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BUILDING Q CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF LICENSING EXCELLENCE

DURANGO, CO – April 22, 2012 – For two decades Woody Browne, founder and managing partner of Building Q, has made a career of recognizing the potential for longevity of licenses as diverse as SpongeBob Square Pants, STAR WARS, Care Bears, Orange County Choppers and Power Rangers (among many others) and their ability to transform products and product lines. Since 1992, Building Q has been the go-to firm for clients looking to leverage – or become – classic properties.

What he didn't expect is that two decades into the journey, his own brand would become a "classic" in its own right. This year, as Browne celebrates his company's 20th anniversary, he reflected on how the industry has dramatically changed

"When I started the firm in 1992, licensing was seen as prognostication – we were hired to predict what licenses might be 'hot' and obtain them for our clients," said Browne. "But over the years we have evolved to a place where our clients understand that the true significance of licensing is in the strategy – really understanding how to build a portfolio of licenses that consistently delivers value and making each agreement equally beneficial for the licensee and the licensor."

Long-time client Comic Images is an example of this shift. The company, which joined the Building Q roster in 2001, started off looking for a license that would expand its trading card business. In time they added banks, bobble pens and other accessories, leveraging licensing to grow their offerings. Today Comic Images has expanded its licensing program to include dozens of SKUs that feature Marvel, Star Wars, Super Heroes, Universal Monsters and more. This year the company will introduce a Moshi Monsters Plush line.

"Woody has been far more than a licensing consultant to us, because he understands you can't recommend licenses if you don't know every aspect of the client's company," said Alan Gordon, president of Comic Images. "He has worked very hard to learn our business, our industry, and the particulars of our retail market and he gives us real intelligence on merchandising, licensing, sales and operations. Building Q has been intrinsic to our long-term success."

Strategy is crucial to creating a long-term plan that generates ongoing revenue. According to former client Neil Werde, president of Quaker Pet Group, "Success in licensing is about seeing three different dimensions at once. You must take into account what is happening in your business now, what will be happening in the industry in 18 months, and whether or not you think a property will have traction in three years. Building Q's all about making sure clients have all three perspectives – and access to properties that can go the distance."

That ability to see “3D” has paid off for clients of all sizes. Seven Building Q clients have been nominated for the LIMA Excellence Awards – no small feat for a specialty consulting firm – and two have won: Modern Publishing in 2005 for its Care Bears program and Briefly Stated in 2002 for its SPONGE BOB sleepwear line.

The View from 30 Years and 30,000 Feet

Browne entered licensing in the late ‘70s, a simpler time when deals were made on handshakes over lunch. “I got lucky and cut my teeth on Thermos lunchboxes and then Tonka Toys, two companies that taught me the value of household names,” said Browne. “Then I moved to Tyco Toys in the mid-80s and was exposed to a broader view of brand management. I could really see the opportunity for licensing to transform a company when deployed correctly.”

Browne could also see that the industry was ready for a more strategic approach to licensing. Long the provenance of toy companies and t-shirt manufacturers, Browne brought licensing to less traditional industries, such as candy (Frankford Candy; Hilco), pet products (Happy Dog, Pet MATE) and later even funeral urns and caskets (Eternal Image) to name a few.

Over the years other industry leaders such as Bakery Crafts, Basic Fun, Bio World, Franco Manufacturing, Gemmy Industries, ODM and Unique have been clients.

“The licensing industry has changed greatly in the last 20 years,” said Maura Regan, Senior Vice President/General Manager, Sesame Workshop. “And in all that time, Building Q has been at the forefront of developing new revenue streams for companies, and a leader in driving new and innovative partnerships. Sesame Workshop and Building Q have a long relationship and we really value the partnerships they have brought to the table.”

What’s Your Company Called Again?

While not quite a household name, Browne has helped transform his own industry as well as those of many of his clients. He’s a three-term Past President of the Licensing Industry Merchandisers Association (LIMA) and past LIMA Board Member. He has served as a columnist with *Brand Marketing Magazine* and often speaks and writes on licensing trends and issues.

One of the questions he can always count on from prospective clients, audiences and new contacts is, “Why the name Building Q?” Browne reminisced that he had the concept for the company, the promise of work from clients *and* the office space. What he did not have was a name for the business.

“I went to sign the lease for our first location and realized that they wanted me to write my company name under my signature - and I had not decided on one,” he recalled. “When I looked up from the paper, I realized the answer staring me in the face – I was leasing space in ‘Building Q,’ which sounded just forward thinking and quirky enough to fit.”

And two decades later, it’s proven to be a name with staying power. For more information about Building Q, visit www.buildingq.com.