

ARE YOU TAPPING THE POWER OF FANDOM?



By Lorin Anderson, President

According to a ranking by FanSided, the current kings of “fandom” – from sports, entertainment, celebrities and brands—include the following among the top 10:

10) Harry Potter/JK Rowling, 9) LeBron James, 8) Ohio State Buckeyes, 7) The Walking Dead, 6) Netflix, 5) Dallas Cowboys, 4) Game of

Thrones, 3) Beyonce, 2) Star Wars, and... 1) Chicago Cubs.

Now those of you who know I'm from Northern Illinois probably also know I've been going to Wrigley Field since I was in kindergarten and the Cubs are the one team I have followed from the moment I got hooked on sports. For most of my 45 years of Cub-rooting fandom they stunk. But, every trip to the ballpark was a great day no matter the score because the ushers were so polite, the food smelled great, the view was amazing, the neighborhood was friendly and I was always with friends and family.

I've been to dozens of other professional sports venues—none have the aura of Wrigley and a Cubs game. The losses were disappointing but a day spent with the Cubs never fell short of being a great experience. I couldn't wait to return as soon as possible.

As Ken Blanchard wrote in his book, Raving Fans, a raving fan is “a customer who is so devoted to your products and services that they wouldn't dream of taking their business elsewhere and will sing from the rooftops about just how good you are.”

Does your teaching business create “raving fans?” You are in a business that thrives on strong word of

mouth referrals, so creating raving fans can be a great lever to pull to grow your business.

Raving fans would never consider taking their business elsewhere. That's a tall order in a highly competitive marketplace, but you can do it. Businesses with raving fans not only provide an exceptional product or service, they also provide an exceptional customer service experience. Follow these tips to create your own raving fans.

- 1) Keep your commitments.** If you tell a customer you are going to do something, you do it. Case closed.
- 2) Educate your customers.** Whether it's a personal phone call, a mailer, or through social media, you can create raving-fan customers by keeping them informed.
- 3) Be consistent.** Do you have a favorite restaurant that you can go to and always get a great meal? Customers like to do business with companies that are consistent. It takes the guesswork out of the equation and creates loyalty.
- 4) Acknowledge and fix problems.** If you avoid customer complaints or issues, customers will avoid you. Honoring your commitment, educating the customer on what can be done, and being consistent will keep them coming back.
- 5) The final secret, according to Blanchard, is to decide what you can do for the customers, and deliver it, plus 1 percent.** Ask yourself what little extra you could do to give yourself the plus 1 percent. You don't need to be 50 percent better. Just 1 little percent makes the difference between a satisfied customer, and a raving fan. Find where your 1 percent is hidden, and go out and deliver it. The raving fans you create will be singing your praises, and your business will grow.

Give the customers what they are asking for, and then give them 1 percent more. What a simple formula! What are you waiting for? **PG**

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