

HOT SPOT

By Art Snyder

Good marketing strategies are essential to a healthy business. Thanks to such opportunities that are based in your perennial profit centers, these opportunities to reach out to your customers almost *beg* to be utilized. That's what you find with this issue's several featured prospects: the *Twilight* franchise, *Transformers*, Disney, DC Comics, Marvel superheroes and Cadbury candy, among others. The intriguing details are below.

Twilight time

The closest thing these days to the *Harry Potter* book and movie phenomenon is *Twilight*. It's a series of four fantasy-romance-vampire novels by author Stephenie Meyer. The lead character is Isabella "Bella" Swan, a teenage girl who falls in love with a vampire-teen boy named Edward Cullen. The four books have seen two of them (so far) turned into Hollywood



smashes — the first was *Twilight: The Movie*, released to acclaim in 2008, and the second, *New Moon*, released this winter. The other books in the series are set for future video release, to ensure popularity of the *Twilight* franchise for years to come. These two

books are *Eclipse* (already filmed and now in post-production, for late-2010 release) and *Breaking Dawn*. A DVD of *Twilight: The Movie* was released last year, and you can bet that future DVDs and a wealth of other licensed and branded *Twilight* consumer goods and products are almost guaranteed to hit the sweet spot of teen girls everywhere. Look at what's right for your teen customers, especially for your school sessions, and work these items into your prize drawings and redemption area. Themed *Twilight* and vampire sessions and costume parties on Friday and Saturday nights are a natural for rinks, so do your planning

soon. And mark your calendar for later this year to add *Twilight* tie-ins to your Halloween schedule, for a frightfully grand time.

Transformers

This is a great time to own a Hollywood film studio, and when that's the case, it's a big plus for rink operators, too. In addition to the *Twilight* saga (above), the *Transformer* fran-



chise that began in 2007 is rollin' along. *Transformer: Revenge of the*

Fallen, a 2009 science fiction-action film produced by Stephen Spielberg, has spawned a videogame and a line of toys, among other licensing that has potential in rinks. The DVD of this top-grossing U.S. film of 2009 was released last fall, adding to the list of options for your rink promotions.

Yo Gabba Gabba!

The Nickelodeon hit *Yo Gabba Gabba!* is in its second season, and the program as well as its animated characters offer great tie-ins with your rink sessions and activities that are tailored to the younger crowd — ages 10 and under. Birthday parties and day-care times are the perfect setting, but don't stop there. The reason? *Yo Gabba Gabba!* has become a cult favorite



'Twilight' time, DC Comics, Marvel, Disney, Cadbury in the spotlight

with teens and adults, too, according to Nielsen TV viewership figures. Almost 50 licensing partnerships are the result of the energized appeal of *Yo Gabba Gabba!*, and you should be able to pepper your rink connections to the show via *Yo Gabba Gabba!* action figures, dinnerware and CDs, for example. Also, the show this year has a supporting live tour of the country, so if it's going to appear in your area, try to get some prize tickets to feature during a school session.

Disney news

The Disney conglomerate earned its reputation by turning creativity into gold, and you can make that good fortune work for you, as well. Among the latest cinema bombshells from Disney are this season's musical-animation hit, *The Princess and the Frog*, and

a Tim Burton adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*. That one opens in March, and early word is that it's destined to spin-spin-spin the profit wheel. The third Disney best-bet film of the current school year is *Toy Story 3*. Look for its release in June, and check your previous promotions and marketing strategies for the original *Toy Story*



and its sequel, *Toy Story 2*. All the upcoming Disney films should get your green light with cross-promotions and -couponing. See which theaters in your market will be showing the 2010 Disney films, and call them to discuss marketing ideas that will benefit them and your rink alike. And keep an eye



open for future DVD releases of these films, for drawings and redemption use. Think about costume parties and other specialty sessions that can put Disney to work, and tweak your birthday party lineup to reflect *The Princess and the Frog*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Toy Story 2*. Movie DVDs and soundtracks could make irresistible party favors or prizes, and many of the songs and tunes played as event background could snap the parties to life.

DC Comics on the move

Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman, The Green Lantern and other iconic superheroes from DC Comics are in for renewed exposure, according to Warner Brothers Entertainment, the parent corporation. Batman saw huge Hollywood success in 2008, when *The Dark Knight* was released to inter-



ville, seen on the CW broadcast TV network. For rink operators, this all bodes well, and the strategy allows you to develop specialty themed sessions to use and refine from year to year. Further, the marketing and licensing by Warner Brothers should help point the way to robust rink profits from superhero tie-ins in your videogame area, redemption zone and foodservice and vending sections of your financial picture. Next up from Warner Brothers in Hollywood is the up-and-coming superhero Jonah Hex, in a film of the same name, set for a debut in June. After that, *The Green Lantern* will hit the big screen in 2011. Stay with us at *The RINKSIDER* in months and years to come for tips that'll have Batman, Wonder Woman and super-friends in your corner.

Marvel superheroes

As Batman and others under the DC Comics banner get the marketing push from Warner Brothers, the Walt Disney Co. has responded in kind. The company has gone after the Marvel Entertainment superheroes, to bring Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four and Iron Man, among others, into its realm. Development of these superheroes into competitive, money-making film, TV, Internet, videogame and other media stalwarts is certain, and you can figure a wealth of licensing agreements will follow. This — and the battle for consumer dollars — should generate

almost unending opportunity for your rink, as you, too, position yourself to be the recipient of choice for the consumer's ever-valuable discretionary income. As these Marvel-DC Comics developments become clear, we'll alert you to your profit prospects wherever possible in your rink.

Cadbury headlines

Activity — *sweet* activity, that is — lies on the horizon, thanks to long-time British chocolate manufacturer Cadbury. The global giant looks to become more of a mainstream competitor in the United States, thanks to merger and buyout events on Wall Street and overseas. U.S. food giant Kraft Foods, as well as Hershey, the Italian candy maker Ferrero and the Swiss food giant Nestlé have all shown interest in what they see as the underutilized Cadbury brand. As these big-gigs jockey for takeover position, you can figure that the current Cadbury candy brands, such as Dairy Milk, Crème Egg and Trident, will get a major boost in marketing across the 50 states. However this plays out this winter, your rink should see fortunes rise, thanks to bumped-up advertising and the development of many new brands of chocolate and other candies. From your snack area to your vending machines, you can count on excitement and a better bottom line as 2010 plays out.

Rocky and Bullwinkle

The cartoon duo Rocky and Bullwinkle are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year — yes, 50th — and that means your customers will see an invigorated media emphasis on Rocky and Bullwinkle throughout 2010. Thanks to licensing agreements keyed to these animation mainstays of childhood, Rocky and Bullwinkle can see duty in your rink for most school, daycare and other sessions for middle-schoolers, elementary students and the younger set. Prize drawings and giveaways are a natural, and this TV cartoon and comic strip tie-in can include reinventing birthday parties, as well. Put your staff to work to hone ideas for Rocky and Bullwinkle parties, perhaps featuring a birthday cake with a Rocky and Bullwinkle theme. A cake with festive coloring and “Rocky and Bullwinkle” spelled out on the icing is sure to delight everyone, as long as napkins, plates, paper cups or similar Rocky and Bullwinkle fare are part of the overall birthday package. Maybe the birthday staff can be in themed costume? Consider, too, a Rocky and Bullwinkle DVD, T-shirt or stuffed toy for the featured birthday present. You'll have all the participants talking, texting and Tweeting about the great time they have had at your rink.

Art Snyder is a regular RINKSIDER contributor who specializes in marketing and technology. He lives in Centerville, Ohio.

national acclaim, and Warner Brothers says it hopes to duplicate — or improve upon — that success in the years ahead. The media giant says it is looking for commercial renown for its action heroes through several media channels. These encompass TV, films, DVDs, comic books, the Internet and any other exposure. Warner Brothers adds that the company has several other fictional superheroes to develop, thanks to its deep library of stories and related content that have been ignored in recent years. And even when a pivotal superheroes film falters at the box office, as with *Superman Returns*, in 2006, the company is committed to the long haul with its character franchises. Superman, for example, has developed into a long-running winner in *Small-*

C H E C K O U T T H E A L L N E W

www.RINKSIDER.com

A community forum/blog for operators to share ideas!

Archives with promo, marketing, redemption and more ideas from previous editions of the magazine!

An online Buyer's Guide!

Classified ads to buy and sell equipment!

Information on the Rinksider's exclusive business-building email marketing service!

Visit us online today!

The screenshot shows the RinkSider website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Home, Calendar, Features, Buyer's Guide, Subscribe, Classifieds, and Contact. A sidebar menu on the left lists various sections: STORIES (Editorial Calendar, Columnists, Features, Story Archive), IDEAS (Marketing, Promotions, Redemptions, Games, Snack Bar, Maintenance, Rental, Pro Shop), COMMUNITY FORUM, RESOURCES (Buyer's Guide, Classifieds, Idea Archive, Email Marketing, Subscribe), SERVICES (Email Marketing, Subscribe), and CONTACT US. The main content area features an article titled "Hollywood laces up its skates and gets ready to Whip It" by Suzy Weiland. The article text discusses the movie *Derby Girls* and mentions Riedell Skate Company. There is also a small advertisement for "Fantastic Novelties, Inc." at the bottom right of the screenshot.