

Which 80's cartoon was NOT created to sell kids' toys?

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The Smurfs originated in Belgium as a French language comic ("Les Schtroumpfs") in 1958 and only eventually aired as an English language cartoon from 1981 to 1987. The Smurfs became one of the most successful and longest running Saturday morning cartoons in television history ([Wikipedia](#)).

Care Bears

The Care Bears began as greeting card characters in 1981 before becoming toys and subsequently a TV show, which aired from 1985 until 1988. The Care Bears were produced by American Greetings after the company's success with the Strawberry Shortcake franchise. Both the Care Bears and Strawberry Shortcake were sold as greeting cards before being developed into cartoons ([Fandom.com](#)).



Original 1981 greeting cards featuring the Care Bears and Strawberry Shortcake.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles started off as an independent comic book in 1984. The comics were darker and more violent than the cartoon, the turtles all wore red masks, and they didn't have initials on their belts. Artists Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird licensed the Turtles to Playmate Toys in 1987 and the characters were promptly promoted with an animated series that same year ([Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teenage_Mutant_Ninja_Turtles)).

EASTMAN AND LAIRD'S TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES



Transformers

Transformers aired from 1984 to 1987 to help market the toy line from Hasbro, in response to Mattel's highly successful He-Man franchise (TheNerdStash.com). Transformers were based on a Japanese line of toys called Diaclone, rebranded for North American audiences (Wikipedia).



The Japanese toy Diaclone before it became Optimus Prime in the U.S.

In the early 1990s, another Japanese kids show was imported and rebranded: the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, which aired in Japan as Kyōryū Sentai Zyuranger (Dinosaur Squadron Beast Ranger) (Fandom.com). The producers kept all the fighting and monster sequences, and simply reshot all the parts with western actors whenever the characters' faces were shown (Wikipedia).



The cast of Kyōryū Sentai Zyuranger (Dinosaur Squadron Beast Ranger), before the show was imported to the U.S. and rebranded as Might Morphin Power Rangers.

The very first cartoon to sell kids' toys

The first ever cartoon created to sell kids' toys was "Hot Wheels", which aired from 1969 to 1971. At the time, industry regulations only allowed 9.5 minutes of advertising per hour. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) saw "Hot Wheels" as a 30-minute ad for kids toys, and therefore squashed the show after just two seasons. The FCC removed these regulations in 1984, at which point cartoons created to sell kids' toys really took off



Hot Wheels (1969-1971) was the first cartoon made to sell kids toys.

Floppy white smurf caps

The floppy white hats that the Smurfs wear are real hats from antiquity called Phrygian caps. They were worn as early as 800 B.C. in present-day Turkey (AOC.gov) but eventually came to signify liberty during the American Revolution (Wikipedia). As opposed to the Smurfs' hats, which are white, Phrygian (or liberty) caps are usually red. One can even be seen in the seal of the U.S. Department of the Army, supported on the point of an unsheathed sword (Wikipedia).



A red Phrygian (liberty) cap in the seal of the U.S. Department of the Army.