

# **ThinkFun Education Initiative**

July, 2003

## **Summary**

Binary Arts' move to becoming ThinkFun carries an enormous potential with it; beyond the simple fact of a better, more marketable name, this is a chance for us to redefine the mission and scope of our company, as an organization that has a higher educational purpose behind our mind challenging games and puzzles. This redefinition doesn't mean we have to alter our basic business practices, but rather it allows us to expand to take advantage of new, broader market opportunities

## **New Distribution Opportunities**

There are four basic distribution channel opportunities to come out of the products we develop under this educational initiative, as follows:

- Our normal traditional toy and gift retail markets. As we're seeing with the Aha! Brainteaser line, there is a need from our current customers for products that are designed with this educational focus in mind
- The School Supply market, including the large educational supply catalogs, teacher supply stores, and other forms of distribution, directly or indirectly to teachers.
- The corporate incentive and premium market. Many of the product concepts we are developing for this program match the needs of corporate programs as well as educational programs for children
- The development of a new marketing channel, with ThinkFun creating a program of Math Clubs and Math Leagues around the country, offering a structure and a system for these clubs to function within, and developing and selling products that clubs can use internally and when competing against each other.

## **Heart of the Program: Math Clubs and Math Leagues**

This is a new concept. It's exciting, and it's a chance to create some energy and bring something good to the world. There's little or no downside, because even if it doesn't become a major initiative, the positive energy and buzz that will come from doing the best we can will accrue to the message of what we are trying to accomplish with the new ThinkFun... and, the products that we develop to support the concept will sell into our traditional markets and have the potential to be as successful as it looks like the Aha! Brainteasers are going to be.

Here is the Math Club / Math League Plan

- Thinkfun is going to create a structure for a “do it yourself” Math Club system that will allow groups of kids, in partnership with adult mentors, to form math clubs, with little effort and great reward.
- We’re going to design these clubs to have relatively uniform structures and programs, so there is commonality to what members are doing throughout the country and around the world – regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Individual clubs will be part of local and regional leagues, and clubs will compete against each other in fun group math game and puzzle contests. These competitions will be an extremely important element of the overall concept, because they offer a reason to focus on improvement for club members and they make great PR opportunities as well as making the whole system more alive and fun.
- Club signups, league scheduling, general event news and contests will be coordinated through our website at thinkfun.com, and on-line puzzle challenges will be broadcast from puzzles.com.
- Club activities will largely be based on puzzle and game concepts that Thinkfun will be developing and turning into retail products that will sell in toy, gift and education stores as well as directly into the clubs.
- The operation and coordination of league tournaments and competitions will be accomplished by local groups according to a system that we develop, to allow the program to scale and to run without draining resources from corporate headquarters. Local coordinators may come from several different resource pools, including the following:
  - o Local toy retailers
  - o Teachers or school resource specialists
  - o Existing high school clubs, such as engineering clubs
  - o PTA parents or other parent organizations
- Our best opportunity in the early going will be to team with empathetic toy retailers in local communities, who will want to support our concept in order to gain exposure for their own stores and to promote our ThinkFun centers in their stores.
- Working with the clubs and local league coordinators, we’ll create a fundraising process to raise the necessary money to distribute puzzles and games to club participants for free, and pay for the costs of hosting league competition events. ThinkFun will manufacture low cost versions of our games for club members, so sponsorship money can go further and so we don’t harm the market for our commercial products. For those interested, full commercial versions of the puzzles and games will be available at local ThinkFun centers within supporting retail stores and from our website.

- ThinkFun will form affiliate partnerships or cross sponsorships with other quality youth creativity programs, helping them to promote their programs and working with them to further promote our math club/math league concept.
- Finally, the puzzle and game concepts that ThinkFun brings to the Math Clubs will all be specifically designed to fit into the system. Of primary importance is that they are fun and rewarding. A distant second, but nonetheless significant goal is that the overall program fit into the NCTM standards. The better we can do this, the more official sanction we will have and the more support the program will gain in the education community over time.