

crackers. And look for their latest flavor varieties that have been making a name for themselves in recent months: Cheez-It® Snack Mix Spicy Cheddar Chipotle and Cheez-It Duo® Cheddar Jack/Baby Swiss. Your customers will love to see that you're stocking their favorite on-trend crackers.

PepsiCo drops Lil' Wayne

From soft drinks to candy bars, celebrity tie-ins can help sell consumer products. But not always. One of Pepsi's high-profile endorsers of its Mountain Dew brand has gotten the boot. Rapper and Grammy-winner Lil' Wayne was dropped by Pepsi after his controversial lyrics referencing Emmett Till, a civil rights martyr. PepsiCo said that Lil' Wayne's "offensive reference to a revered civil rights icon does not reflect the values of our brand." Be advised with your rink playlists.

Superhero, sci-fi summer With the May blockbusters Iron Man 3 and Star Trek Into Darkness, and Hugh Jackman's X-Man in The Wolverine in July, it looks as if we're set to enjoy a "superhero and sci-fi summer." Be sure your rink takes advantage of these movies — they'll appeal to nearly all skaters — with some ticket drawings and other partnership possibilities with local cinemas, and stock your redemption area with the right superhero goodies. Look, too, for licensed vending, game and foodservice items that should be a hit with your customers.



And how about a Superhero Session, perhaps over the week of the Fourth of July? That'll be a blast! Iron Man 3 already has topped \$1 billion in global ticket sales, and Star Trek Into Darkness is the 12th money-making installment in the Star Trek franchise. Experts predict yet another banner year for Star Trek fortunes on all fronts, which should benefit rinks everywhere.

Adding to the mix is the Brad Pitt-starring zombie thriller World War Z, which should help rink fortunes with sci-fi sessions. Plus, this June film sets the stage for your rink's zombie-themed Halloween activities, especially since zombies have emerged as the trendiest heartbeat-banger of the past year.

For more on Iron Man 3 and Star Trek Into Darkness, see Marvel.com/ironman3 and Startrekmovie.com. (Also see the next two segments, below.) For details on Marvel's The Wolverine and World War Z, see <http://x.co/17J1t> and Worldwarzmovie.com, respectively.

'Man of Steel'

Superman remains the top-rated superhero of all time, and as reporter Clark Kent, Superman must save Earth from alien invasion in Man of Steel. The highly anticipated film from Warner Bros. is set for June release in 2-D, 3-D and IMAX formats, and it should spur activity in rink redemption and foodservice areas with licensed fare. Plan on a "Superhero Session," too, for school-age skaters. Plan for Man of Steel drawings and giveaways during school sessions, as well. For more, visit <http://x.co/173Cp> and <http://x.co/173CZ>.

'Star Wars' — the franchise future

Star Wars is the movie franchise that has no foreseeable end, and that spells continuing profits throughout your rink. From your redemption and game areas to ticket giveaways and licensed merchandise, Star Wars will get yet further cinematic boosts with the release of three planned sequels. The Disney studio bought the Star Wars brand, and its release schedule is firming up for the next few years. Star Wars Episode VII is set for its debut in 2015, and the two sequels to that will be in

years afterward.

In the meantime, you can look for the release of 3-D versions of two earlier Star Wars hits, Star Wars Episode II and Star Wars Episode III. In total, this means opportunity aplenty for your rink as you consider all your Star Wars prospects. Short on ideas? Talk to your staff, especially if you want a fresh, youth-oriented take on what tie-ins look most promising.

Game: 'Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag'

The Assassin's Creed family of pirate games stands as one of the best collections of 18th-century Caribbean



swashbuckling, and Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag continues that tradition. For action, naval adventure and rousing fun, make sure you offer AC IV in your games area, and look for any licensed fare that'll be a hit in vending, redemption and foodservice areas with your customers.

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