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## Hong Kong International Licensing Show draws to a close *Over 20,000 visitors look to seize business opportunities*

**8 January 2020** – Organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the **HKTDC Hong Kong International Licensing Show**, Asia’s flagship licensing event, drew to a successful close today. The three-day fair (6-8 January) attracted a record attendance of more than 20,000 visitors. The ninth **Asian Licensing Conference**, which ran concurrently with the Licensing Show and concluded on 7 January, featured some 30 speakers from renowned brands and global licensing experts, attracting more than 1,200 industry practitioners.

### Licensing adds value to businesses amid challenges

Speaking at the opening ceremony on Monday, HKTDC Executive Director **Margaret Fong** said: “Despite the current global economic sentiment and the impact of the Sino-US trade conflict, the licensing industry continues to flourish.” She added that licensing adds value to businesses, helping to boost their competitiveness during challenging times. With its rigorous intellectual property protection regime, robust legal system, professional expertise and proximity to Mainland China and other key Asian economies, Hong Kong “provides the ideal platform for global brands and top licensors to access markets across the region,” Ms Fong said.

### Hong Kong an effective platform for entering the international market

Exhibitors at this year’s show came with the intention of exchanging ideas with industry players from around the world. Joining the Licensing Show for the second time, an exhibitor at the DLab Hong Kong Pavilion, **Shawn Chiu**, Founder of Pixel Fairy, said that buyers were of high quality and had a strong desire for business collaboration this year. “We will follow up with a number of potential buyers, including a Wenzhou-based shoe manufacturer that invited us to Wenzhou for further discussions; a Korean lifestyle chain store that sought our quotation for an intellectual property (IP); and a Malaysian boutique store looking for suitable IPs for their premium items.”

**Dave Jo**, Product Director for a young Korean brand, Pound Cake Cat, came to the show expecting that his company would only appeal to the Asian market and was set to meet licensing agencies from Mainland China and the Asian region. However, he was pleasantly surprised to find licensing agencies from Europe and the United States expressing an interest in the company’s characters. He found the Licensing Show to be an “international arena” that gave him greater confidence about promoting the brand worldwide.

**Kamonrose Mahattanasomboon**, Co-founder and Designer at a Thailand cartoon company called Scoo Pup, shared that the Licensing Show provides opportunities to small enterprises such as hers, enabling her to learn more about the global market as well as network with business agents from the mainland. “During the show, many agents expressed an interest in our characters and we will arrange meetings with mainland manufacturers on a range of products they are going to produce,”

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she said. Meanwhile, Taiwan exhibitor Brilliant International Group & BIG Impression grabbed the attention of a Sichuan shopping mall, which company Chairman & CEO **Charlie Han** said is now thinking of using its IP to organise a thematic exhibition. Various Taiwanese retail chain stores also showed an interest in collaborating with his company.

### **Hong Kong creativity and culture attracts diverse buyers**

**Colin Jones**, Managing Partner of Copyright Live from the Middle East, attended the Licensing Show for the first time as a buyer and said that two companies had showed an interest in cooperating. “One of them is a mainland licensing agent that ranks as one of the top 100 licensing agents worldwide, which owns a popular character in the Middle East. The other company is a Hong Kong start-up specialising in technologies such as virtual reality. We may collaborate with them to develop escape room games for the Middle East market.”

Another buyer, **Cindy Wu**, Senior Director, New Brands Business Marketing Department, Xtep (China) Co Ltd, commented that many consumers in the mainland are proactively looking for personalised goods, which indirectly drives the growth of IP licensing in the country. Her company came to the Licensing Show looking for suitable licensing partners for four of its brands, discovering many cartoon IPs that would arouse youngsters’ interest. She also saw IPs related to sports, and other IPs from Japan, Korea, various Southeast Asian countries and the mainland that meet the brand’s needs. Ms Wu said foreign buyers see Hong Kong as a trustworthy platform to help them connect with mainland start-ups and companies.

The HKTDC continued to provide business matchmaking services on site, and also made the services available online this year through the Licensing Show website. This one-stop solution connected buyers with exhibitors at the show, helping companies to identify – and make crucial connections with – potential business partners from Hong Kong.

### **Mainland China to become the second largest esports market**

Various plenary sessions and thematic sessions at the Licensing Show saw industry leaders gather to discuss industry trends. At a thematic session titled “Gaming and Esports Licensing”, **Wilson Chow**, PwC Global Technology, Media and Telecommunications Industry Leader, said that the US will still be the leader in the esports market by 2023, though Mainland China, with an annual growth rate of nearly 19%, will surpass Korea to become the second largest esports market by 2022. In terms of revenue share, brand sponsorship, media revenue and advertising revenue take the lead. Media revenue is showing the strongest growth and is expected to increase from 22% in 2018 to 28% by 2023. **Daniel Amos**, Head of Esports at Difuzed, said the potential for the esports market in the mainland is encouraging and there were already 75 million viewers in the country by 2019.

The momentum for development in the esports market remains strong, but a number of companies have already achieved a significant scale. The We Are Nations Group generates revenue by licensing esports teams, selling the copyright for game broadcasts and sales of derivative products. **Patrick Mahoney**, the company’s Co-Founder and CEO, said that the secret for success in esports

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licensing is to understand the needs of all segments of the market, including the teams and the players. Moreover, bringing different business models such as sports and entertainment to esports tournaments can also boost interest and revenues.

### Shared values multiply the co-branding effect

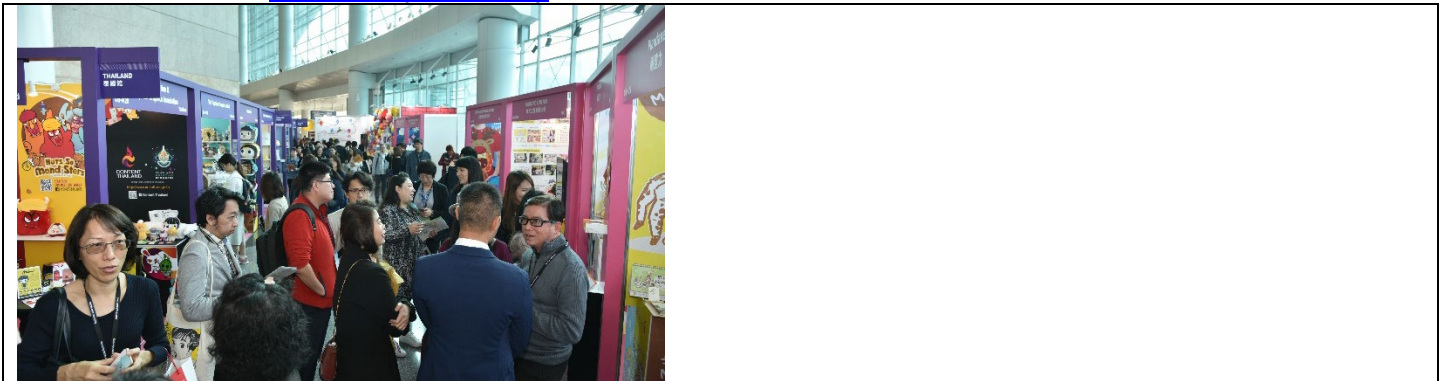
In the “Dialogue with Star Licensees” session, **Anna Charisse Sumulong**, Marketing Director at Jollibee Foods, said the company has developed its business at a rapid pace in recent years, expanding in areas such as North America and Dubai. The Jollibee Foods Corporation has a popular mascot called Jollibee, and Ms Sumulong said that finding a suitable licensing partner can help to produce a bigger branding effect. Jollibee has cooperated with major corporations such as Warner Bros, Universal Studios, DreamWorks and Sanrio, and Ms Sumulong explained that the values of these companies are close to Jollibee’s own, which helps to reinforce the brand image.

### Legal knowledge equips licensing business

Supported by the Intellectual Property Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and organised by Licensing International, the newly established **Licensing Academy** brought industry players up to speed on issues such as licensing law essentials, operational intelligence and cross-border cooperation between retailers and manufacturers.

One of the speakers at the academy, **Alan Chiu**, Managing Director, Ella Cheong & Alan Chiu, Solicitors & Notaries, said that to maintain good brand protection, brand owners have to define the scope of IP that is included. “Many people may know the importance of protecting trademarks, designs and patents, but may often neglect the protection of commercial secrets, reputation, website domain names and social media accounts,” Mr Chiu said. He recommended that a thorough preliminary data collection is carried out before the next contract is drafted, so that a list of commercial secrets, IP application scope and duration can be clarified. He also reminded participants that when infringements occur, the licensee must be given immediate written notice to fix the problem, and to always keep communication records for traceability when legal action needs to be taken.

Photo download: <https://bit.ly/2T59m0y>





More than 20,000 visitors joined the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the HKTDC Hong Kong International Licensing Show, which concluded successfully today







Pictured (from top to bottom) are: Dave Jo, Production Director of Pound Cat Cake; Shawn Chiu, Founder of Pixel Fairy; Charlie Han, Chairman & CEO of Taiwan exhibitor Brilliant International Group & BIG Impression; and Kamonrose Mahattanasomboon, Co-founder and Designer of Scoo Pup



The DLAB Hong Kong Pavilion returned this year with the support of CreateHK, showcasing the creativity of Hong Kong companies





The ninth Asian Licensing Conference ended yesterday. The event brought together 30 speakers from renowned brands and global licensing experts, attracting more than 1,200 industry practitioners



Giving the opening remarks, Margaret Fong, HKTDC Executive Director, said that licensing adds value to businesses, helping to boost the competitiveness of companies during challenging times. She added that Hong Kong can provide the ideal platform for global brands and top licensors looking to access markets across the region

## Relevant websites

- Asian Licensing Conference: [www.hktdc.com/fair/alc-en](http://www.hktdc.com/fair/alc-en)
- Hong Kong International Licensing Show: [www.hktdc.com/fair/hklicensingshow-en](http://www.hktdc.com/fair/hklicensingshow-en)

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## About HKTDC

Established in 1966, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) is a statutory body dedicated to creating opportunities for Hong Kong's businesses. With 50 [offices](#) globally, including 13 in Mainland China, the HKTDC promotes Hong Kong as a platform for doing business with the mainland, Asia and the world. With more than 50 years of experience, the HKTDC organises [international exhibitions, conferences](#) and [business missions](#) to provide companies, particularly SMEs, with business opportunities in the mainland and international markets, while providing business insights and information via [trade publications](#), [research reports](#) and [digital channels](#) including the [media room](#). For more information, please visit: [www.hktdc.com/aboutus](http://www.hktdc.com/aboutus). Follow us on

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