

THE B[®] AND LIAISON

A Blueprint for Success in Brand and Art Licensing

How the boutique licensing agency built an entire art licensing division through a collaboration with **creatiflicensing**

If one wanted to create a blue-print for a successful expansion of a company's business, you need only follow the model of The Brand Liaison's collaboration with Creatif Art Licensing, which has successfully bridged the gap between brand and art licensing, and is now one of the industry's top licensing companies.

Total Art Licensing magazine recently sat down with The Brand Liaison's Steven Heller, Paul Cohen and Marcy Silverman to discuss how this collaboration came about and some of the success stories of this new partnership. What we learned is that when two leading agencies join forces, the results can be instantaneous.

TAL: Before we get started, I have to ask, how did this collaboration come about?

Heller: "Essentially, the goal of this collaboration was to bring new and expanded business opportunities to each of our existing client base. The Brand Liaison represented several well-known celebrity and fashion brands that we were looking to license in



the home and gift markets where Creatif has built an expertise over 30+ years, and Creatif represented several artists that were looking to expand their brands into fashion and other categories, where we have had a proven track record success. But even we could not have predicted the success we would have right out of the gate."

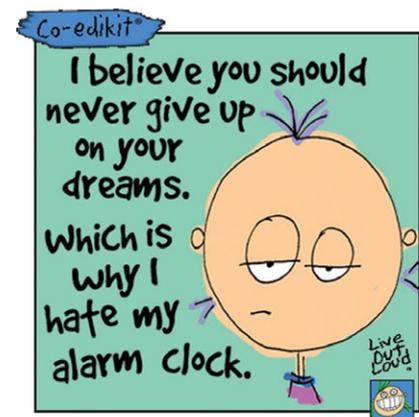
TAL: Can you give us an example of a success story?

Heller: "David Tutera is a great example. He is a well-known celebrity entertainer, his television show now in its 10th consecutive season, and he already had licenses in wedding dresses, jewelry and fashion. Our collaboration focused on expanding his brand into home and gift channels where we have been able to attract several best-in-class licensing partners, who have created David Tutera brand products such as dinnerware, home décor, home accents, permanent botanicals, Christmas ornaments and holiday trim, and have placed these products at major retailers across the country." Silverman: "Another great example is Debra

Valencia. She is a very well-known designer and graphic artist, and we have been building her licensing program across all categories into fashion, home, bath and body, fabrics, and more. And did I mention her new book, Modern Expressions in Sewing is now available at Bookstores and Craftstores."

TAL: What are the benefits of working together?

Cohen: "To me its very simple. Our expanded rolodex and contacts bring greater





opportunities to all of our clients. No one on the Brand Liaison team has less than 15 years of licensing experience. By combining our efforts with The Brand Liaison, we can now reach manufacturing partners across virtually every industry, with access to every major retail channel of distribution.”

Heller: “Just look at the success we have had as proof of that.

But to me, in addition to being able to offer expanded opportunities to our existing clients, this collaboration has helped us attract new properties – including a few properties from Europe such as Wild Side animal photography and their famous In The Pink pig, photographer Assaf Frank and a great new property called iGeneration, that we found at BLE with over 20 licenses in Europe. (See separate feature). We now represent these properties in North America. We are showing iGeneration at Surtex and Licensing Expo, and their European agency, Art



and transforming it into exciting products including over-the-counter fabric, home decor, stationery and giftware. Linda Maron is always creating fresh new collections with her keen sense of design and vivid mix of color. And, we are extremely excited to introduce new collections from Tracey English and Milk and Honey.”

Cohen: “One other new initiative is Gary Patterson, the famous artist, known for his cartoon cats and dogs, and his golf images. We are bringing several new licensees to the Gary Patterson brand and also working with Gary Patterson and his team to expand his sports licensing, including the college sports markets.”

Ask Agency shows this property at BLE.”

TAL: Can you tell me about some of your other properties that you are showing at Surtex and Licensing Expo?

Silverman: “We will be showing all of our artists but to name a few: Jessica Flick continues to amaze me with her rare talent. She creates unique collections for hundreds of products, which is why the retailers are always coming back to get more of Jessica. She has a proven track record. Steve Haskamp is great at spotting new trends

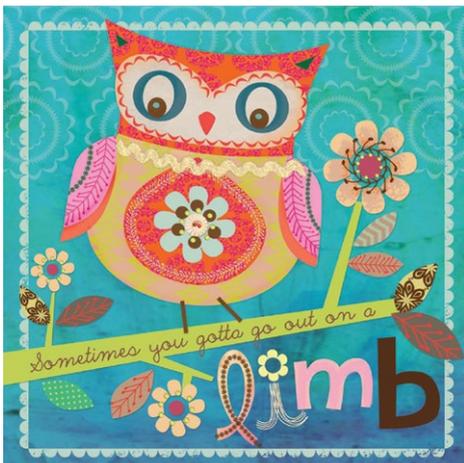


many other products all featuring the bold and unforgettable Loudmouth patterns.

The other is Coedikit. Its simple cartoon art with sophisticated humor that is appealing to all ages from teens to adults, to grandparents, male, female alike. Everyone can identify with the humor of Coedikit.”

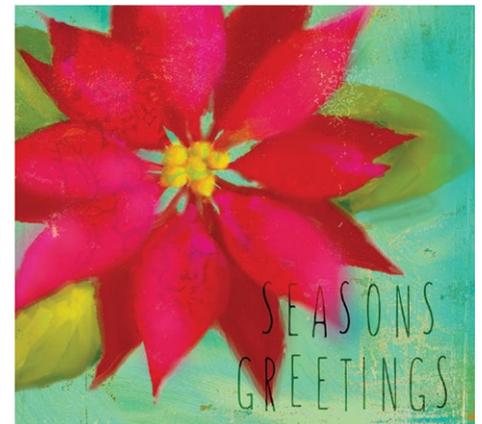
TAL: What's next for your collaboration?

Heller: Well, our newest property is top secret but our clients can get a sneak preview at Surtex and Licensing Expo where we will be launching this brand for its Licensing debut... But you have to come to us to see it!



TAL: What would you consider your most fun property?

Heller: “For me there are actually two. First, the outrageous clothing of the Loudmouth brand which has basically become a hallmark for me personally. I wear Loudmouth at virtually every tradeshow. Loudmouth started as golf brand featuring colorful bold prints and has now become a leading worldwide lifestyle and fashion brand. We have over 30 licensees around the world in everything from apparel, to accessories, bedding, luggage, and



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iGeneration.

The European Brand now showing off its iStyle in the U.S.

Today's millennials, and yesterday's "me-generation" are both all about everything "I" – and so is the brand iGeneration. iGeneration is based on a copyrighted series of i-slogans and trademarked i-designs that brings a fun and whimsical approach to today's tech language. With fan favorites like iRock, iCandy, iParty and iDrink the iGeneration brand has quickly grown to over 20 licenses in Europe. And now The Brand Liaison is expanding iGeneration in the U.S. with new licensing partners in everything from apparel to accessories, home good to tech toys.

"We love this property!" stated Steven Heller, President of The Brand Liaison. "It's just so timely in today's society. And the way the creators have been to capture the mood and style of the iGeneration, with a fun and funny interpretation, is incredible. All of the i-slogans and their designs for new apps, make the brand so versatile for almost any product: t-shirts, sleepwear, bedding, luggage, and of course cell phone cover and tech accessories. There is so much opportunity here."

iGeneration's story began when Canadian partners Robert Smith, Janice McDonald and Stephen Bleeker created some simple t-shirts with clean fonts and just a few ubiquitous "i"

slogans. "I think iRock and iCandy were among the first slogans" stated co-creator Stephen Bleeker, reflecting on those early days. "But then we couldn't stop. iText, iTweet, iTalk for cell phone covers, baby clothes with iCute, and pet accessories with iPaw, iPoop. It's endless. We even have designs for yoga clothes, iOhmmm." With such broad appeal and a variety of products, licensing was an obvious method of brand expansion. Licensing allowed the creators to focus on design and creative, and licensing partners to add new products with instant brand attraction to their existing product mix. Success was immediate.

"Our i-slogans just took off in Europe (where the brand is known as iStyle Originals)"



stated Bleeker. "We are represented by Art Ask Agency in Europe and there was immediate traction for brand." The brand and concept really seems to resonate with European buyers: "It's clean, simple and fun – and for us that translates into sales" described one licensee.

There are now over 20 licensees doing business in over 25 countries around the globe. iGeneration is now building its licensing empire in North America as a brand suitable for a wide variety of categories including apparel, back to school, kitchen and bath, travel and many more, with Steven Heller and the team

at The Brand Liaison leading the charge. Heller explained, "we love the way the brand complements what Apple and others are doing in the marketplace. We knew there was something special with iGeneration when I brought it to our team – and we couldn't stop thinking about how their slogans could be applied to so many consumer products." Currently iGeneration has licenses in the U.S. for hydration, tumblers, mugs, and an entire line of pet products with several new deals in discussion.

Brand owner Stephen Bleeker comments, "We're a creative and nimble brand and our team loves working with licensees directly when given the chance. It's great to brainstorm with fresh creative minds and coming up with something fantastic for their customers." And for licensees, that creativity translates into dollars.

