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## **DRAGON BALL LICENSING GAINS HIGHLIGHT FRANCHISE STRENGTH AHEAD OF 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY YEAR**

**TV Series and Aggressive Licensing Extends Popularity of Hit Anime Franchise  
to a New Generation of Fans Across U.S.A. & Canada**

LOS ANGELES, CA – April 9, 2018. In advance of Licensing Expo 2018, Toei Animation Inc. and Funimation® today reported on the success of their Dragon Ball licensing efforts over the last 12 months as well as announcing new license agreements for the franchise since the beginning of last year. Introduced to U.S. & Canadian audiences more than 20 years ago, Dragon Ball has grown to become an iconic brand and pop culture phenomena that spans multiple generations of fans – from the current Gen Z to the post-Boomer Gen X.

Produced by Toei Animation and distributed in the U.S.A. & Canada by Funimation, the Dragon Ball anime franchise consists of 19 feature films and four TV series including “Dragon Ball Z,” which celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019, and most recently “Dragon Ball Super,” the first new Dragon Ball storyline from original creator Akira Toriyama in more than 18 years. Since Day One, beginning with its January 2017 premiere on Cartoon Network’s Adult Swim, “Dragon Ball Super” TV ratings have consistently ranked #1 in its time slot each and every week – a testament to the intense popularity of the franchise.

Ahead of last year’s Licensing Expo, Toei Animation and Funimation executed multiple licensing agreements across a range of categories, including mass market apparel, home goods, wall décor, accessories, gifts calendars and costumes. These efforts succeeded in creating a new demand for “Dragon Ball Super” merchandise as well as boosting the popularity of “Dragon Ball Z” merchandise heading into the series’ 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

One of the top performing categories for “Dragon Ball Z” was mass market apparel. Consumer interest in “Dragon Ball Z” mass market apparel went global late last year when it was revealed that Adidas would be releasing a “Dragon Ball Z” themed sneaker collection. Dubbed “Adidas x Dragon Ball Z” by the media, this collaboration consists of multiple unique sneaker designs with each inspired by a different “Dragon Ball Z” character. This will be a highly collectible, limited edition sneaker series with the first design anticipated to drop in retail outlets this fall. In addition, “Dragon Ball Z” themed t-shirts and sell-thru from Bioworld rolled out with the biggest retailer in the U.S.

Similarly, gaming became an instant standout following this January’s release of “Dragon Ball FighterZ” from Bandai Namco Entertainment. “Dragon Ball FighterZ” quickly became the top selling Dragon Ball game of all time after reaching total sales of more than 2 million copies worldwide within the first week of its release. Following up on the success of “Dragon Ball FighterZ,” Bandai Namco revealed during the Game Developer Conference (GDC) that its next release will be “Dragon Ball Legends,” a 3D fighting game for iOS and Android mobile devices. Based on its support for real-time, global player vs. player (PvP) gameplay, media outlets are already predicting that “Dragon Ball Legends” could be the best mobile fighting game ever. As with Adidas, this was a global licensing deal by Toei Animation.

Over the last twelve months, Toei Animation and Funimation secured numerous additional licensing agreements with both new licensees as well as existing licensees for additional collections. These new agreements include:

- **China Manufacturing Direct:** Leading manufacturer of entertainment collectibles and accessories for two new collections of FigPins (combination enamel pins and collectible figures) based on “Dragon Ball Super” and “Dragon Ball Super FighterZ.” [Image01](#)
- **Primitive Skateboarding:** Well-known merchandiser of skateboard gear and clothing for a new co-branded “Dragon Ball Z” collection of decks, wheels, apparel, headwear, grip tape, pins, patches, wallets, drinkware and home goods. [Image02](#)
- **Just Funky:** Premiere manufacturer of private label merchandise for a new “Dragon Ball Z,” “Dragon Ball Super” and “Dragon Ball Super FighterZ” collection of auto accessories, home décor, kitchenware, tableware, beverage ware, bedding, fashion apparel, miscellaneous small items and impulse items.
- **Trends International:** Leading supplier of licensed posters, calendars, stickers and social stationary for a new “Dragon Ball Super” collection of calendars and stationary.

- **Bioworld:** Leading merchandiser of licensed apparel and accessories in the pop culture space for new collections based on “Dragon Ball,” “Dragon Ball Super” and “Dragon Ball Super FighterZ” including t-shirts, fashion tops, bottoms, jackets, skirts, dresses, headwear, bags and stationary. [Image03](#)
- **Great Eastern Entertainment:** Leading manufacturer of licensed anime and entertainment merchandise for new collections based on “Dragon Ball Z,” “Dragon Ball Super” and “Dragon Ball Super FighterZ” including wallets, buttons, pins, keychains, t-shirts, wall art, body pillows and bags. [Image04](#) [Image05](#) [Image06](#) [Image07](#) [Image08](#) [Image09](#)
- **Everything Legwear:** Well-known merchandiser of licensed hosiery in the pop culture space will produce new collections based on “Dragon Ball Z” and “Dragon Ball Super” with all styles of hosiery for men, women and children.

Planning is currently underway for next year’s “Dragon Ball Z” 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration which will include special advertising and fan activations that will benefit all “Dragon Ball Z” licensees by not only elevating brand awareness and interest but also driving retail sales of licensed merchandise. Toei Animation and Fox Sports are creating a World Cup commercial for U.S. broadcast that will depict the Super Saiyan transformation of Argentinian football star Lionel Messi. Next, Toei Animation and Bandai will kick-off the seven-city Dragon Ball North America Tour 2018 ([www.db-tour.com](http://www.db-tour.com)) starting in San Diego this July. Lastly, to create a year-long, consumer call to action, all “Dragon Ball Z” licensees will be invited to produce limited edition merchandise to sold throughout 2019 and which will feature an as-yet-be-revealed, exclusive commemorative logo.

Toei Animation and Funimation will be actively seeking additional licensing partners at Licensing Expo 2018 for “Dragon Ball Super” and “Dragon Ball Z” themed merchandise in a variety of categories including sleepwear, pet accessories, bedding, health and beauty, consumables and construction. For more information or to schedule a meeting, please visit either the Toei Animation (#C196) or Funimation (#U252) booth to speak to a licensing representative.

**About Toei Animation Inc.**

Based in Los Angeles, Toei Animation Inc. manages the film distribution of Toei's top properties, including *Dragon Ball all series, Sailor Moon, One Piece, Digimon series, Saint Seiya*, and many others to North America, Latin America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Toei Animation Los Angeles office further handles all categories of consumer product licensing based on its film and television brands within these territories. For more information, please visit [www.toei-animation-usa.com](http://www.toei-animation-usa.com).

**About Funimation**

Funimation, a subsidiary of Sony Pictures Television, is *the* go-to destination for extraordinary anime. By combining its integrated in-house studios along with its technology and distribution partnerships, Funimation leads the industry with its omnichannel approach to offering anime to fans – from streaming and home entertainment, to theatrical distribution and broadcast television. The company's next generation streaming service, FunimationNow, provides subscribers with instant access to their favorite sub and dub shows in ad-free HD on the widest array of devices and platforms—from smartphones and tablets to TVs and gaming consoles. For more information about Funimation, visit [funimation.com](http://funimation.com).

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