INTERVIEW:
Iza Login, Co-Founder & Deputy CEO, Outfit7 Limited

GERMANY

Germany is one of the biggest markets in Europe in terms of licensed properties with a collection of home grown and international brands succeeding in the market. On the following pages, we feature articles from the viewpoint of the children’s market and from the non-media-based properties, as well as information and news from various leading German companies.

The Kids’ Marketplace - Trends in Germany
by Axel Dammert, conkids & youth international research GmbH

Yes, the licensing market in Germany shines yellow, too! The Minions are the most popular property by far across the kids market (and most likely in older age groups as well). But when taking a closer look at the data we collected during recent months in our Kids License monitor study, some interesting trends emerge that not only summarize the German market, but also show some more basic developments within the marketplace.

1. Minions – it’s not just the yellow!
What is most fascinating about the Minions’ success is the breadth of their fan base: All children ranked them 1st or 2nd in our study with the exception of the youngest girls. Humor is the common denominator, of course, but there is much more to the Minions: In an environment that is highly unpredictable in terms of the used design codes, the Minions break all the rules because they look so different – you just can’t open a drawer and put them next to similar characters. The last character that was as outstanding was in fact SpongeBob. So it’s no surprise the Minions started to sidestep in Despicable Me (the same applies to the Penguins from Madagascar). Production companies can be much more daring with these characters than with the lead characters that need to be mainstreamed.
The really interesting year for the Minions will be 2016, though. Sooner or later, the Minions will face the normal life cycle of a license and move towards a more specific and limited core target group. In most cases this child means the target group gets younger (see SpongeBob), but it can also pitch older (see The Simpsons). So we can expect the Minions to claim their territory over the next year – but it will most likely be smaller than last year.

2. Dragons and Ice Age – story value beats design
Dragons and Ice Age are examples of highly regarded franchises that also work across the target groups in the kids market. It’s not the visual design and artwork that makes them stand out from the crowd, but the quality of the stories and the appeal of the characters. It’s about, who they are and what they do, not what they look like. Ice Age shows how sustainable this special quality can be: Without any new content, it’s still loved by German children. But here’s a hidden trap and a major watch-out for the licensing business: Merchandise products must leverage the quality of their property. For Dragons and Ice Age this means that only those properties that build on the story value of the property can be successful. So it’s not surprising that role play toys for Dragons work well in Germany. However, product categories that have to rely on the look of the characters or logo will find it much harder to succeed. After all, who wants an Ice Age t-shirt these days?

3. Tom & Jerry, Lion King, Mickey Mouse - don’t forget the Classics
It is understandable that marketers always look for the next big thing. Let’s face it, who wants to ride an old or even dead horse. So I dare say hardly anyone had Tom & Jerry on their bucket list for 2015. But that was a huge mistake.
And what was the simple explanation behind this phenomenon? Tom & Jerry was aired in the early evening prime time on Super RTL, one of Germany’s most successful kids TV channels, and TV can even make old stuff a hype-brand in the schoolyards.
Lion King and Mickey Mouse are different stories. These two don’t have the coolness of the funny and rule breaking Tom & Jerry, but they are nevertheless relevant. Not for the schoolyard, but for home products. Sometimes the old classics have more potential than newer licenses. They
can build on a solid fan base and will be relevant for longer.

4. Frozen – welcome to the gender debate

Minions, Dragonix, Ice Age, Tom & Jerry are great unisex success stories— but they are the exception to the rule. The

sent a new generation of female role models. These princesses are not the helpless victims that need to be saved by Prince Charming, but they take fate into their own hands. In fact, their princesses are more a burden than a real support in their quest.

So gender preferences will always be an issue in terms of the selection of licenses and children will go for the design codes that are currently in vogue. But this does not automatically mean that this takes children back to the role models of the 50’s.

5. Princess Lilifee, Topmodel & Ostwind – is Germany still so different?

You'll probably have heard of the lovely Princess Lilifee, the sympathetic little fairy princess. But unless you are German, you might not know Ostwind—a tweenshow franchise first based on two movies about the friendship between a rebellious girl and a horse. Together with design-driven Topmodel these two are actually the only truly German franchises in the Top Ten lists. It is no big surprise that all three are for girls. These properties were developed for the domestic market, and with a smaller budget. All other top licenses are big, and as such excite boys even more than girls.

So Germany is losing more and more of its uniqueness in terms of the international market because blockbuster IPs occupy center stage now. Nevertheless, there are German franchise based in the course of the day, the industry will visit the best from all areas of licensing, i.e. TV cinema and sporting rights, in time slots of 15 and 25 minutes.

2014 and 2015 around 600 visitors have joined the invitation of the LIMA Representation in Germany to this event, which is annually booked out. Many booths and stands are no longer filled. The presentations will present their theme worlds also introducing the newest rights.

THE TAG DER LIZENZEN 2016

The Tag der Lizenzen, the most important industry event in spring, assembles licenses, manufacturers and retail traders in Cologne on April 14th, 2016. This is the 14th time that licenses and agencies will present their highlights in the course of the day, the industry will visit the best from all areas of licensing, i.e. TV cinema and sporting rights, in time slots of 15 and 25 minutes. In 2014 and 2015 around 600 visitors in each case followed the invitation of the LIMA Representation in Germany to this event, which is regularly booked out. Many booths and stands are no longer filled. The presentations will present their theme worlds also introducing the newest rights.

LIMA NETWORKING PARTY

Subsequent to the day’s program, the LIMA members and for the first time also all guests can continue networking at the exclusive LIMA spring party at the Wolkswagen in Cologne. Discuss the impressions of the day and of course enjoy the romantic historical castle ambiance.

This event in the evening with more than 400 persons is regarded as a “must attend” event by the members.

Please register under www.lima-verband.de

The presentations will be held in German.

LIMA TAG DER LIZENZEN

APRIL 14, 2016 - COLOGNE

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