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## 5 Marketing lessons from Lady Gaga



You may love Lady Gaga. You may hate her. But no matter what, it's hard not to respect what she's done as an artist. With 23 million albums sold, five Grammy Awards, and *Forbes'* distinction as *one of the world's most powerful celebrities*, at age 27, Lady Gaga is one of the most well-known pop artists in the world. Known as much for her voice as for her over-the-top wardrobe, few people recognize Lady Gaga for her business acumen.

And yet, Gaga has cultivated legions of loyal fans worldwide—fans who are eager to buy her music, concert tickets, and products. Her social networking prowess is off the charts with 36 million Twitter followers and 57 million “likes” on Facebook. Not only has she created a brand but she has built a fanatical group of consumers, known as her “Little Monsters,” who will follow her for decades to come.

Jackie Huba is author of the new book *Monster Loyalty; How Lady Gaga Turns Followers Into Fanatics*. I asked Jackie what we can all learn from Lady Gaga about marketing in leading our own teams, companies, organizations and communities. Here are five brand marketing lessons from Huba - and Gaga - for building loyalty in any organization:

### 1) Focus on Your One Percenters

# 1%

Lady Gaga spends much of her effort on just one percent of her audience- the highly engaged superfans who drive word of mouth. Despite her tens of millions of followers in social media, she focuses more on the die-hard fans that make up a small but valuable part of the fan base. It's these fans who will truly evangelize for her and bring new fans into the fold.

Who are *your* one percenters- your most passionate customers and fans, who are willing to go the extra mile to sing your praises to their friends and community?

2) **Lead with Values** Gaga differs from many of her contemporaries by standing up for issues that she cares about and for sharing her values. She champions those in society who feel marginalized and bullied for being different -

and that has drawn many people to her. Customers feel a deep emotional connection to you when they can identify with your values or causes that you care about.

Leading with values is not easy - and may lead to some people, who disagree with your values, not wanting to do business with you. But when done with integrity and commitment, some customers will also go out of the way to reward you with their loyalty.

3) **Build Community** Gaga knows that connecting One Percenters to each other strengthens their bonds not only with each other, but with her and her brand. So she built her own social network for the die-hard fans called [LittleMonsters.com](http://LittleMonsters.com). Fans set up profiles, post fan art and photos, message each other, and find links to concert dates. They even get their own LittleMonsters.com e-mail address, linking their online identity to Gaga. The pop star is on the site weekly, posting special messages to fans, “liking” and commenting on their fan art, and participating in chat discussions.

Now, you may not have a strong enough brand to merit its' own social network, but surely you can cultivate community online amongst your most loyal customers, employees, friends and partners.

4) **Give Fans a Name** Creating a name for your One Percenters, like Lady Gaga's Little Monsters, assigns them an identity. With that identity comes a set of recognizable behavioral or personal characteristics that everyone with that name shares. In essence, a name gives your fans something further to join, to be part of, and to feel connected to. The simple act of referring to themselves by the name gives customers a strong sense of belonging.

Maker's Mark has the Maker's Ambassadors. Fiskars scissors has the Fiskateers. I'm proud to be a member of [Just Salad's exclusive VIP Pink-Bowlers](#). *What can you name your community of your most loyal customers?*

### 5) Give Them Something to Talk About



Lady Gaga is the queen of word-of-mouth marketing. She understands that you must continually give your One Percenters - and everyone - things to comment about so that they have reasons to talk to others about you. From popping out of an “egg” at the Grammys to lighting her piano on fire, to the famous meat dress, one thing nobody can dispute is that Gaga gets people talking.

You don't need to wear a meat dress to get people talking. But you should think about what you can say and do to get your customers and fans talking about you in a positive way. Whether it's a [VIP club](#), [surprising and delighting customers](#), a [color that really stands out](#), or something else entirely, in general, the more you give people to talk about, the better.

Lady Gaga has set the standard for brand marketing through engendering loyalty, standing for strong values, building community, and word of mouth marketing. The good news is, you don't need to be a pop star, or even wear outlandish outfits, to reap the rewards of the lessons Gaga teaches us