DIVERSE INSIGHTS' DALLAS FALL TOY PREVIEW: TRENDS & LICENSING RECAP

Dallas, TX (October 10, 2016) – Fall Toy Preview has evolved into a hybrid show. It’s geared less towards prototypes and loose marketing plans in hopes for a buyer’s subtle nod of approval; to instead a collection of suppliers both large to small showcasing their products from concept to “currently in stock”. It’s become a show where you hear “can you ship that now” as much as you hear “I’m all bought up through fall”. The industry is tracking to be up 7% year over year according to NPD and retailers are being forced to move faster and be more flexible when it comes to trends. Below are the major trends from Fall Toy Preview 2016 that I believe will be heavy hitters in 2017:

THE MIGHTY RETURN OF ACTION FIGURES

The 2nd highest growth super-category YTD posting a 13.02% increase according to NPD and generating over $763M at retail is ACTION FIGURES. There is a perfect storm happening for this "awakening," mostly focused around millennial consumers and their passion for pop culture. Brands & franchises like Star Wars, Funko POP, Funko Mystery Minis, & TMNT are leading the way but kids and kidults are searching for more. This super category isn't bought purely out of necessity or to pacify a momentary hissy fit. It is bought with passion, precision, devotion, and love. This category is connecting consumers to something they deeply care about - past and present. Something they are proud of; and want to share and trade with others. This is a category where smaller, flexible, and nimble retailers can win, as pop culture tastes shift faster than mass market planograms.
SpiderMan (Homecoming & Classic)

The tent pole marketing event from Marvel in 2017 will reboot the Spiderman franchise within the cinematic Marvel universe. From his first appearance in Captain America: Civil War, the fans have been abuzz for this movie. Coming out Friday, July 7th (July 4th is on a Tuesday), the movie is positioned for a MONSTER opening weekend.

Experts are saying it will earn between $800m - $1B globally. Be conscious of the secondary characters like Spider Gwen, Venom, Carnage, & Vulture (played by Michael Keaton).

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Power Rangers (New Movie & Classic)

The movie hits theaters March 24th and has received quite a buzz on the internet already. The product leverages the old school content but ditches the campy feel for a more relatable and darker tone to the new movie. Elizabeth Banks, Bryan Cranston, and Bill Hader as the voice of Alpha 5 give the new movie a lot of credibility. My favorite happened to be from The Loyal Subjects, check out the little removable helmets! These have 7-point articulation and fully posable and come CARDED or BLIND BOX.
**Metals by Jada**

The new kid on the block continues to shine! Top notch licensing & value proposition at under $15 makes this a unique collectible. A laser focus on top licensing that includes female super heroes and complimentary characters is propelling this brand forward and making it important with collectors.

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**TIME FOR A NEW BRICK**

The construction super-category has been an example of consistent growth as licensed products from LEGO and MEGA BRANDS grabbed consumer attention while also pulling girls into the isle with the LEGO FRIENDS brand. However recent retail reports have shown it down by 1.11%. This may seem small but for a category that has been showing double digit increases for over 3 years this decline suggests an opportunity for retailers to support a new way to build for kids - and our business.

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**Eco-bricks by Once Kids**

Eco-bricks are eco-friendly, natural, wooden bricks made from cherry wood. Eco-bricks are designed to inspire your creativity and are 100% compatible with plastic bricks. The wooden surface allows you to utilize paint, markers, stain, or even carve to personalize your creation. A simplistic yet elegant approach that provides heirloom quality and doubles as room, art décor.

A charitable contribution of 1% of the consumer’s purchase price is given directly to the Ocean Conservancy to aid in the cleanup of plastic from our oceans.
‘...this decline suggests an opportunity for retailers to support a new way to build for kids’

Geomatrix by CALIFORNIA CREATIONS

This 3D abstract brand uses neodymium magnets that are safely enclosed in micro cavities that allow for magnetic construction without polarity issues. The magnet has full 360 movement ability to create a solid bond in any way the end-user intends. It even has that satisfying snap sound. Easy to remove and re-arrange makes this fun not only for kids 5+ but great for executives and work place fidgeter.

Modern House Kit by KID MADE MODERN

Architecture is core construction even if it may have traditionally been considered an arts & craft item. I love the build model in this item as it combines color, texture, and patterns to challenge the way a house has been taught to look.
The 1990s Nostalgia for a whole new generation – In 1970 the average age of a first-time mother was 21.4. In the 2014 census the average age rose to over 26. This means that marketers and retailers are shifting to promote brands and licenses that forged an emotional connection with consumers born 1981 – 1992 (parents 24 – 35); there is a deep loyalty to these characters and yearn to share in it with their children.

**Nickelodeon 90s Bundle Blind Bag Keychains by Monogram**

Hey Arnold, Ren & Stimpy, Rugrats, and more! Nick is putting a big focus on these brands and licensing it as pack vs. individually which drives collectability and offers vendors a ton of art content to play with at product conception.

**Beauty & the Beast Dress Up Colorforms by Colorforms**

teaming up with a 90s classic in a year in which a highly-anticipated live action remake hits theaters is a recipe for success. The movie opens nationwide March 17th and stars Emma Watson, Luke Evans, Josh Gad, Ian McKellen, and Ewan McGregor as Lumiere.
FOR THE LOVE OF VIDEO GAMES!

Total revenues for the video game industry in the U.S. hit $23.5 billion last year—a 5% jump over 2014, according to the Entertainment Software Association, the industry lobbying body, which also hosts the E3 trade show in June. Kids of all ages simply love video games and in 2017 there is more product than ever to support their fandom.

Pokemon small doll line from TOMY INTERNATIONAL

An ultra-collectible and has dual gender appeal by mixing a boy’s license with a "traditional" girl’s play pattern.

Zelda, Super Mario, & Digimon blind bag programs from UCC DISTRIBUTION

Pokémon, Street Fighter, Digimon, Zelda, Mario, Kingdom Hearts, Overwatch, Fall Out, Mortal Kombat & Mario Kart are focus brands for 2017.

PJ MASKS

*PJ MASKS is the going to be the #1 new preschool of 2017. The cartoon airs daily on Disney Jr. (renewed for season #2) and is based on the Les Pyjamasques book series from French author Romuald Racioppo, which has so far released 21 books. It’s so good that it even boasts a 7.4/10 rating on IMBD. The show is wonderfully gender and race inclusive, breaking down stereotypes without forcing the issue. Great tone, characters, and toyetic nature make this a good bet for the next big thing!*