



HIT entertainment

THE GREAT DISCOVERY

15th September 2008

PEEP! PEEP! IT'S FULL STEAM AHEAD INTO 'THE YEAR OF THE GREAT DISCOVERY' FOR THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE™

HIT Entertainment kicks off 'Discover Thomas' campaign, including *The Great Discovery* DVD, brand new consumer products and live events

All aboard! One of the world's best-loved children's characters, Thomas the Tank Engine, is inviting young fans on a thrilling new journey as he embarks on 'The Year of the Great Discovery'.

HIT Entertainment, one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights owners, has kicked off an extensive campaign, which features integrated partnerships across toys, books and live events and is marked by the release of a brand new feature length DVD special *Thomas and Friends: The Great Discovery*.

The release heralds the debut of former 007 Pierce Brosnan as the voice of the narrator, joining an iconic hall of fame that has boasted many famous voices, including Ringo Starr, Michael Brandon, Michael Angelis and Alec Baldwin. The DVD sees Thomas and some trusty new friends puff into new and uncharted territory in their biggest adventure to date.

Thomas & Friends is the UK's Number One pre-school property (according to NPD) and is one of the most consistent brands in the industry. The popular television show has recently been given a refresh as it moves into a new CGI format in 2009 and the latest series – an enhanced CGI format – recently premiered on Five in the UK.

Peter Byrne, EVP Consumer Products Worldwide for HIT Entertainment, said: "Thomas fans will be thrilled to re-discover their favourite character on the big screen as the popular series is brought to life in a fantastic 60-minute special. It's a big movie-style action adventure. There's also a chance for fans to see some brand new characters for the first time, so it's very much *the* major consumer product event in the Thomas Calendar for 2008".

To celebrate this special release, HIT Entertainment has partnered with VUE cinemas for a special theatrical 'blue carpet' premiere at VUE Leicester Square and weekend of screenings across 40 VUE Cinemas across the UK.

During the premiere, young Thomas fans will be given the opportunity to meet The Fat Controller and there will be plenty of activities and attractions including a large scale Thomas train, provided by toy partner LEGO, face painters, balloon makers and lots of other activities

Children will also receive an exclusive goodie bag packed with licensed Thomas tie-in product including toy engines, DVD's, books, stickers and special new look Thomas and Friends vanilla cake kits from Green's, who will also be supplying freshly baked Thomas cakes for everyone to enjoy on arrival.

The release of the DVD will be supported by a fully integrated marketing campaign, including TV, print and online advertising.



There are also associated Great Discovery consumer products from TOMY, RC2 and Hornby. The *Thomas and Friends* website will be given a Great Discover takeover including a refreshed home, new games and activities inspired by the DVD special.

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

About Thomas & Friends

Thomas & Friends 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 185 countries enjoy fun and adventure with their engine friends while experiencing timeless life lessons of discovery, friendship and cooperation. For more information about the world of Thomas the Tank Engine and his friends, please visit www.thomasandfriends.com

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.