

# Focussing on the star's side

## The Hannah Montana TV and merchandising world

**Hannah Montana is a prime example of a TV show extending into children's lives through licensed products. This article summarises the Hannah Montana licence world.**

While the show emphasises 2 identities, the star Hannah appears in only 20 % of the show. Nevertheless, the licensing products focus on the star, giving girls the chance to present themselves as competent and successful. Since it was first broadcast on the Disney Channel in 2006, the show has been a hit in the ratings.<sup>1</sup> Worldwide, more than 350 million viewers in 177 countries<sup>2</sup> watch the series, which comprises 101 episodes in 4 seasons and has now ceased production. The feature film "Hannah Montana – the film" made 155 million dollars<sup>3</sup> at the box-office worldwide. The concert and live DVD in 3D for the "Best of Both Worlds Concert Tour" with Hannah Montana and Miley Cyrus generated just under 84 million dollars<sup>4</sup> in the USA. Miley Cyrus, aged only 17, is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the Forbes Celebrity 100 list for 2010, with an estimated annual income of 48 million dollars.<sup>5</sup>

### World of glitter and glamour for sale

The success of the format is recognised not just by the viewers, but also by the marketers: in 2009 the property was honoured with the LIMA Award<sup>6</sup> in the category "Licensing theme of the year". The decisive factor in the granting of this award is exceptional success in the industry, on the market, and with the end consumer.

The franchise of the live-action comedy series comprises merchandising programmes which are "inspired by relatable plots and characters", around the subject areas of "music, fun, fashion, and friends", which constitute, according to Disney, the "key elements for a tween lifestyle".<sup>7</sup> The core of the merchandising target group does mainly consist of female tweens between 6 and 12. They are the ones buying the magazines, clothing, beauty products, etc. in order to bring their Hannah Montana world into their own home. Hannah can also be completely integrated into everyday school life: slumbering in their Hannah pyjamas, girls are woken by the Hannah alarm clock, their sandwich is packed in their Hannah lunchbox, and their homework is done with Hannah pens in Hannah exercise books.

### Disney's licensing partners

Hannah Montana's look is taken up in the product style guides and is transferred onto the products on offer across all categories. These, according to the Walt Disney Company, are designed to be "trendy, stylish, 100 % girly",<sup>8</sup> come in the candy colours pink and purple, and are decorated with glitter or little stars – in the exact same way Hannah is dressed and styled on the stage.

And the sales figures of the Hannah-inspired products leave no doubt that the concept of the property is working: in GSA (Germany/Switzerland/Austria) alone, more than 1 million magazines, 450,000 books, 430,000 CDs, 370,000 games, 350,000 audio dramas, and 250,000 DVDs have been sold in 2010.<sup>9</sup> But what criteria

do the licence products have to fulfil to satisfy Disney's requirements? The directives for awarding a licence are, according to Disney, fundamentally oriented towards the customer and the market, and focus partly on the idea put forward by the potential media partner, and partly on ensuring that the story is transferred into an attractive, innovative, and high-quality product or product group, and that the target group is served in the relevant channels of distribution. For manufacturing and technical reasons, licences are usually awarded for at least 2 years.

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In the USA, the format started in March 2006 on the American Disney Channel

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.disneychannelmedianet.com/web/showpage/showpage.aspx?program\\_id=002084&type=lead](http://www.disneychannelmedianet.com/web/showpage/showpage.aspx?program_id=002084&type=lead) (last access: 24.1.2011)

<sup>3</sup> <http://boxoffice Mojo.com/movies/?id=hannahmontanamovie.htm> (last access: 24.1.2011)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/2008/HM-MCB.php> (last access: 24.1.2011)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.forbes.com/lists/2010/53/celeb-100-10\\_Miley-Cyrus\\_EB0C.html](http://www.forbes.com/lists/2010/53/celeb-100-10_Miley-Cyrus_EB0C.html) (last access: 24.1.2011)

<sup>6</sup> Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association, cf. <http://www.lima-verband.de/limaneu/index.php?page=lima-award> (last access: 24.1.2011)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.disneyconsumerproducts.com/Home/display.jsp?contentId=dcp\\_home\\_ourfranchises\\_disney\\_tween\\_de&forPrint=false&language=en&preview=false&imageShow=0&pressRoom=DE&translationOf=nul&region=0&first=0&last=0](https://www.disneyconsumerproducts.com/Home/display.jsp?contentId=dcp_home_ourfranchises_disney_tween_de&forPrint=false&language=en&preview=false&imageShow=0&pressRoom=DE&translationOf=nul&region=0&first=0&last=0) (last access: 24.1.2011)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.lizenzbranche.de/License.aspx?Lic=633: Disney Factsheet Hannah Montana, 2010> (last access: 24.1.2011)

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*