Fall/Autumn 2013

TOTAL LICENSING

FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

INTERVIEW

How Bill Schwartz Reinvented Himself

Up until 2007, Bill Schwartz continued to produce and license documentaries, animated specials and films to broadcasters and video distributors around the world. In his career of over 25 years, he produced over 25 documentaries, eight animated films, exercise videos and licensed or acquired over 1,500 hours of intellectual property from Viacom, ABC, Disney, HBO and Starz, and attended NAPTE, MIP-TV, MIPCOM and other key trade shows. Bill adds, "Then 2008 came around and everything just kind of melted away. License fees dried up, advertising dollars vaporized and the DVD business, for the most part, lingers like a ghost of itself…still floating around…but pretty hard to monetize on a value-for-value basis. However, two ideas came to me."

The first one came to light when Bill was living in a boathouse on the River Thames near Oxford in England. Bill was producing a couple of documentaries and buying and selling programming when he met Carolyn Robb, personal chef to HRH Prince Charles and his family for over a decade while she lived in Kensington Palace and traveled the world with the Royals.

Carolyn has always wanted to write a cookbook based on recipes enjoyed by royals, un-royals, family members and friends alike. Bill suggested creating a culinary/lifestyle brand that embraced Carolyn's past while casting an 'old-world' but contemporary glow of quality for the future. Hence, Carolyn Robb: The Royal Touch brand was born. The Royal Touch brand benefited from The Royal Wedding, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the London Olympics, and most recently, the birth of Prince George.

When Bill secured their first international agent, Ted Larkins, Carolyn Robb: The Royal Touch brand was launched at the British Embassy in Japan. Shortly afterward Bill licensed the right to open their first Royal Touch Gourmet Bakery in Osaka, Japan. In addition to using Carolyn's name and likeness, their Seal-Of-Approval logo, Carolyn's tried and true exclusive baked recipes, complete hand's-on training is provided to each chef. Bill is currently working on licensing their third retail outlet.

Sir Michael Lou from VIP International also came into the picture. Carolyn's cookbook secured a publishing deal with Callway Books; a leading German book publisher. In September of this year the book was released. Michael was also instrumental in securing licenses with Nestlés and other German based companies in addition to 'spreading the word' via newspaper and magazines which is so required on a territory by territory basis. Interviews on on CNN, the Today Show, Rachael Ray, People and many other media outlets followed.

Brand number two is called Happy Toon World. This brand consists of 'junior' versions of over forty of the world's most recognizable characters for licensing and merchandising around the world, includes 'Little Puss N Boots', 'Little Mermaid', 'Little Santa' and 'Little Frankenstein'. Bill's past includes writing, producing and marketing eight animated specials, which include 'Snow White', 'Young Pocahantas' and 'The Secret of the Hunchback of Notre Dame', which sold millions of videos in the US and were licensed to over 45 international territories.

With the decline in license fees and funding for new animated specials, Bill thought it was time to create the largest collection of 'little characters' that were immediately recognizable, iconic, and evergreen.

Happy Toon World was launched at the Licensing Show in Las Vegas this year, and presented by exhibitor The Brand Liaison.

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