

BRANDmania delights with new partnerships and festival atmosphere

- Visitor growth: the platform for networking, co-operations and licensing continues to expand
- International brands, new formats and high-quality business connections

Two full days of meetings, new business ideas and inspiring brand experiences: despite midsummer temperatures, BRANDmania transformed the Zeche Zollverein site in Essen into the hotspot for the licensing industry and brands looking for partnerships on 24 and 25 June. The event surpassed last year's attendance, bringing together more than 1,000 participants from sectors including entertainment, toys, fashion, food, retail, publishing and gaming, who scheduled around 3,000 meetings through the event platform. Attendees took advantage of the numerous networking opportunities and immersive experience areas to develop new business ideas, establish partnerships and exchange views on the trends of tomorrow. BRANDmania concluded on a high note with its open-air party, with a live band, a vibrant atmosphere and a lively community keeping the celebrations going well into the evening.

High-quality business connections

"We're connecting with many more people than we would otherwise meet, particularly within the retail sector," explains Delphine de Kool, Senior Licensing Director EMEA at Hasbro, on the company's participation at BRANDmania. Other leading international brand owners, including Mattel, Paramount Global, Sesame Workshop, The Pokémon Company International, Universal Products & Experiences and Warner Bros. Discovery, also used BRANDmania to strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones. At the same time, numerous first-time exhibitors from a wide range of industries brought fresh inspiration to the event. These included Joy&Toy, a Polish supplier of pet products, and JETRO, Japan's government trade promotion organisation. "BRANDmania is exceptionally well organised, the all-inclusive service is excellent, and the venue is beautiful," says Loïck Boïnnard, Trade & Retail Marketing at Toei Animation Europe in France. Sebastian Rösch, Section Manager Toys at TÜV Rheinland Group, who also attended BRANDmania for the first time, agrees: "The atmosphere on both days was genuinely relaxed, and we made lots of new contacts. We'll definitely be back next year!"

Press Release

A premier industry gathering

The concept also impressed the retail community. "BRANDmania clearly demonstrates how strong partnerships and creative ideas can unlock new opportunities for retail. The combination of an inspiring atmosphere, premium brands and effortless networking makes BRANDmania one of the most exciting platforms for developing new partnerships in retail and licensing," says Torsten Benjatschek, Marketing and Licensing Coordinator Textile & Non-Food at KiK. All major retailers were represented at Europe's largest B2B networking festival for licensing and partnerships. They were also able to expand their expertise through the conference programme, The Stage, where content was developed jointly with Licensing International Germany. "Co-creation is the foundation of our industry. I am particularly pleased by the positive response to our stage programme," says Managing Director Petra Strobl. Alongside business and networking, the event also delivered emotional highlights. "A particularly special moment for us this year was presenting a donation cheque for €2,800 in support of deaf children," says Beate Mitschke, Vice President Franchise Management, Licensing Operations & Product Development at RTL Consumer Products.

Between content and festival atmosphere

Whether through exclusive screenings from international licensors or numerous brand activations, the event offered countless opportunities for exchange and hands-on experiences. HillcrownAI, for example, not only showcased its widely acclaimed Children's GPT AI application but also developed the new BRANDmania app specifically for the event. Leo Hoffmann, Head of Creative & Brand, was enthusiastic about the event's "unique vibe": "The quality of the contacts was exceptionally high. We had more relevant conversations in a short space of time than we had expected." The popular blindmate® format by MarkenKuppler also received an equally positive response, successfully matching language-learning app Duolingo with Deutsche Telekom. Additional festival highlights came in the form of new activity zones. For the first time, the Gaming Lounge invited visitors to try gaming and e-sports, while the Glow Up Area expanded the programme with styling and beauty experiences. The new BRANDmania Ink Lab, offering complimentary licensed tattoos, also proved extremely popular and was fully booked throughout the event.

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"This year's BRANDmania demonstrated just how naturally brands, retailers and creative minds can come together. That openness is what defines the event. The positive feedback from all sides confirms that this blend of business and experience is exactly what resonates with the community. BRANDmania has evolved significantly, and together with the industry we intend to continue on this path, creating even more inspiration, opportunities for exchange and new business ideas in the future," concludes Katrin Störr, Head of BRANDmania.

The next BRANDmania will take place in Essen on 23 and 24 June 2027.

Images are available at www.spielwarenmesse-group.com/media.

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About BRANDmania

BRANDmania is a B2B networking event in the field of brand collaborations, partnerships and licensing, which aims to bring together companies, brands and potential collaborative partners from different sectors. BRANDmania will take place on 23 and 24 June 2027 at the Grand Hall at the disused coal mine Zeche Zollverein in Essen.

Spielwarenmesse eG

The multifaceted positioning and international orientation of Spielwarenmesse eG is representative of the toy sector and other consumer goods markets. With its legal structure as a cooperative, the business is unique among trade fair companies and is highly successful. Its 60-member team operates from the 'ToyCity' of Nuremberg and is supported by representatives in over 100 countries. Its portfolio includes two major global fairs: the **Spielwarenmesse** in Nuremberg is the lead international event for the B2B sector, as is **SPIEL** in Essen for the B2C field. To these can be added **Kids India** in Mumbai and the **World of Toys by Spielwarenmesse** trade fair programme, which opens up new markets for manufacturers through joint activities in **Hong Kong, Tokyo** and **New York**. The Company's own subsidiaries in the key locations of **China** and **India** ensure that appropriate expertise is available locally. With its accumulated knowledge and global network, the trade fair producer is becoming an ever stronger initiator and groundbreaker in the industry's issues and trends. The most recent example of this is **BRANDmania** in Essen, which casts an unconventional and future-directed spotlight on the topic of licensing and partnerships. With its combination of events and online activities, Spielwarenmesse eG (www.spielwarenmesse-group.com) is active all year round.