

# LAST WORD



CHRISTOPHE GOLDBERGER, GOLD BEE

## Flying solo in Spain

**A**fter almost 15 years in the industry, as a producer and head of distribution and marketing at Imira Entertainment and head of business affairs at Moonscoop in Paris, I decided to launch my own company last autumn, a distribution consultancy called GoldBee. It was a big decision but I felt confident I could branch out on my own.

The industry had certainly changed a lot since I'd started at Montreal, Canada's Klik Animation in 1998. Back then, financing was easier to access, and business models were stable with broadcasters leading the way. With the arrival of the internet, the multiplication of digital platforms and the rise of multi-screen consumption by kids of all ages, the business has been forced to evolve and reinvent itself. I decided I needed to do the same.

As audiences have been fragmented, as each target group has divided into sub-groups and as kids have become more proactive in their search for their favourite content, it has become crucial to offer strong innovative properties, articulated around a brand, which are available on numerous platforms. The concept of exclusivity has changed enormously. It's a complicated puzzle to assemble, and it can't be solved only by creative or business skills:

experience is key in getting the balance right.

Spain's economy has been very tough for some years, and this has led to some well known animation companies falling away as money became scarce. The past five years have been very hard – a lot of economic destruction has happened here – so you had to be very strong and make the right decisions to face and survive the contraction.

The Spanish animation industry had to learn to diversify or die, and diversify it did. Creative financing structures were put together. These included animated projects stemming from the toy industry that were financed by the toy industry, which was something new. Private equity investment funds supported innovative content in a country with almost no track record in that area. So there has been, and will be, innovation. If one looks closely at the long-lasting Spanish professionals, one will see that most of them are still doing business and managed to pull through these difficult times. After all, this industry is about long-term relationships.

As Spain is starting to show signs of recovery, I look to the future with enthusiasm. New opportunities are arising. The plan for Gold Bee is to go global, but the structure will stay lean until the dust settles.

My company provides distribution and consulting services in all areas related to the

different steps of creating, financing and exploiting successful IP and brands, and helps raise a company's profile and reach in the international industry. That's what I know best and what I can offer my partners on a global level.

Though I'm not an expert in all things Spain, this is where I live now. I have lived and worked in two countries before, so my backyard starts in Latin America and ends in Asia. This means I can target business with the whole world while remaining nimble.

I recently joined forces with ZDF Enterprises in order to exploit the rights of its Junior catalogue in Iberia, Latin America and Asia. ZDFE has a fantastic catalogue of award-winning kids programmes, ranging from preschool hit such as *Q Pootle 5* and *JoNaLu* to great comedy shows like *Rusty Knight* and international teen live actions hits including *Mako Mermaids*, *Sam Fox Extreme Adventures* and *Wolfblood*. They also produce new takes on classics with *Lassie*, *The New Adventures of Peter Pan* and *The Jungle Book*, which are a hit with buyers around the world. It's a privilege to partner and contribute to the success of such a fantastic team.

Looking ahead, Gold Bee will continue focusing on kids properties and brands, reinforcing its position as a distributor and consultant.

Short term, I am looking for strong properties to distribute in the rest of the world. But the challenge will be to grow the business, find new ways of monetising content in the digital world and develop new projects originating from the interactive and toy industries, the biggest entrants in to the kids market in the past few years. **TBI**

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