices and companies defining pop culture today, building creator-led businesses across talent management, content production, marketing strategy, and venture investing.

The firm oversees some of the most influential creators in pop culture, including Kai Cenat, Hasan Piker and the Kalogeras Sisters. Night's creators and partners set trends, engage audiences at scale, and drive commerce, positioning the company at the forefront of content, culture, and the future of media.

"Reed is a deeply respected business leader and investor with a proven track record of building dynamic businesses in fast-evolving consumer and digital markets," said Josh Simon, Chief Executive Officer of Funko. "We believe his experience bridging content, creators and commerce, as well as his work developing new revenue models around fandom, will be highly valuable as we focus on driving profitable growth, deepening fan engagement and creating long-term shareholder value."

Duchscher steps in as Lunsford, a key figure in Funko's development over the years, steps down from his long tenure on the board. In addition to his work as a director, Lunsford also stepped in as an interim CEO during periods of organizational change at the company.



New Kendra Scott CEO Ken Blakeslee.

"Funko and the Board express their appreciation to Mike Lunsford for his many years of service and leadership, including his contributions as Funko's Interim CEO during periods of strategic transition and organizational change," the company said.

Funko is a leading global pop culture lifestyle brand, owning top companies like Funko, Loungefly and Mondo, and is a key player in the licensing industry as well, holding a vast portfolio of licensing partnerships with top entertainment brands.

Kendra Scott Appoints Chris Blakeslee as its New CEO

The Kendra Scott lifestyle brand has announced the appointment of Chris Blakeslee as the company's new chief executive officer effective January 12.

The company founder, Kendra Scott, will continue in her roles as chief visionary officer, executive chairwoman and majority shareholder.

"Kendra has built an extraordinary brand grounded in a deeply customer-first, experience-driven approach," said Chris Blakeslee, chief executive officer. "I'm energized by the opportunity to bring the world of Kendra Scott to life in richer, more immersive ways across product, environment, community, and culture—building on the strong foundation already in place as we shape the brand's next era."

In his new role at the company, Blakeslee will use his strategic and operational expertise to further expand the Kendra Scott brand into new retail markets and consumer product categories.

Prior to joining Kendra Scott, Blakeslee served in leadership roles for lifestyle and fashion companies such as Alo Yoga, BELLA+CANVAS, Athleta and Unspun.

This included significant experience in working with founder-led brands.

"Chris understands our customer-first mission, and I'm excited to see him lead with purpose—driving strategic growth

and deepening brand affinity," said Scott. "His forward-looking vision strengthens our holistic brand world, where product, environment, community and culture work seamlessly together. Chris honors my vision while adding a dynamic perspective, making him the ideal steward for our next phase of growth."

Founded in 2002, Kendra Scott is a jewelry and lifestyle brand that is known for its designs, use of color and signature shapes.

The brand offers a wide variety of items across fashion, jewelry, watches, engagement rings, fragrances, home accessories, footwear and more.

The company distributes its products through an omni-channel network of namesake stores, pop-up locations, wholesale partners and specialty boutiques.

Since 2010, the company has donated over 70 million dollars to philanthropic organizations, including through the Kendra Scott Foundation's childhood literacy initiative, Yellow Library.

Fender Appoints New Chief Executive Officer

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) has appointed Edward 'Bud' Cole to the role of CEO and member of the board of directors.

Cole began serving as CEO-designate



Fender CEO-designate Edward 'Bud' Cole. Photo credit: Naoki Tsuruta.

beginning on January 19, and will officially assume the CEO position on February 16, 2026.

He will be taking on the role from Andy Mooney, who plans to retire following a decade of work for the company.

"Leading Fender has been a highlight of my career," said Andy Mooney. "I'm deeply grateful for the creativity and commitment of the Fender teams around the world and proud of what we've accomplished. I'm excited to pass the baton on to Bud and confident that under his leadership, Fender will continue to inspire players for generations to come."

Cole most recently served FMIC as the president of its Asia Pacific division, where he worked to expand the business across 14 countries throughout the region.

During this time, he contributed to launching Fender's Tokyo headquarters and established new commercial and operational capabilities.

He also played key roles in building direct-to-dealer operations in Australia, expanding Fender's e-commerce retail presence, establishing licensing partnerships with local artists and more.

"To lead Fender is the honor of a lifetime," said Cole. "This brand has been a part of my life since childhood, and I'm committed to ensuring Fender continues to empower players everywhere, from beginners picking up their first guitar to the artists shaping the sound of today and tomorrow," added Cole. "Together with our global teams, partners, and loyal community of players, we will write the next era of Fender's history."

Prior to joining FMIC, Cole held senior leadership roles with prominent global brands from the lifestyle, luxury and consumer branding sectors.

This previous experience included roles that focused on commercial expansion and brand development for Pernod Ricard, LVMH, QVC and Ralph Lauren.

"Bud has been one of the most impactful leaders within our organization,"

said FMIC executive chairman, Mark Fukunaga. "He has a deep understanding of the Fender brand, our global players, and the commercial and operational foundation required to propel us into the future. His track record of building teams, expanding markets, and elevating Fender's presence around the world makes him uniquely qualified to lead the next chapter of growth," added Fukunaga. "On behalf of the Board, I also want to thank Andy Mooney for his leadership over the past decade and for the significant contributions he has made to the company."

Launched in 1946, FMIC is a global company that operates a portfolio of wholly-owned and licensed brands related to the music and performance industry.

The company's portfolio includes well-known labels such as Fender, Squier, Gretsch, Jackson, EVH, Charvel, Bigsby and PreSonus.

While its main focus is the manufacturing, marketing and distribution of instruments, it also offers a range of apps and learning platforms that are designed to complement its Fender branded guitars, amplifiers, effects pedals, accessories and pro-audio gear.

Falcon's Beyond Promotes Saham Ali to Chief Technology Officer

Falcon's Beyond Global has promoted its long-standing employee, Saham Ali, to serve as its first chief technology officer (CTO).

Formally working as the company's EVP of technology, Ali has been instrumental in shaping the technological initiatives and overall business operations of Falcon's Beyond.

"Technology is the heartbeat of immersive storytelling," said Falcon's Beyond CEO, Cecil D. Magpuri. "I have worked closely with Saham for over a decade, and he has been a driving force behind our product offerings in XR and real-time graphics pipelines. As well, he has continued to be a leader in the

industry by successfully leveraging the latest technological platforms to power next-generation attractions," added Magpuri. "His leadership has also optimized complex creative workflows, integrated enterprise IT with robotics and media systems, and introduced efficiencies across global production environments."

In his newly-created role as CTO, he will continue to implement technology strategies across the company's portfolio of themed entertainment experiences and interactive attractions.

This includes initiatives to advance the company's products in areas like real-time rendering, robotics, ride systems, extended reality (XR), generative AI, connected experiences and more.

"In this extended role, Saham will ensure that we are in the best position to deliver unique experiences for our customers and set new standards in the themed entertainment and interactive attractions industry."

Saham has close to 25 years of experience working in the production and technology sector.

Prior to joining Falcon's Beyond, he developed his skills by working with entertainment studios to assist in the production of TV series and films like Hawaii Five-0, Outsourced, Star Trek: New Voyages and Red Tails.

Ali has presented his insights at major industry events such as INFOCOMM, IAAPA Expo, NAB Show, Synapse Orlando and Techonomy.

In addition, his works have been featured in prominent publications such as 3D World, POST Magazine, Orlando Business Journal, InPark Magazine and Theme Park Insider.

Ali serves as an active member of several trade organizations including the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA), Visual Effects Society (VES) and SIGGRAPH.

"I am honored to continue to provide strategic oversight for Falcon's



Saham Ali joining Falcon's Beyond Global.

technology evolution," said Saham Ali. "In my extended role, I will build on our efforts to align technology with the vision that Cecil has outlined for Falcon's global strategy. I am excited to create a pathway to advance platforms like ÆONXP, our loyalty and engagement ecosystem, and continue to push the boundaries of what may be possible in immersive entertainment."

Falcon's Beyond is a global entertainment, consumer experience and technology company that develops IP through its core business units: Falcon's Creative Group, Falcon's Beyond Destinations, and Falcon's Beyond Brands.

The company endeavors to bring brands and intellectual property to life through themed entertainment, animation, movies, licensing, merchandising, gaming and ride technology.

Pam Kaufman to Lead 'Fashiontainment' Platform for Gap Inc.

Gap Inc. has appointed Pam Kaufman as Executive Vice President and Chief Entertainment Officer, leading a new initiative it calls 'Fashiontainment.'

In this newly created role, Kaufman will report to Gap Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer, Richard Dickson, starting February 2.



Pam Kaufman making a big move at Gap Inc.

Gap says the role is designed to build and scale Gap Inc.'s entertainment, content, and licensing platform across music, television, film, sports, gaming, consumer products, and cultural collaborations. Kaufman and her team will be tasked with creating innovative storytelling to unlock value at the intersection of fashion and entertainment.

Kaufman will lead the development of Gap Inc.'s strategy for the Fashiontainment platform in close partnership with Gap's various fashion brands.

"Fashion is entertainment, and today's customers aren't just buying apparel, they're buying into brands that tell compelling stories and drive cultural conversations," said Richard Dickson, President and CEO of Gap Inc. "As we reinvigorate Gap Inc.'s house of iconic American brands to drive relevance and revenue, we recognize entertainment is a critical link to the consumer; one we can lean on to create fandoms, inspire movements, and fuel sustained growth.

"Through Fashiontainment, we are unlocking that potential to take our brands to the next level, and Pam's discipline, deep expertise, and proven track record in entertainment and licensing make her the perfect fit to help us bring it to life."

Kaufman is an entertainment and licensing veteran with a great deal of

Continued on page 36

Licenses Recently Granted International

Applied Nutrition

baked goods, dairy products, desserts, ready meals (U.K.)

To: WM Morrisons

Kelly Nichols, Licensing Mgr
kelly.nichols@morrisonsplc.co.uk

By: Blonde Sheep Licensing

Natasha Dyson, MD
34 691 02 89 35
natasha@blondesheep.co.uk

Bing

cakes (Italy)

To: Balocco S.p.A, Giulia Cappabianca, Brand and Communication

gcappabianca@balocco.it

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bing

interactive toys, laptop (children's) (Italy)

To: Clementoni S.p.A.

Matteo Paolucci, Global Licensing Manager
39 71 758 1357
matteo.paolucci@clementoni.com

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bing

arm chairs, car accessories, toilet seat reducers (Italy)

To: Colzani Spa - Global Trading Srl

Ermando Branduini, Brand Manager
ermando.branduini@colzanispa.it

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bing

backpacks, blankets, footwear, rain boots, slippers, sneakers (Italy)

To: Coriex

Chiara Varotto, Product Mgr Accessories and Apparel
39 049 900 32 88
chiaravarotto@coriex.it

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bing

bicycles (Italy)

To: Dino Bikes S.p.A.

39-0171266241
info@dinobikes.com

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bing

stockings (Italy)

To: Dolfin spa

Francesca Tumminelli, Licensing Manager
39 095 7780410
francesca.tumminelli@dolfin.it

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bing

musical figurines (Italy)

To: FABBA

Sara Visentin, Head of Brand and Content
sara.visentin@myfaba.com

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bing

Christmas activity books (Italy)

To: La Fabbrica delle Idee/Pon Pon Edizioni

Marilla Pascale, Publishing Executive
39 2 3672 3258
marilla.pascale@ponponedizioni.com

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Blippi

live experiences (North America)

To: Round Room Live

Mike Smith, Head of Production - Exhibits & Experiences
msmith@roundroompresents.com

By: Moonbug Entertainment

Susan Vargo, Head of Experiences
susan.vargo@moonbug.com

Bluey

floor puzzles, puzzles (Italy)

To: Clementoni S.p.A.

Matteo Paolucci, Global Licensing Manager
39 71 758 1357
matteo.paolucci@clementoni.com

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bluey

bicycles (Italy)

To: Dino Bikes S.p.A.

39-0171266241
info@dinobikes.com

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501
maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Licenses Recently Granted International

Bluey

chocolate eggs, Epiphany stockings (Italy)

To: Dolfin spa

Francesca Tumminelli, Licensing Manager
39 095 7780410

francesca.tumminelli@dolfin.it

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501

maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bluey

eco-puzzles (Italy)

To: Lisciani Giochi Spa

Federica Iezzi, Licensing & Marketing
Manager

39 0861 2311

federicaiezzi@liscianigiocchi.it

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501

maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bluey

accessories, apparel (Italy)

To: OVS dba JB Licenses

Sara Zangrando, Marketing Mgr
sara.zangrando@ovs.it

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501

maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bluey

*action figures, playsets, plush toys, toy
vehicles (Italy)*

To: Rocco Giocattoli

Marco D'alessandris, MD

marco.dalessandris@roccogiocattoli.com

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501

maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Bubble O'Bill

*one piece swimsuits (women's), swim
bottoms (women's), swim tops (women's),
swimwear (boy's), swimwear (girl's),
swimwear (men's) (Australia)*

To: Budgy Smuggler

Brenden Hartmann
GM, 61 0404 026 836

brenden@budgysmuggler.com.au

By: Asembl div. Merchantwise

Justin Watson, MD

61 3 9520 1000

justin@asembl-brands.com

Care Bears

plush (North America, U.K., E.U.)

To: Basic Fun!

Lisa Doiron, VP of Global Brand Marketing
lisa.doiron@basicfun.com

By: Cloudco Entertainment (form. American Greetings Entertainment)

Robert Prinzo, Head Global Licensing
917-533-1501

rprinzo@cloudcoentertainment.com

CoComelon

musical figurines (Italy)

To: FABA

Sara Visentin, Head of Brand and Content
sara.visentin@myfaba.com

By: Maurizio Distefano Licensing - The Evolution of Licensing (MDL)

Maurizio Distefano, President & Owner
39 0131 481501

maurizio@mdistefanolicensing.com

Disney

AI content (Worldwide)

To: OpenAI

Kate Rouch, CMO
kate@openai.com

By: Disney Consumer Products

Paul Gitter, EVP of Global Brand
Commericalization

212-576-4000

paul.gitter@disney.com

Duck-Y

*apparel, sleepwear, swimwear (U.S.,
Canada)*

To: JCorp

Lori Lerner, President
514-384-3872 x287

llerner@jcorp.ca

By: Firefly Brand Management

Cynthia Modders, President & CEO

cynthia@fireflybrandmanagement.com

emoji

video game content (France)

To: Crypto Blockchain Industries (CBI)

Fred Chesnais, Founder and CEO

fredchesnais@cbicorp.io

By: Emoji Company

Marco Husges, CEO and Founder

marco@emoji-company.com

Flash Gordon

*bendable figures, vinyl figures (U.S.,
Canada)*

To: Major Bendies

Michael Kanik, CEO and Co-Founder

contact@majorbendies.com

By: King Features, a Unit of Hearst

Carla Silva, SVP GM & Global Head
Licensing

212-969-7582

csilva@hearst.com

Harry Potter

plush (North America, U.K., E.U.)

To: Basic Fun!

Lisa Doiron, VP of Global Brand Marketing
lisa.doiron@basicfun.com

By: Warner Bros. Consumer Products

Sally de St. Croix, SVP, Franchise
Development, Wizarding World

sally.destcroix@warnerbros.com

Licenses Recently Granted International

Marvel*AI content (Worldwide)***To: OpenAI**Kate Rouch, CMO
kate@openai.com**By: Disney Consumer Products**Paul Gitter, EVP of Global Brand
Commericalization
212-576-4000
paul.gitter@disney.com**Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir***theatrical productions (Canada)***To: Monlove**Martin Ferguson
SVP, 514-587-2992
martin@monlove.com**By: Miraculous Corp**Roz Nowicki, Global Head of Consumer
Products
rnowicki@miraculouscorp.com**Moomin***bags, card holders, glasses, headwear,
jackets, knitwear, pants, rugs, shirts, shorts,
skirts, sweatshirts, wallets (U.S., Canada)***To: Steady Hands Apparel**Wesley Morales, Owner
wesleym@steadyhandsapparel.com**By: King Features, a Unit of Hearst**Carla Silva, SVP GM & Global Head
Licensing
212-969-7582
csilva@hearst.com**Natural History Museum***plush dinosaurs (U.K.)***To: Puppet Company (The)**Katy Rugman, Product and Marketing
Director
katy@thepuppetcompany.com**By: Natural History Museum (London)**Louisa Skevington, Licensing Manager
louisa.skevington@nhm.ac.uk**Palworld***trading card games (Japan)***To: Bushiroad**Romain De Palo, GM Overseas Business
Department
romain@bushiroad.com**By: Pocket Pair**Takuro Mizobe, CEO
takuro.mizobe@pocketpair.jp**Pixar***AI content (Worldwide)***To: OpenAI**Kate Rouch, CMO
kate@openai.com**By: Disney Consumer Products**Paul Gitter, EVP of Global Brand
Commericalization
212-576-4000
paul.gitter@disney.com**Popeye***muscle t-shirt, t-shirts (Australia, New
Zealand)***To: Crate Life Clothing Company**Blair Wigglesworth, Director
blair@crateclothing.co.nz**By: King Features, a Unit of Hearst**Carla Silva, SVP GM & Global Head
Licensing
212-969-7582
csilva@hearst.com**Popeye***body wash, conditioner, face wash, hair
clay, hair grooming products, natural
deoderant, pomades, sea salt sprays,
shampoo, shaving cream, skin care (U.S.,
Canada)***To: Razor MD**Scott Saltzman, Co-founder
866-386-8236
scott@razormd.com**By: King Features, a Unit of Hearst**Carla Silva, SVP GM & Global Head
Licensing
212-969-7582
csilva@hearst.com**Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)***puppet theaters, puppets (U.K.)***To: Puppet Company (The)**Katy Rugman, Product and Marketing
Director
katy@thepuppetcompany.com**By: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)**Rupert Waters, Licensing Mgr
rupert.waters@rspb.org.uk**Star Wars***AI content (Worldwide)***To: OpenAI**Kate Rouch, CMO
kate@openai.com**By: Disney Consumer Products**Paul Gitter, EVP of Global Brand
Commericalization
212-576-4000
paul.gitter@disney.com**Swizzels (Love Hearts)***cosmetics, toiletries (U.K.)***To: Rainbow Cosmetics**Audrey Laurent, Head of Own Brands
44 0161 767 7878
alaurent@rainbowcosmetics.co.uk**By: Blonde Sheep Licensing**Natasha Dyson, MD
34 691 02 89 35
natasha@blondesheep.co.uk**Tabasco***lip gloss (U.K.)***To: Sephora**Lauren Donnelly, Sr Brand Marketing Mgr
- UK
ldonnelly@sephora.co.uk**By: WME/IMG Worldwide Licensing d.b.a. Endeavor (U.K.)**Bruno Maglione, President IMG Licensing
Worldwide & EVP IMG
44 20 8233 6668
bruno.maglione@img.com

Licenses Recently Granted International

The Phantom

hardcover books (Germany, Austria, Switzerland)

To: Comics und Mehr

Michael Beck, MD
michael.beck@comicsundmehr.de

By: King Features, a Unit of Hearst

Carla Silva, SVP GM & Global Head Licensing
212-969-7582
csilva@hearst.com

The Phantom

bendable figures, vinyl figures (U.S., Canada)

To: Major Bendies

Michael Kanik, CEO and Co-Founder
contact@majorbendies.com

By: King Features, a Unit of Hearst

Carla Silva, SVP GM & Global Head Licensing
212-969-7582
csilva@hearst.com

Winx Club

video game content (Worldwide)

To: Maximum Entertainment

Mathias Bugeon, Global Brand Mgr
mbugeon@maximument.com

By: Rainbow Group

Joanne Lee, CCO
joanne@rbw.it

Yu-Gi-Oh! GO RUSH!!

content distribution (U.K.)

To: ITV

Darren Nartey, Sr Acquisitions Mgr
darren.nartey@itv.com

By: Konami Cross Media NY form. 4K Media,

Jennifer Coleman, VP Licensing & Marketing
212-590-2120
cj.52363@konamicrossmedia.com

Zak Bagans

5-inch figures, 6-inch figures (U.S., Canada)

To: Thrilljoy

Bianca Brooks, Brand Partnerships
562-713-2306
bianca@thrilljoy.com

By: Firefly Brand Management

Cynthia Modders, President & CEO
cynthia@fireflybrandmanagement.com

Zoological Society of London

plush backpacks, puppets (U.K.)

To: Puppet Company (The)

Katy Rugman, Product and Marketing Director
katy@thepuppetcompany.com

By: Zoological Society of London

Abbie Taylor, Brand Licensing Mgr
abbie.taylor@zsl.org

Licensing Round Up

Continued from page 24

“The acquisition of Marcolin marks another important milestone in our 70-year history of providing VSP members, clients, network doctors, owned retail locations and key customers with more value and choice,” said VSP Vision President and CEO Michael Guyette. “Marcolin’s portfolio of globally renowned brands, manufacturing expertise, and geographic presence greatly complement Marchon Eyewear’s brand portfolio and capabilities, further strengthening our ability to meet evolving customer needs throughout the world.”

Both Marcolin and Marchon will continue to operate as they do today. ■



Licenses Recently Assigned International

Benihana

A cultural icon with 77 Benihana restaurants in the United States, Caribbean, and Central and South America.

groceries, retail (Worldwide)

Surge Brands

Ari Freedman, VP and Director of New Projects

516-939-2225

ari@surging.com

Bosco

With nearly 100 years of heritage, Bosco® is one of America's most beloved chocolate brands, known for its legendary squeezable bottle, rich chocolate flavor, and deep nostalgic appeal that has connected generations of consumers. A cultural mainstay, Bosco has been featured in pop culture for decades and remains a trusted, multi-generational pantry staple.

baking mixes, desserts, frostings, frozen treats, ready-to-drink beverages, refrigerated sweets (Worldwide)

Surge Brands

Ari Freedman, VP and Director of New Projects

516-939-2225

ari@surging.com

Hanky Panky

Home of the game-changing, famously comfortable thong, Hanky Panky is loved by celebrities and stylists, sold in over 70 countries, and relied upon by millions of fans.

retail (Worldwide)

Crown Brands Group

Raymond Dayan, Co-Founder and CEO

212-235-6380

rdayan@cbgny.com

Kona Grill

Kona Grill, Inc. is an upscale casual restaurant company based in Denver, Colorado serving American cuisine, sushi, and cocktails. The company owns and operates around 40 restaurants in 23 U.S. states, as well as three international locations operating under franchise agreements.

groceries, retail (Worldwide)

Surge Brands

Ari Freedman, VP and Director of New Projects

516-939-2225

ari@surging.com

Sad Nuggie

What began as an internet meme has grown into a global brand. Sad Nuggie has generated millions in plush sales, launched a major retail expansion in 2025, and amassed over 3 million followers across TikTok and Instagram. With multiple videos surpassing 20 million views and hundreds of distinct designs driven by relatable humor, Nuggie is set to become a lasting cultural icon. apparel, collectibles, home, lifestyle products, stationery (Worldwide)

Dimensional Branding Group (DBG)

Claire Westlund, Licensing Coordinator

920-822-3951 x1628

claire.westlund@thevillage.bz

STK Steakhouse

STK distinguishes itself by emphasizing the social experience and taking a vibe-driven approach to fine dining. Every venue has a DJ to create an infectious, high-energy atmosphere. Our sleek environment is designed to encourage guests to interact and mingle. groceries, retail (Worldwide)

Surge Brands

Ari Freedman, VP and Director of New Projects

516-939-2225

ari@surging.com

Licenses Recently Granted U.S.

AD Sutton

backpacks (U.S.)

To: Exxel Outdoors

Russell Rowell, EVP Global Sourcing -
Product Dev and Design
russell.rowell@exxel.com

By: Excel Branding

Jennifer Blake, Licensing
excelbranding@gmail.com

Alienware

eyewear (U.S.)

To: Gunnar Optiks

Michael Volpe, Director of Brand
Marketing
888-486-6270
michael@gunnars.com

By: Alienware

Winnie Wong, Head of Alienware Gaming
Partner Engagement
winnie.wong@alienware.com

Anthropologie

doormats, rugs (U.S.)

To: Ruggable

Robyn Daniels, Senior Manager, Licensing
& Brand Partnerships
robyn.daniels@ruggable.com

By: Urban Outfitters (URBN) dba

Anthropologie
Katherine Finder, CMO
kfinder@anthropologie.com

Benihana

snacks (U.S.)

To: Flock Foods

Harrison Fugman, Co-Founder
harrison@flockfoods.com

By: Surge Brands

Ari Freedman, VP and Director of New
Projects
516-939-2225
ari@surging.com

Bring Your Own Bucket

activations, events, social media
activations (U.S.)

To: Cinemark

David Haywood, SVP
dhaywood@cinemark.com

By: Lowe's Companies

Jennifer Wilson, SVP Chief Marketing
Officer
jwilson@lowes.com

Canticos

plush (U.S.)

To: Teddy Mountain

Jen Ruh, Business Development - Key
Account Mgr
1-877-480-2327
jenruh@teddymountain.com

By: Excel Branding

Jennifer Blake, Licensing
excelbranding@gmail.com

Cinnamoroll

bags, bath bombs, blind boxes, bubble
bath, desk accessories, eye masks,
journals, lip balms, lip gloss, markers,
moisturizing face mask, mugs, notebooks,
pen toppers, pens, plush, socks, stickers,
tumblers, wristbands (U.S.)

To: Lisa Marks Associates (LMA)

Lisa Marks, President
914-933-3900
lmmarks@lma-inc.com

By: Sanrio

Heather Prior, Head of Licensing
310-896-3277
hprior@sanrio.com

Dragon Ball

wooden construction sets (U.S.)

To: Puremind

Zoe Li, Licensing Mgr
zoe@puremind3d.com

By: Toei Animation Inc.

Alston Li, Head of Merchandising &
Licensing
alston@toei-anim.co.jp

Dude Perfect

video game content (U.S.)

To: NEX Team Inc.

Mahesh Ramachandra, Director of Global
Content Partnerships
mahesh@nex.inc

By: Dude Perfect

Scott Winkler, Head of Commercial
Partnerships
swinkler@dudeperfect.com

Harry Potter

trading cards (U.S.)

To: Upper Deck Company

Gabriel Garcia, Sr Director and Sr Brand
Manager
gabriel_garcia@upperdeck.com

By: Warner Bros. Consumer Products

Sally de St. Croix, SVP, Franchise
Development, Wizarding World
sally.destcroix@warnerbros.com

Hello Kitty

bags, bath bombs, blind boxes, bubble
bath, desk accessories, eye masks,
journals, lip balms, lip gloss, markers,
moisturizing face mask, mugs, notebooks,
pen toppers, pens, plush, socks, stickers,
tumblers, wristbands (U.S.)

To: Lisa Marks Associates (LMA)

Lisa Marks, President
914-933-3900
lmmarks@lma-inc.com

By: Sanrio

Heather Prior, Head of Licensing
310-896-3277
hprior@sanrio.com

Hershey's

vinyl figures (U.S.)

To: MGA Entertainment

Junko Tsukamoto, Licensing Administrator
junko.tsukamoto@mgae.com

By: Hershey Co. (The)

Ian Norton, Senior Director - REESE'S
Franchise
717-508-3112
inorton@hersheys.com

Licenses Recently Granted U.S.

Jolly Rancher

vinyl figures (U.S.)

To: MGA Entertainment

Junko Tsukamoto, Licensing Administrator
junko.tsukamoto@mgae.com

By: Hershey Co. (The)

Ian Norton, Senior Director - REESE'S Franchise
717-508-3112
inorton@hersheys.com

KPop Demon Hunters

plush (U.S.)

To: Jazwares

Jeremy Padawer, CBO
267-536-9186
jeremy@jazwares.com

By: Netflix

Cindy Chang, Head of Toys and Publishing
cindyc@netflix.com

Kuromi

bags, bath bombs, blind boxes, bubble bath, desk accessories, eye masks, journals, lip balms, lip gloss, markers, moisturizing face mask, mugs, notebooks, pen toppers, pens, plush, socks, stickers, tumblers, wristbands (U.S.)

To: Lisa Marks Associates (LMA)

Lisa Marks, President
914-933-3900
lmarks@lma-inc.com

By: Sanrio

Heather Prior, Head of Licensing
310-896-3277
hprior@sanrio.com

Majesty

hosiery (U.S.)

To: Delta Galil Industries

Victoria Langro, Assistant Marketing Mgr
victoria.langro@deltagalil.com

By: Excel Branding

Jennifer Blake, Licensing
excelbranding@gmail.com

Moomin

advent calendars, blankets (infants'), capes, crowns, games, streamers, toy playmaps, tutus (U.S.)

To: Sarah's Silks

Sarah Lee, Founder and CEO
760-313-6476
sarah@sarahssilks.com

By: King Features, a Unit of Hearst

Carla Silva, SVP GM & Global Head Licensing
212-969-7582
csilva@hearst.com

My Hero Academia

cropped jackets, hoodies, joggers (U.S.)

To: Born Licensing (Born to License)

David Born, Director
44 74 3830 1920
david.born@bornlicensing.com

By: Crunchyroll

John Leonhardt, Head of Consumer Products
415-310-6135
jleonhardt@crunchyroll.com

My Melody

pendants (U.S.)

To: Pop Mart

Emily Brough, Head of IP Licensing
emily.brough@popmart.com

By: Sanrio

Heather Prior, Head of Licensing
310-896-3277
hprior@sanrio.com

My Melody

bags, bath bombs, blind boxes, bubble bath, desk accessories, eye masks, journals, lip balms, lip gloss, markers, moisturizing face mask, mugs, notebooks, pen toppers, pens, plush, socks, stickers, tumblers, wristbands (U.S.)

To: Lisa Marks Associates (LMA)

Lisa Marks, President
914-933-3900
lmarks@lma-inc.com

By: Sanrio

Heather Prior, Head of Licensing
310-896-3277
hprior@sanrio.com

One Piece

8-inch plush, action figures, collectible figures, plush (U.S.)

To: Moose Toys

Hollie Holmes, VP Global Licensing
310-341-4642
hollie.holmes@moosetoys.com

By: Netflix

Cindy Chang, Head of Toys and Publishing
cindyc@netflix.com

PAW Patrol

games, toys (U.S.)

To: JAKKS Pacific

Josh Weichbrodt, VP of Licensing
424-268-9549
joshw@jakks.com

By: Paramount Pictures

Lourdes Arocho, SVP Global Consumer Products
lourdes.aroch@paramount.com

PAW Patrol

tees, hoodies, caps, accessories (U.S.)

To: Born Licensing (Born to License)

David Born, Director
44 74 3830 1920
david.born@bornlicensing.com

By: Paramount Australia and New Zealand

Christie Scandura, Director of Licensing and Retail Consumer Products
christie.scandura@paramount.com

Licenses Recently Granted U.S.

Peacock Apparel

shirts (men's) (U.S.)

To: Bill Blass Group

William Blass, CEO
william@billblass.com

By: Excel Branding

Jennifer Blake, Licensing
excelbranding@gmail.com

Pochacco

bags, bath bombs, blind boxes, bubble bath, desk accessories, eye masks, journals, lip balms, lip gloss, markers, moisturizing face mask, mugs, notebooks, pen toppers, pens, plush, socks, stickers, tumblers, wristbands (U.S.)

To: Lisa Marks Associates (LMA)

Lisa Marks, President
914-933-3900
lmmarks@lma-inc.com

By: Sanrio

Heather Prior, Head of Licensing
310-896-3277
hprior@sanrio.com

Pokémon

bags, clothing, gold-plated decor, pins, plush, pop-up activation, posters, stationery (U.S.)

To: Natural History Museum (London)

Louisa Skevington, Licensing Manager
louisa.skevington@nhm.ac.uk

By: Pokémon Company Intl.

Charlee Rebane, Senior Licensing & Promotions Manager,
425-274-4800
c.newman@pokemon.com

Pompompurin

bags, bath bombs, blind boxes, bubble bath, desk accessories, eye masks, journals, lip balms, lip gloss, markers, moisturizing face mask, mugs, notebooks, pen toppers, pens, plush, socks, stickers, tumblers, wristbands (U.S.)

To: Lisa Marks Associates (LMA)

Lisa Marks, President
914-933-3900
lmmarks@lma-inc.com

By: Sanrio

Heather Prior, Head of Licensing
310-896-3277
hprior@sanrio.com

Reese's

vinyl figures (U.S.)

To: MGA Entertainment

Junko Tsukamoto, Licensing Administrator
junko.tsukamoto@mgae.com

By: Hershey Co. (The)

Ian Norton, Senior Director - REESE'S Franchise
717-508-3112
inorton@hersheys.com

Stranger Things

plush (U.S.)

To: Basic Fun!

Amanda Perez de Corcho, Director of Licensing
561-997-8901
amanda.perezdecorcho@basicfun.com

By: Netflix

Cindy Chang, Head of Toys and Publishing
cindyc@netflix.com

Stranger Things

dice sets (U.S.)

To: Sirius Dice

Sara (Jenkins) Tata, Head of Marketing PR and Licensing
sara@siriusdice.com

By: Netflix

Cindy Chang, Head of Toys and Publishing
cindyc@netflix.com

Wicked

backpacks, bags, patches, accessories (U.S.)

To: Born Licensing (Born to License)

David Born, Director
44 74 3830 1920
david.born@bornlicensing.com

By: Universal Products & Experiences div. NBCUniversal

Rafael Macias, EVP, Global Commercial Officer
818-777-1000
rafa.macias@nbcuni.com

Licenses Recently Assigned USA

FUL

FUL is an active lifestyle and travel brand that was founded by Justin Timberlake in 2008. The brand launched as a backpack and luggage brand.
all categories (U.S.)

TSG Brands

Adam Gemal, President
732-284-8269
ag@tsgbrands.com

Gerson & Gerson

Founded in 1935 by Max Gerson and his brother, Gerson & Gerson was established with a singular purpose: to delight their daughters—and girls everywhere—through beautifully made dresses.
all categories (U.S.)

Gateway Licensing

Brian Formica, VP Branding & Licensing Innovation
908-601-2535
brian@gatewaylicensing.com

Who's News

Continued from page 27

experience leading successful licensing teams, and with a well-established track record of extending entertainment IP into consumer products, including fashion expressions through design-led partnerships, licensing, retail and experiences.

Most recently, Kaufman served as President and CEO of International Markets, Global Consumer Products and Experiences at Paramount. In that role Kaufman led a multi-billion-dollar organization for the Hollywood studio giant, spanning media, gaming, hospitality, licensing, retail, and live experiences across more than 170 markets.

Kaufman's knowledge of the sector has been further enhanced by board leadership roles with Stella McCartney, Lindblad Expeditions, and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

"Gap Inc.'s brands have shaped culture for generations, creating a legacy that is incredibly powerful," said Kaufman. "What excites me most is the opportunity to build on that foundation, thoughtfully expanding how these brands connect

with people through partnerships and experiences over time.

"I'm inspired to join a company that believes in people and creativity, and to help shape the next chapter of these extraordinary brands."

Gap Inc. says it will establish a Los Angeles-based office on Sunset Boulevard beginning this spring, further embedding the company within the entertainment ecosystem. "This new hub will anchor key initiatives and reinforce that our brands and products are positioned at the center of pop culture," the company said in a statement. "Pam will be spending her time between Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, underscoring the importance of these markets to our strategy and the acceleration of our Fashiontainment vision."

Gap Inc. stresses that the Fashiontainment initiative didn't just come out of nowhere. In fact, it builds on work already taking shape across Gap Inc.'s brands.

Some examples include Gap's partnership in culture-shaping moments like the Better

in Denim campaign featuring KATSEYE, Old Navy's first-ever co-created collection and experience with Disney, and Harlem's Fashion Row during the NBA All-Star Weekend.

The success of those programs has led Gap to establish content production as a key element of its global marketing and engagement initiatives.

Kaufman's appointment is seen as key to the program, and she'll be tasked with leveraging her relationships across the entertainment, licensing and cultural landscape to help Gap brands drive long-term growth.

The various brand teams will continue to lead creative vision, product direction, and campaigns, the company adds, while Kaufman's new role will be focused on enabling and helping ideas travel further through the right relationships and platforms.

Gap Inc. is the largest specialty apparel company in America, owning top brands like Old Navy, Gap, Banana Republic, and Athleta. ■