

Monopoly keeps growing after 80 years

By Allison Prang, Bloomberg

How do you keep a Depression-era board game like Monopoly growing after 80 years? Keep giving people a reason to buy a new one.

That's been the strategy of Hasbro Inc., which has created hundreds of versions of the game in a bid for repeat shoppers. Special editions of Monopoly cover everything from the New England Patriots to "The Walking Dead" TV show. The best-selling variation currently on Amazon.com is based on Walt Disney Co.'s "Frozen."

Monopoly's ceaseless reinvention has helped bolster demand in a era when kids are engrossed in smartphones and tablets. Sales of the product have climbed more than 15 percent in the past three years, and lately it's been outperforming the rest of Hasbro's board-game business. A key driver: a 2013 token contest that let people vote out one of Monopoly's game pieces and choose a new one to take its place. After intense lobbying online, the cat replaced the iron.

Monopoly, which celebrates its 80th birthday next month, is a bright spot in Hasbro's sluggish games category.

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