



HiT entertainment

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THOMAS AND FRIENDS STEAMS INTO CHINA

Thomas & Friends™ to make its television debut on Chinese national broadcaster

13 October 2008, MIPCOM Cannes – It's full steam ahead for the world's most famous blue engine, Thomas the Tank Engine, as it prepares to make its television debut in China. HIT Entertainment, one of the world's leading children's entertainment producers and rights owners, has today announced a strategic licensing agreement with China's national broadcaster CCTV for four series of the popular pre-school show, scheduled to broadcast later this year.

The distribution agreement marks the Company's first venture into China and will be one of only a handful of foreign-owned properties on Chinese television. Alongside the CCTV deal, HIT has also appointed the Promotional Partners Group Ltd. (PPW) as licensing agent for Thomas & Friends in China. Its first range of consumer products, from TOMY and RC2, is scheduled for launch in 2009.

In addition to this deal, Children's Fun Publishing, which is part of the Egmont group, will launch Thomas & Friends publishing in China in early 2009 with 12 TV tie-in story book titles followed by colouring and activity titles and Thomas story library books.

Alison Homewood, Executive Vice President for Worldwide TV Distribution commented, *"Thomas & Friends is one of the world's most popular and unique properties in the pre-school market today and we are delighted to be bringing the show to Chinese audiences. We're thrilled to be working with CCTV, PPW and Children's Fun Publishing in what we see as a long-term strategic partnership. China is an important growth market for HIT and we look forward to making Thomas & Friends a success in this territory."*

Yu Pei Xia, Director of CCTV added: *"We're delighted to be working with HIT Entertainment to bring Thomas and Friends' world of joy, warmth and humour to children across China. This is an extremely exciting time for us."*



Thomas & Friends was created in 1945 by the Reverend W Awdry and today is broadcast in over 185 countries and in 45 languages worldwide. The television show and series of classic books has propelled Thomas & Friends into a global success story and Thomas is currently the number one property in the UK and the #1 pre-school toy property in the US (source: NPD June 2008).

Over 200 million books and 80 million DVDs have been sold to date and the series has spurred the creation of Thomas Land in the UK a themed attraction inspired by the popular character and stories. The Thomas & Friends website attracts over 30 million visitors each month highlighting its global appeal and resonance with young Thomas fans around the world.

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About HIT Entertainment

HIT Entertainment, owned by private equity investment group Apax Partners, is one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights-owners. HIT's portfolio includes properties, such as *Barney*TM, *Bob the Builder*TM, *Thomas & Friends*TM, *Pingu*TM, *Fireman Sam*TM, *Angelina Ballerina*TM and *Rainbow Magic*TM. HIT represents Chapman Entertainment's *Fifi and the Flowertots*TM and *Roary the Racing Car*TM in North America and Japan. HIT also acts as a worldwide representative for The Jim Henson Company's library of classic family brands and as representative for *The Wiggles*[®] in the UK. Launched in 1989, HIT's lines of business span television and video production, content distribution, publishing, consumer products licensing and live events and has operations in the UK, US, Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. HIT is a part-owner of US-based preschool channel, PBS KIDS SproutSM, and international preschool channel JimJam, (outside of the US, UK and China). For more information, visit www.hitentertainment.com.

About Thomas & Friends

Thomas & Friends, the #1 preschool toy property in the US (source: The NPD Group/Consumer Panel Tracking: YTD November 2006) invites children to enter a world of imagination through the tracks of a train and the words of a story. *Thomas the Tank Engine* was created by a father for his son more than 60 years ago. Today, families in more than 145 countries enjoy fun and adventure with their engine friends while experiencing timeless life lessons of discovery, friendship and cooperation. *Thomas & Friends* is making tracks to great destinations is broadcast on Five's Milkshake! For more information about the world of *Thomas the Tank Engine* and his friends, please visit www.thomasandfriends.com.

About PPW

With offices all over the world, Promotional Partners Group Ltd. (PPW) is a company with global infrastructure providing one-stop-shop marketing promotional services to its international clients. PPW has extensive experience in licensing and premium business, it is the Oversea Master Licensee of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, the exclusive licensing representative for FIFA World Cup 2002 (Asia Pacific excluding Japan) and the exclusive licensing representative for Lucasfilm Star War, and it works closely with internationally renowned licensed properties owners such as Sony Pictures, Sanrio and Discovery Channel. PPW has strong root in China with full team of China experts in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Qingdao offices, right now it provides professional services such as license matching and retail distribution channel building, it also acts as a brand facilitator for its clients to develop their brands in China.