



THE POWER OF FANDOM *IS NOT RANDOM*

[For building brand love and developing social strategies]



So...

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN
WE TALK ABOUT *FANDOM*?



Overview

01 What do we mean when we talk about fandom?

02 Consumers, fans & stans

03 The north star of fandom

04 Fandom tactics for brands

Welcome to the Social Innovation Lab Social Bites. In this edition, we talk about marketing strategies related to fandom, community and subcultures. We hope you enjoy it.

Sincerely,

Monks

Welcome to *The Power of Fandom is Not Random*

Introducing the idea of a fandom

This is Anthony Bourdain. Maybe you know him from his show *No Reservations* or from his books *Confessions of a Chef*, *World's Travel: an Irreverent Guide*. Maybe you know him because he is an icon in the gastronomic universe and you are passionate about the world of pleasures and flavors—in other words, you are part of the foodie fandom.



*Epicurean mastermind.
A leader in foodie fandom.*



"The impact of fandom in society"
- Cheng Lu Wan

"The fans of" /
A common object
of love and desire /
Kingdom of fans

Network of
meanings. Identity

A Tribe to Be:

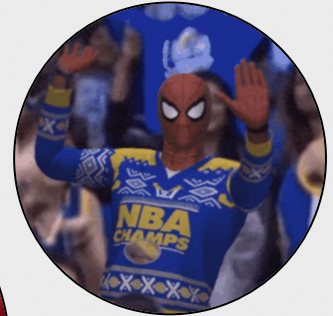
Little Monsters.
Potterheads. Yogis.
Beatniks. Jedis. Beliebers.
Gadget junkies. RuPaul
Devotees. Vintage
enthusiasts. Rihanna lovers.
Kpop singers. BonVivants.

What do we mean when we talk *about fandom*?

Fandom And Participatory Culture / Subcultures And Sociology
Henry Jenkins et al

"Fan culture, or fandom, is a term which describes communities built around a shared enjoyment of an aspect of popular culture, such as books, movies, TV shows, bands, sports or sports teams, etc. **Fan cultures are examples of participatory cultures. Participatory cultures involve fans acting not only as consumers but also as producers and creators of some form of creative media.**

Though most fan cultures, including sports fans and fans of music groups, have elements of participatory culture, media fandom in particular encourages creative expression and artistic production by its participants."



What do we mean when we talk about fandom?



If there is a *fandom*, there could be a *subculture*. If there's a subculture, there could be a *community*.

What is the difference?

First, **Fandom**

People who love something in particular and in common.

"I am a big fan of Snoop Dogg."

Then, **Subculture**

A group of people who share interests and beliefs on one specific thing more deeply than fans.

"I love rap because it represents a social movement: it's an alternative way to express freedom."

And then, **Community**

A feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals.

"We are going to get together for the annual skateboard competition."

Consumers are indiscriminate, *fans* have a sentimental involvement, and *stans*' interest can get hateful.

Consumers

Passive Culture

(Buyers only)



The relationship is driven by convenience. Consumers don't exhibit brand loyalty.

Indiscriminate

Fans

Interactive Culture

(Co-creators & promoters)



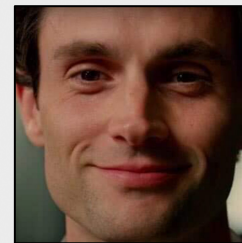
This is where word of mouth happens. Fans will help amplify your brand and become your ambassador.

A closer relation with their object of love

Stans

Based in Ego

(Rooting & sharing)



An excessively enthusiastic and devoted fan. It's defined by Merriam-Webster as "[exhibiting] fandom to an extreme excessive degree."

An obsessive relationship

CONSUMERS,



FANS & STANS

Consumers, fans & stans

Fandom, subculture and community are *inherently connected*. How could we use this knowledge to create a *brand strategy*?



Human meets brand: *A Love Story*

When people interact with a brand, **a bond is created** similar to the one we have when we are emotionally linked to another person. There are some people are players; others are devoted to their love; and, unfortunately, some partners are toxic.



Consumers, fans & stans

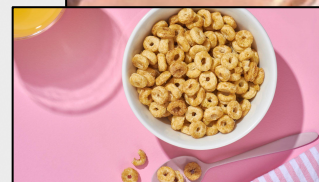
Human meets brand: *A Love Story*



A young person enters the cereal
aisle in the supermarket:
which one do they choose?



Sometimes the decision is just based on
convenience: *there's no emotional link*,
and they can switch between brands from
one moment to another. They are called
“consumers,” but what every brand
actually wants is a *fan*.



Consumers, fans & stans

How can we turn consumers into fans? In other words, *how can a player become serious?*



All potential fans have within them a *desire*. We call it "*inner mantra*." It is who they are or who they long to be, and it is completely linked to their sense of *identity*. Brands that successfully connect with fans resonate their *brand essence* with the inner mantra of their audience.

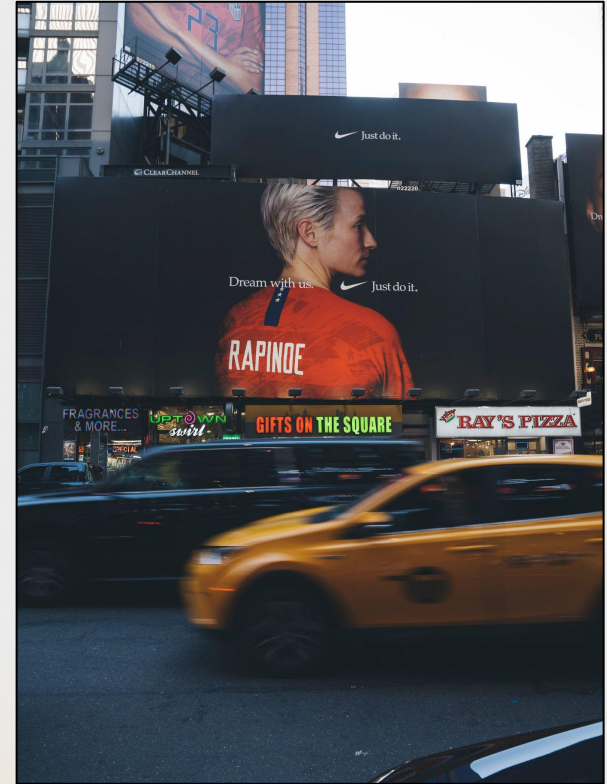


Photo by Nelson Ndongala
/ Unsplash

THE NORTH STAR OF FANDOM

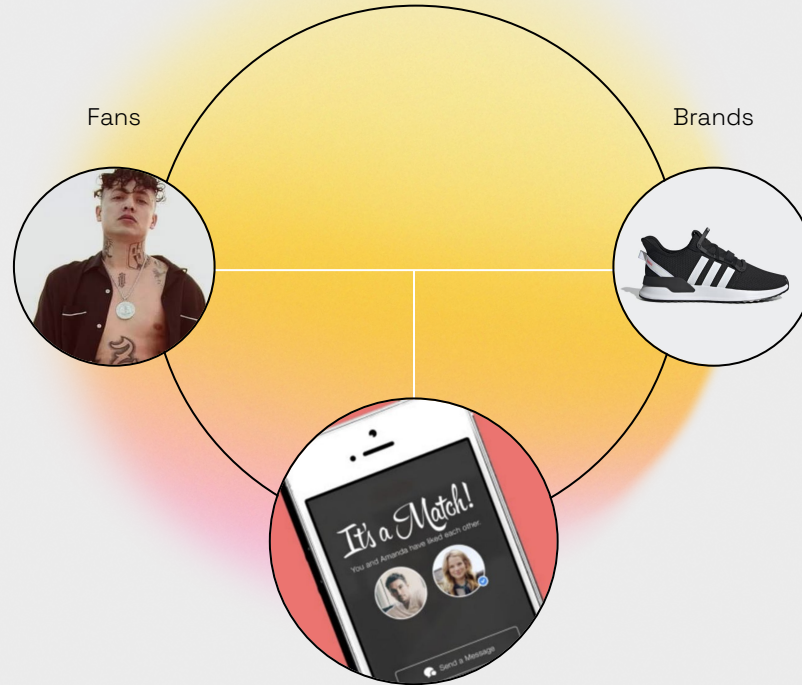


“Is my inner mantra
being echoed?”

A possible fan deciding what to love.

Inner Mantra

It is an internalized desire for self or confirmation of self. Humans make more accurate decisions when their context reaffirms this inner mantra.



“Do I have a DNA vibe
that connects with the
inner mantra of the
potential fans?”

DNA Vibe

Brand DNA refers to the *implicit and explicit values of the brand*. They reflect its ideology and reason to exist with a purpose beyond the product or service it offers.

Example



Fandom:
Stranger Things



Character:
Puzzle Decoder

"I connect the dots."

Inner Mantra:

"I'm always searching for the ultimate truth. I do find answers regarding the future in science fiction."

Subculture:
Geek Culture

Geek culture is a subculture of enthusiasts who are traditionally associated with obscure media (Japanese animation, science fiction, video games, etc.).

Brand DNA:

"Stranger Things represents all those things society is hiding. You can find a piece of truth here."

FANDOM TACTICS



FOR BRANDS

1. Think about the inner mantra of your fan.
2. Set your mood, DNA and semantic values.



Let's think about some tactics to use fandom as a *brand strategy*

Positive

These are tactics that have a social welfare approach with a propositional and energetic tone of voice of creation and optimism.

Generic

These are traditional tactics that work to support a positive tactic, but because they are already proven, they do not generate surprise in the audience.

Negative

These are risky tactics that generate a lot of awareness (and notoriety) for their atypical and politically incorrect tone.



The *ultimate* kit of love and war for a fandom

Check the actions and set your audience

Positive

- Ask for good reviews on social platforms
- Support political and social statements
- Create an internal language/slang in the audience
- Shoutout to break records
- Start a movement
- Trigger conversation through easter eggs
- Co-brand/Partnerships
- Create experiences or give free features
- Exclusive content

Generic

- Generate engagement through 1:1 conversation
- Generate loyalty promotions
- Set a name
- Meet & Greets
- Content that involves internal jokes or slang
- Connect with influencers

Negative

- Calling others out
- Incite conflict
- Audacious online behavior
- Trolling people and other brands
- Poke fun at a cause
- Get toxic with other fandoms
- Call on the support of your stans

Here are some examples of brands using
fandom tactics

NIKE

NIKE TRAINING CLUB APP



Example of tactic:

Create experiences or give free features

Providing friendly encouragement and motivation, Nike Training Club allows you to personalise your workout with options to Get Lean, Get Toned or Get Strong. Fully guided step-by-step training offers you the choice of 15, 30 and 45-minute workouts at the level that's right for your ability.

Here are some examples of brands using
fandom tactics

GUCCI

OSTERIA GUCCI



Example of tactic:
Co-brand/Partnerships

Gucci Osteria: a series of contemporary Italian restaurants found in world cities, each with its own identity. Capturing the youthful energy embodied in Gucci and its parallels with the philosophy of chef Massimo Bottura, they draw from the thread of legacy to stay contemporary in the present and drive forward into the future.

Here are some examples of brands using
fandom tactics

STELLA ARTOIS

THE ART OF SNACKING CONTENT



Example of tactic:
Exclusive Content

Stella Artois partners with chefs in Toronto, Buenos Aires and London through their "Table Turners" (#SatableTurners) series, which delves into specific scenarios experienced by restaurants. In their IGTV series "The Art of Snack," they explore the best snack bars and share them using a special illustration.

Here are some examples of brands using
fandom tactics

LIBRESSE

VIVA LA VULVA! BY LIBRESSE



Example of tactic:
Start a Movement

Libresse (Essity FemCare brand in the Nordics, known as Bodyform in the UK), the taboo-breaking brand that dared to normalise periods in 2017 with the *#bloodnormal* movement, released Viva La Vulva in Sweden and Denmark. The bold campaign celebrates the vulva in all its beautiful forms and fights against the myths, insecurities and stereotypes that women are subjected to when it comes to their genitals.

Here are some examples of brands using
fandom tactics

WENDY'S

WENDY'S TONE OF VOICE ON TWITTER



Example of tactic:
Incite conflict

Wendy's fast food chain might be named after a sweet little girl, but don't be fooled by that seemingly innocent exterior. Beneath that sign lurks a world of sass, as Twitter users everywhere have been discovering. The fast-food restaurant is well known for its hamburgers and chicken sandwiches, but they've also started to serve up double helpings of shut-the-hell-up to anybody brave enough to take them on via Twitter.

Fandom creates communities, and this can be a tremendous tool for social buzz.



So, *the power of fandom is not random.* Fandom is the power of love: *brand love.*

Mirror the narrative.

Semiotic productivity =
generating meaning and pleasure
from the objects
of their fandom.

"Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change" (1975),
the American political scientist Harold R. Isaacs





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Contact us to get started

