

The Troublesome Tweens

Often described as the troublesome tweens, at the inaugural Licensing Summit last Autumn, Dave Lawrence from the Promotions Practice charted the likes and dislikes, the highs and the lows, and critically the purchasing preferences of this tricky age group.

LSB shares some of his findings and beliefs as well as a handful of other sources of statistics.

Setting the scene behind the tween generation, Dave Lawrence highlighted research which confirms the most important elements in the world of today's 6-10 year olds. Key in these little darlings lives are: toys and crazes; family; school; independence; social interaction; TV and screen time; collecting and crazes and sports and energy. No surprises there then!



What TV do they like to watch?

Top of the TV programme preference list was cartoons followed by comedy and pop music, but Dave pointed to some distinct difference between 7-8s and 9-10s. For 7-8 year olds there is a full rejection of anything 'babyish' while slapstick toilet humour always hits the mark. Learning about complex personalities is important, but creative shows that perhaps even tap into the tail end of older kids' crazes are bound to score points.

For older kids of 9-10 there is a marked move towards live action and creative magazine shows. Programmes that tap into their zeitgeist like growing pains do well while sit coms tend to get a strong following as do fantasy/adventure shows and, of course, programmes that tap into the latest craze or big thing.

More specifically Dave referred to research from TGI 2007 that the TV channels that these age groups liked best are CBBC followed by Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network. Another research body, Carrick James 2007, has delved further to show which are the favourite programmes of boys and girls. The Simpsons featured in both sexes 'Top Three' while boys also liked Doctor Who and Scooby Doo. Girls, however, preferred Eastenders and Tracey Beaker.

Above: Top on the viewing lists for girls was Eastenders.
Above: The Simpsons is enjoyed by boys and girls according to Carrick James 2007.

What Does It All Mean?

Overall, Dave pointed out, kids aged 6-10 have incredibly diverse and active lifestyles. They are aspiring teens, but at heart they are still children and these issues need to be taken into account by any property owners targeting this age group. They are influenced by multi media factors, but traditional activities and media are still important. Families are a major and positive part of their lives while their peer affiliation and interaction is critical. Unfortunately the current climate necessitates a parental inclusive approach, but the good news for the industry is, according to Dave, the fact that licensed based products provide genuine added value.

NPD Number Crunching

According to NPD License Tracker £1 in every £5 spent on kids is licensed (excluding expenditure on food, homeware and cycling). Spend on licensed products in the 0-14 age category stands at an amazing £2.4 billion, which means that £214 per annum (or £4.11 per week) is being spent on licensed products for children under 14 in Britain.

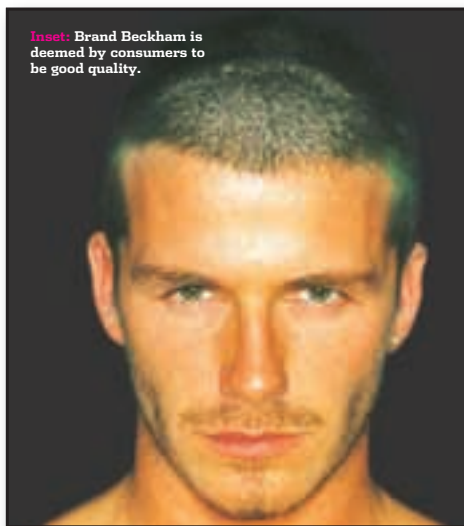
NPD says it is hard to miss the hive of activity at the box office this summers, with massive blockbusters and sequels presenting many licensing opportunities. Toys remain the biggest category of licensed spending, with licensed toys seeing double digit growth over the last 12 months. The summer blockbusters inevitably contributed to this, as spending on film licenses has increased, taking on the mantle that the World Cup did in 2006 on sports licenses. The films last summer have been largely boy-orientated and it should therefore come as no surprise that licensing among the boys age group has seen impressive growth. In fact last summer saw cinema attendance reach a 40 year high. Spend on film properties was up 11% - Spider-man 3 took £15.9 million in toy revenue alone (equivalent of 33p for every £1 spent at the box office) while the much hyped Transformers movie had, for every £1 spent at the box office, 35p spent on toys.

"Films are, however, by no means the only game in town as far as licensed spend is concerned. Licenses from TV shows are still dominant, and the indomitable rise of the new show In The Night Garden among pre-schoolers typifies this," said NPD's John Hales.

Charting The Celebrity

It seems the UK's love affair with all things celebrity is as fickle as our real life relationships, as 72% of adults stated in a recent survey they 'wouldn't be seen dead wearing or buying anything' with Jade Goody's name on it, according to research undertaken by Brand Licensing Europe. At the time the poll was carried out (shortly before the last October exhibition) some 31% of voters also believe Jade's products represent the worst quality goods on the market, followed by Britney and Jordan who claimed 12% each. 'Brand Beckham', however, came out smelling of roses as 48% of voters deem its products to be the best of quality.

And while Jade, Jordan and Britney may have fallen



out of favour with UK shoppers, it would appear Brits are more in love than ever with fame, as 83% of adults confess to buying one or more celebrity-endorsed products. Their top five celebrity 'booty buys' are:

- * **Jamie Oliver**
- * **George Foreman**
- * **Stella McCartney**
- * **Lloyd Grossman (even in 2003, Lloyd was TV's top money spinner with a brand value of £50m*)**
- * **Kate Moss**

In fact, it seems the former World Boxing Champion, George Foreman, can lay claim as a forefather of the celebrity licensing boom, as 37% of respondents declared that their very first celebrity product purchase was his Lean Mean Fat-Reducing Grilling Machine, that was introduced to the market in 1995.

Since then, housewares have stayed on top of the celebrity merchandise chart – 53% of survey respondents would be happy to buy them over own-brand goods, 40% would buy celebrity food, 38% perfume, 34% clothing and 32% sporting goods.

However, with celebrity fragrances now accounting for 20% of the market and sales increasing by 2000% since, the results of the survey indicate that Sarah Jessica Parker could be on track to top the charts with 27% of



Inset: Kylie's perfume brand has caused a stir at the fragrance counters this Christmas.

respondents claiming they would like to receive her perfume for Christmas. SJP was followed closely by Kate Moss (20%), Gwen Stefani (15%) and Intimately Beckham and Kylie (both 11%).



Below: Should licensees be targeting grandparents more?

Old Is Gold

Reyne Rice, toy trend specialist for the Toy Industry Association, USA, has spoken out about how baby boomers and grandparents are an extremely lucrative market.

“About one-third of American adults are grandparents. There are currently 70 million of them in the US and with Baby Boomers now approaching grandparent age, this number is expected to swell to over 115 million by 2010,” she said. “As a group, American grandparents spend more than \$30 billion a year on their grandkids, a

two-fold increase over what was spent a decade ago.”

Grandparents aren't the only older generation being targeted for toys and games. As prime consumers of collectibles, Baby Boomers are building and expanding their own collections of toys, according to Reyne. “Whether their passions are for die-cast vehicles, action figures, dolls, urban vinyl, retro and nostalgic brands, games, or master replica collectibles, Boomers also have the disposable income to spend beyond collectibles, especially on youth electronics & technology products,” she said. “A Christmas wish-list study revealed 52% of grandparents and 68% of Baby Boomers had consumer electronics products on their own wish lists, with nearly one-third of those surveyed, requesting a Portable Gaming System, for their own use!”

“Baby Boomers are the fastest growing segment of Web users and are increasingly doing more online. Approximately 42% (58.8 million) of online users in the USA are between 45-64 years of age. Baby Boomers represent 42 % of all U.S. households and control 50% of all consumer spending,” she added. “With the ‘forever young’ Boomers, and doting grandparents searching for innovative toys and games, it is no surprise that many youth market, toys and games manufacturers and retailers are paying much more attention to this consumer segment.”