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# Genius Brands Signs National Retail Deal With Hot Topic for the Stan Lee Brand

## New Direct-to-Retail Program Featuring an Array of Stan Lee-Branded Apparel to Debut in Q4 2022, Online at Hottopic.com

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Nov. 16, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Genius Brands International](#) ("Genius Brands") (NASDAQ: GNUS) announced today its first direct-to-retail program with specialty retailer, **Hot Topic**, to create a line of apparel for the **Stan Lee** brand as part of this year's **Stan Lee Centennial** celebration campaign.

Genius Brands, through a joint venture with POW! Entertainment, owns and manages the global rights to the legendary Stan Lee's name, physical likeness, voice, signature, and IP, called **Stan Lee Universe**, which includes the Stan Lee Celebrity brand, as well as new content to be created from Stan Lee's portfolio of approximately 150 unmined ideas and character creations in his post-Marvel career, along with consumer products programs to be developed for these new projects. This year's Stan Lee Centennial campaign, celebrating Stan's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, is the first phase of a much broader Stan Lee Universe program.

Under the new deal, Hot Topic will create an exclusive line of officially licensed Stan Lee-branded print-on-demand apparel, available at Hottopic.com in time for holiday. In addition to Hot Topic, Genius Brands is working with licensing partners, including **Funko, Bioworld, Changes, Iron Studios, JADA, Mego, Mighty Mojo, Moor Art, Royal Bobbles, Sideshow** and more, to create a curated product capsule, including apparel and collectibles, for the Stan Lee Centennial Collection. Additional product categories will follow in early 2023.

**Genius Brands' Chief Brand Officer Kerry Phelan** stated: "We are launching the Stan Lee Centennial campaign to carry on his legacy for his millions of fans worldwide. We take our role of managing the Stan Lee brand very seriously and are being extremely selective with our partners, and we couldn't be more thrilled to bring Hot Topic on board to drive this first direct-to-retail program for the brand."

"Stan Lee is a legend and one of the most prolific creators of a generation," said **Ed Labay, EVP Merchandise & Marketing, Hot Topic Inc.** "We are excited to partner with Genius Brands to celebrate Stan's life and his invaluable cultural contribution through the creation of a direct-to-retail program that features high-quality merchandise for fans to enjoy."

Recently, Genius Brands signed a 20-year deal to license the name and likeness of Stan Lee to Marvel Studios for future feature films and television productions, as well as to create and sell merchandise in Disney theme parks and experiences worldwide.

## **About Stan Lee**

Stan Lee is one of the most prolific and legendary comic creators of all time. As Marvel's editor-in-chief, Stan "The Man" Lee helped build a universe of interlocking continuity, one where fans felt as if they could turn a street corner and run into a super hero from Spider-Man to the Fantastic Four, Thor, Iron Man, the Hulk, the X-Men, and more. Stan went on to become Marvel's editorial director and publisher in 1972, and was eventually named chairman emeritus.

Stan also appeared in some of the most popular films of all time. His well-known cameos in Marvel films began in the 1989 telefilm *The Trial of the Incredible Hulk*. After the release of *X-Men* in 2000, he appeared in nearly every Marvel film and television project until his passing in 2018.

Among Stan's many awards is the National Medal of Arts, awarded by President Bush in 2008, and the Disney Legends Award, received in 2017. He was also inducted into the comic industry's Will Eisner Award Hall of Fame and Jack Kirby Hall of Fame.

## **About Genius Brands International**

Genius Brands International, Inc. (Nasdaq: GNUS) is a leading global kids media company developing, producing, marketing and licensing branded children's entertainment properties and consumer products for media and retail distribution. The Company's IP portfolio of family-friendly content features the Stan Lee brand, Stan Lee's Superhero Kindergarten, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, on Cartoon Channel!; Shaq's Garage, starring Shaquille O'Neal, coming to Cartoon Channel!; Rainbow Rangers on Cartoon Channel! and Netflix; Llama Llama, starring Jennifer Garner, on Netflix and more. Recently, Genius Brands entered into an agreement to acquire Canada's WOW! Unlimited Media (TSX-V: WOW), which includes 2,500 channels under the Channel Federator Network, and has also made a strategic investment in Germany's Your Family Entertainment AG (FRA:RTV), one of Europe's largest distributors and broadcasters of high-quality programs for children and families.

Genius Brands' Cartoon Channel! is a globally distributed entertainment platform with 100% penetration in the U.S. television market and international expansion with launches in key markets around the world. The channel is available in the U.S. via a broad range of distribution platforms, including Comcast, Cox, DISH, Amazon Prime, Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Apple iOS, Android TV, Android Mobil, Google Play, Roku, YouTube, CartoonChannel.com, Samsung Smart and LG TVs, the JetBlue Inflight platform and more. Genius Brands will soon launch the subscription-based Cartoon Channel! Kidaverse, featuring metaversal content and over 15,000 animated titles.

For additional information, please visit [www.gnusbrands.com](http://www.gnusbrands.com).

*Forward Looking Statements: Certain statements in this press release constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the federal securities laws. Words such as "may," "might," "will," "should," "believe," "expect," "anticipate," "estimate," "continue," "predict," "forecast," "project," "plan," "intend" or similar expressions, or statements regarding intent, belief, or current expectations, are forward-looking statements. While the Company believes these forward-looking statements are reasonable, undue reliance should not be placed on any such forward-looking statements, which are based on information available to us on the date of this release. These forward looking statements are based upon current estimates*

*and assumptions and are subject to various risks and uncertainties, including without limitation, our ability to generate revenue or achieve profitability; our ability to obtain additional financing on acceptable terms, if at all; the potential issuance of a significant number of shares, which will dilute our equity holders; fluctuations in the results of our operations from period to period; general economic and financial conditions; our ability to anticipate changes in popular culture, media and movies, fashion and technology; competitive pressure from other distributors of content and within the retail market; our reliance on and relationships with third-party production and animation studios; our ability to market and advertise our products; our reliance on third-parties to promote our products; our ability to keep pace with technological advances; our ability to protect our intellectual property and those other risk factors set forth in the "Risk Factors" section of the Company's most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and in the Company's subsequent filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"). Thus, actual results could be materially different. The Company expressly disclaims any obligation to update or alter statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law.*

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Source: Genius Brands International, Inc.