

License!

WHERE CONCEPTS COME TO MARKET

Keep Chuggin'

HIT ENTERTAINMENT HAS GONE SOFT ON *Thomas & Friends*, inking a series of new and expanded



HIT Entertainment's Christina Miller (left) and Jamie Cygielman.

deals in the soft goods category. "The property has experienced eight consecutive years of double-digit growth, and we felt soft

goods was a terrific growth opportunity," says Jamie Cygielman, senior vice president, consumer products, HIT Entertainment.

New partners such as Children's Apparel, Accessory Network, E.S. Originals, Inc., Handcraft Manufacturing Corp., and Moto Concepts join renewed and existing partners Bentex/Extreme Concepts, Wormser Co., Changes, and Sara Lee. Limited products launch this summer with the bulk of the line due in fall 2005 and into 2006.

HIT Entertainment also seeks partners for rain and outerwear.

Ebony Opportunity

Johnson Publishing Company, owner and publisher of *Ebony* magazine, has entered the licensing arena, tapping TurnerPatterson as its licensing agency. *Ebony* attracts 12.9 million African-American (and other ethnicities) readers monthly and celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. The licensing program—targeted at African-Americans—initially will focus on technology (particularly mobile content), apparel, home, entertainment, and financial services. Says Linda Rice Johnson, president and CEO, Johnson Publishing Company, "We're looking at categories that dovetail with the premise of the magazine: family, lifestyle, achievement, success, and education."

New Deals

• Verizon tapped New York-based licensing agency Brandgenuity to extend the communications brand to complementary consumer product categories. According to Amy Rubenstein, vice president of brand management and media for Verizon, the intent is to offer customers a total technological and communications solution for customers' homes or businesses.

• Amusement brand Whac-A-Mole signed Toy Quest and Activision to develop and publish video games for the property. Activision will create Whac-A-Mole games for Nintendo Game Boy Advance, Nintendo Dual Screen, Nintendo Game Cube, and Sony PlayStation 2. Toy Quest will create a new Whac-A-Mole interactive wireless TV game, combining interactive gameplay with camera recognition technology to create a fun way for kids to



Lisa Marks (left) and Betts Fitzgerald of Lisa Marks and Associates with Packy character.

exercise. Dimensional Branding Group, LLC, agent for Whac-A-Mole, brokered the deals.

• Lisa Marks and Associates, Inc. (LMA), was appointed North American licensing and merchandising agent for Packy Playfair, the national mascot for good sportsmanship from Always Play Fair, LLC. Packy is a fun, cool, positive

"spokescharacter" for fitness and LMA plans to extend that message to kids and families with "feel good" licensed products and promotions.

• Granada Ventures and Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Enterprises signed a licensing deal for UK cult comedy *Little Britain*. The deal provides ABC Enterprises with three direct licenses: gifts, mobiles, and books, and also extends existing and future Granada Ventures licenses for the brand into Australian territories via ABC.