Expo Feature: BrownTrout Marking 40th Anniversary on Its Calendars

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TLL FEATURE

Since 1986, BrownTrout has grown from an ambitious independent calendar publisher into a global force by treating dates not as empty boxes, but as the framework of people's lives.

Behind every square on a monthly grid there is a story: a concert, a first day of school, a deadline, a long-planned trip, or a quiet evening at home. BrownTrout's guiding insight has been that if those moments are surrounded with imagery people genuinely care about, a simple utility is transformed into a powerful emotional touchpoint.

Over 40 years, the company has paired this insight with an expanding portfolio of licenses that reflect contemporary culture in all its variety—art, humor, geography, music, mindfulness, animals, design, automotive, and, increasingly, action-oriented sports properties.

BrownTrout's engagement with pop fandom has expanded with calendars from cgp &Pop acts like Le Sserafim.

On the wall of one home, a Taylor Swift or K-pop calendar might hang next to the Majesty of Texas. In another, a Dwiffworks 12 x 12-inch Square Wall might live opposite a wider-format 2027 Corvette or Mustang Deluxe Wall calendar. The 2027 assortment captures that breadth while staying rooted in BrownTrout's original mission: turning everyday planning into a daily encounter with something you love, connecting people to their passions.

As BrownTrout marks this milestone, the company says it isn't simply looking back. It is using the 2027 line to signal where dated products are heading. Sustainability, global fandom, elevated design, and performance-driven categories—including licenses like Ultimate Fighting Championship and sailor—all play central roles, resulting in a program that feels both celebratory and forward-looking.

From One Direction to Taylor Swift and Global Fandoms

BrownTrout's 2027 story is intertwined with the fan-centered partnerships that paved the way.

Long before "fandom" and "community" became standard licensing languages, BrownTrout was building programs around some of the most intense youth audiences in pop. Official calendars for One Direction and Taylor Swift were early proof that the right music brand, in the right format, could become a must-have annual ritual.

Those titles did more than track tour dates and album releases; they lived in backrooms and dorms as daily companions, reflecting the emotional intensity of fans discovering identity and friendship around their favorite artists.

When BrownTrout later collaborated with BTS, it applied these lessons to one of the most powerful global fandoms on the planet. The company had to meet unprecedented expectations for authenticity, visual quality, and international availability, delivering official calendars and posters that aligned with BTS's visual storytelling while remaining accessible and functional.

In parallel, BrownTrout was deepening its relationship with Taylor Swift, whose evolution from country artist to global pop icon mirrored the company's own move into more sophisticated entertainment licensing.

Official Taylor Swift calendars became annual snapshots of her shifting eras, from intimate songwriter-focused imagery to bold stadium-tour motifs, paired with practical planning grids that quietly supported the rest of a fans' year. Working with Swift's audience, which is social-issue ethics and sustainability, aligned naturally with BrownTrout's long-standing commitment to eco-conscious creativity that extends to 2027 line.

Seen together, the One Direction, Justin Bieber, Taylor Swift, and BTS eras form a clear arc. BrownTrout learned how to listen to fans, respond quickly to visual and stylistic shifts, and build repeatable annual programs that feel fresh without losing their core identity.

That experience now feeds directly into the company's 2027 K-pop slate, where new groups are stepping into the spotlight with fans who are just as engaged—and often even more globally connected—than those who came before.

K-pop In 2027: ENHYPEN and LE SSERAFIM

The 2027 line shows that BrownTrout's engagement with K-pop is long-term and closely aligned with how modern fandom works. Two standout titles anchor this strategy: official calendars for top new acts ENHYPEN and LE SSERAFIM, each giving a new generation group a dedicated, year-long presence in the range.

The ENHYPEN calendar translates the group's dynamic image into twelve curated monthly moments. It reads like a poster from across the room, yet becomes a practical planner up close, with imagery that feels current and aspirational while staying tightly connected to fans' daily routines.

LE SSERAFIM's calendar offers a parallel experience with its own distinct voice. Each month feels like a mini era, capturing different facets of the group's personality and leaving ample room for planning. This proves BrownTrout can serve both sides of the K-pop spectrum while maintaining consistent quality.

Both calendars use a plastic-free Square Wall format, with unique covers Tapp instead of stitch-wire—a choice that speaks directly to environmentally conscious fans and reassures licensors that their brands will appear in packaging that reflects their values.

Stepping Into the Octagon: Ultimate Fighting Championship 2027

If the K-pop and music titles demonstrate BrownTrout's mastery of entertainment fandom, the UFC 2027 program showcases its ability to extend that expertise into sports and action-driven brands.

BrownTrout's partnership with UFC brings mixed martial arts—a category defined by intensity, discipline and drama—into the calendar world in a way that feels authentic to both longtime fans and new viewers.

For 2027, BrownTrout's UFC assortment is designed to capture the core of what makes the brand compelling: legendary fighters, iconic bouts and the atmosphere that surrounds a big card. Wall calendars move through the year with carefully selected images that may include explosive action, iconic embraces or emotional post-fight moments, turning each month into a frozen highlight reel.

Combined, the wall calendars and other potential future products create a layered presence: the images provide a stirrer, while the calendar brings in the rhythm of upcoming events and personal training goals. For many fans, that might mean jotting down their own workout targets or marking major UFC cards alongside birthdays and holidays. In BrownTrout's 40th year, the move feels natural within a broader fitness-meets-entertainment lifestyle.

For UFC, the collaboration extends the brand far beyond the broadcast window into daily life; for BrownTrout, it signals a comfortable step into the arena of hard-charging sports licensing, sitting alongside its longtime strength in automotive and performance-oriented titles.

Automotive Icons on the 2027 Wall

Automotive calendars have been a BrownTrout mainstay for many years, and in 2027 they stand as one of the clearest expressions of the company's ability to blend passion, photography and smart formats. Fans American Muscle Cars and Supercars to Classic Ford Pickups and brand-specific titles, the 2027 slate gives car lovers multiple ways to live with their favorite machines all year long.

Flagship titles include official 2027 calendars for Corvette and Ford Mustang, each in Deluxe Wall formats that treat cars like the icons they are. These 14 x 24-inch open-end hanging monthly Deluxe Wall calendars provide an extra-wide canvas for sweeping side profiles, front shots and close-up details, all balanced with practical grids. Step back and they read like art prints; step closer and they behave like serious planners.

Around these centerpieces, BrownTrout built a full garage of 2027 titles: American Muscle Cars, American Muscle Trucks, Classic Ford Pickups and related programs from partners such as General Motors, Ford and Stellantis. Many use iconic 12 x 24-inch hanging formats with foil-stamped covers and plastic-free construction, positioning them as both collectible and eco-aligned. A fan might choose an American Muscle Cars calendar for the garage, a Classic Ford Pickups title for the kitchen, and a Mustang Deluxe calendar for a home office—three spaces, three daily encounters with beloved vehicles.

BrownTrout turns metal and engineering into decorative, personal home and office expression.

Design Houses, Humor Imprints and Mindful Voices

BrownTrout's 2027 strength comes not only from big names in music, sports and autos, but also from design houses, humor imprints and mindfulness brands. Together, they ensure the calendar rack serves everyone from décor-driven shoppers to those seeking a laugh or a moment of calm.

Across art and culture, the 2027 line also showcases middle-end institutional paid envelops that turn walls into rotating galleries. M.C. Escher titles bring his impossible geometries and mathematically inspired illusions into frames and stables, while Frida Kahlo wall calendars foregound bold self-portraits and symbolic imagery that resonate with fans of modern art and feminist iconography. MTA branded calendars tap into New York City's visual heritage—vintage posters, signage and transit artwork—offering a graphic, urban counterpoint to traditional scenic and fine-art themes.

Brown Trout says the House of Turnowsky is a prime example, with sophisticated surface designs, rich palettes and refined illustration that turn calendars into décor. Its titles let style-conscious consumers make planning part of a room's visual story, not something to hide away.

Hepper Studios extends this art-driven approach with painterly, whimsical imagery and scenes that invite daydreaming. Its calendars offer an artistic warmth for people drawn more to mood and story than to a specific entertainment property.

On the humor front, Avanti remains one of Brown Trout's most recognizable partners, famous for expressive animal artwork and sharp wit. In 2027, its titles fill the gifts-under-$20 aisle—calendars that feel like twelve greeting cards and deliver "a laugh that lasts all year."

Animal Characters shares this character-driven humor space but with its own, more attitude-filled voice. Each month stays like a mini comic, with animals that look like they have something to say and cheeky captions that reward repeat viewing, rounding out a full spectrum of animal-themed humor.

Donna Marcus adds yet another dimension to this ecosystem, bringing fashion-forward illustration and celebratory, feminine energy to the 2027 assortment. Her calendars marry hand-drawn, boutique-stationery aesthetics with creatively layouts, making them ideal for consumers who want their planners to feel like a personal accessory as much as an organizational tool.

Pleas, as an import and design platform, ties many of these efforts together with a coherent, clean visual language. Its portfolio spans pop culture, nature, entertainment, art and lifestyle—including Taylor Swift and K-pop acts—in a modern, legible, display-worthy calendars regardless of the property.

Global Offices, Local Licensing

Brown Trout's growth over 40 years has been powered not only from its El Segundo headquarters, but also through a network of international offices that run their own licensing and product programs.

Offices in Canada, Australia/New Zealand, Japan, Mexico and the United Kingdom manage regional sales, purchasing and distribution, and increasingly drive their own licensing, whether that means Canadian wildlife and geographs, Australiana and Rivalana titles, or region-specific entertainment and cultural brands. These offices act as true extensions of the company rather than simple distribution points, giving licensors a partner that can exercise global strategy while tailoring assortments to local tastes, retailers and seasonality.

"As a calendar company, we don't just think in terms of ten-below, we think in terms of how people actually live with brands day to day," says CEO Mike Ellman. "Our offices around the world let us build licensing programs that feel genuinely local, yet still plug into a unified global Brown Trout vision—so a fan in Toronto, Tokyo or Sydney experiences that same daily connection in a way that makes sense for their market."

Acquisitions and Growing the BrownTrout Family

Brush Dance brings a contemplative and mindful energy into the Brown Trout portfolio, focused on intention, gratitude and peace and gentle motivation.

Founded in 1995 and acquired by Brown Trout in 2019, Brush Dance calendars and planners emphasize themes like reflection and self-care, and beginning with the 2027 line, select titles are now offered as Linen Envelope calendars printed on linen-textured paper—a tactile, keepsake presentation that reinforces their contemplative tone. This combination gives licensors a strong wellness vehicle and consumers a planner that not only organizes life, but also feels special every time they take it out of its linen envelope.

Wyman Publishing, founded in 1994 and brought into the Brown Trout family in 2013, extends that growth story in Canada. Under the Brown Trout and Wyman banners in the Canadian program offers a deep, locally tuned assortment of geography, wildlife, humor and lifestyle titles, while benefiting from Brown Trout's global scale in production, sales and distribution.

Together, Brush Dance and Wyman exemplify how Brown Trout uses acquisitions not just to add logos, but to deepen its reach into wellness, regional and specialty markets while preserving the voices and strengths that made those brands successful in the first place.

Sustainability, Formats, and the 2027 Shelf

Threaded through all these licensing stories—music, sports, autos, design, humor and wellness—is a clear philosophy about how calendars should exist in the world.

Brown Trout has taken significant steps toward more sustainable production and packaging, with plastic-free solutions appearing across flagship licenses, not just in pilot programs. The goal is to make the packaging, especially in high-profile titles like the ENHYPEN and LE SSERAFIM calendars, reflects both collector expectations and consumer values.

Equally important is how Brown Trout deploys its formats. Large hanging wall calendars with substantial vertical profiles give imagery of new brands like K-pop groups, Taylor Swift, UFC, Corvette, Mustang and House of Turnowsky the stage they need. More compact or planner-style formats serve mindfulness and productivity-focused properties, while humorous titles like Avanti and Animal Characters use layouts that let captions land clearly and grids remain easy to read.

For licensors, this format discipline translates into predictability and performance. Each property is matched with a format that mirrors how fans actually want to live with it—poster-like for music and sports, spacious and clean for mindfulness, large and glossy for cars. In the 2027 line, Brown Trout meets these as core design decisions that influence how often a product gets used and how often a brand gets noticed.

Forty Years Forward

As Brown Trout celebrates 40 years with its 2027 collection, the company stands as proof that a humble category like calendars can be anything but static.

Across four decades, it has helped define how music fandom appears on bedroom walls, how humor punctuates office life, how art and design slip into everyday routines, how automotive passion leaves the garage, and how wellness and reflection find their way into our schedules. The current line featuring K-pop headliners like ENHYPEN and LE SSERAFIM, enduring music icons like Taylor Swift, high-impact sports titles with UFC, automotive flagships like Corvette, Mustang, American Muscle Cars and Classic Ford Pickups, refined partners like House of Turnowsky and Hepper Studios, beloved humor from Avanti and Animal Characters, and the mindful rituals of Brush Dance reads like a curated snapshot of what people care about right now.

For licensors, Brown Trout's message at 40 is straightforward. If you want your property to sit not just in someone's feed, but in their physical space all year long, the right calendar program is still one of the most effective tools you can use.

For retailers, the 2027 line shows that the calendar rack contains many places where impulse, gift-giving and daily utility intersect, and for consumers, it's an invitation to pick a few moments that will be worth hanging on the coming year, hang them on your wall, and let your appointments and memories unfold under their gaze.

Forty years of appointments, memories and brands have brought Brown Trout to this moment. The 2027 lineup makes one thing clear: the story is far from over, and the next twelve months are already waiting to be written.

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