

# DEVELOPING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

When you think of your own life and the people to whom you are most loyal, what comes to mind? We are not simply loyal from the onset of a relationship. There are several elements that combine to afford you that sense of loyalty. As children, we develop a sense of trust with our parents and loved ones because we can count on them to provide for us. But that trust isn't innate. It's learned through the consistency of connection and support we've gotten from those people.

Connection, support, and consistency are what Sarah Robinson calls the "advanced evolution" of wildly successful communities. But there's a lot that has to happen first. Sarah lays out five building blocks to fierce loyalty in her book ["Fierce Loyalty: Unlocking the DNA of Wildly Successful Communities"](#). They are:

- 1. A Captivating Common Interest**
- 2. People Who Share This Common Interest**
- 3. A Set of Compelling Needs**
- 4. A Specific Organizational Structure**
- 5. Advanced Evolution**

As we dig a little deeper, you'll see how each of these elements applies to your creative endeavor.

## Captivating Common Interest

Ideally, that "captivating" common interest revolves around you, your Great Work, and/or how you show up in the world. Don't ignore the word "captivating" because it is a pivotal word. If you – or your Great Work – are just "meh," you can forget it. Mediocrity is a one-way ticket to nowhere.

Assuming your Great Work is awesome in the minds of your fans, your and your personality need to be equally "captivating" - which does not mean you need to be something you are not. Introverts and extroverts alike have found incredible success in their chosen



fields by being fully and completely themselves – warts, sparkles, and all. That means being courageous, peeling away the masks, and showing up in the way that only you can. As my favorite performer Judy Garland once said:



*“Always be a first rate version of yourself and not a second rate version of someone else.”*  
- Judy Garland

## People Who Share This Common Interest

Since we've established YOU and your Great Work are the common interest, now we've got to find the people who like you (and/or your Great Work). Not all of the people who share a love of you (the common interest) will be part of your community of Raving Fans, but this is the bigger pool of people from which your Raving Fans will emerge.

So who's in this “bigger pool”? These are not just your clients, customers, and fans, but also your evangelists: your colleagues and peers who talk you up, send you referrals, and make mention of you in their own work. They are your friends, your family, and even acquaintances that have shown appreciation for you or your Great Work.

Yes, this is a very large pool, and it's unreasonable to think you can market to or even reach all of them, but these people are part of your community nonetheless. Let's try a couple of exercises to help you narrow the pool a bit and get closer to your Raving Fans.



# EXERCISE: YOUR NUMBER ONE FAN

Think about the best compliment or testimonial you could get for your Great Work. What would your “Number One Fan” have to say? What makes them love you SO much? Stephen Covey tells us to “begin with the end in mind.” Use the space provided and write out the words your number one fan would use (in their voice, not yours), as if you were stepping inside their head for a minute and hearing exactly what they were thinking.



*This exercise helps you understand how exactly you wish to be perceived through the eyes of your Raving Fans. Use as many sheets as needed to complete the exercise.*



Congratulations! Completing the **Number One Fan** exercise is a huge step in getting clarity on who your Raving Fans really are. It helps you get in the head of your clients and customers and understand their words as well as how they will feel once they've had a chance to work with you or experience your Great Work.

You still may still have more work to do to refine this, but at least you're narrowing the pool and getting closer. Here's another exercise to help you come at this from a different perspective.

## TESTIMONIAL “MAD LIBS”

This is a simple, fill in the blank-style testimonial generator. It's a different approach to the previous exercise.

### Here's the sentence you can complete:

Before I experienced \_\_\_\_\_'s Great Work, you could describe my situation as (description). Now, I've seen the following changes: (examples). I would recommend this to someone who: (recommended audience).

Here's an example of an actual testimonial I received using a similar template:

**“Before** I started getting Lisa's power-packed newsletter, the best way to describe my business was...needing any and every bit of advice I could get! **Since I've started** using the great advice Lisa's taught me I have built a team of 25 consultants in less than 5 months! **Lisa's training is perfect for** people who are just starting out, like me, and for seasoned consultants who need a little boost in their business. THANK YOU LISA!!”



## EXERCISE:

### YOUR TESTIMONIAL “MAD LIBS”

Use this space to develop your own testimonial mad libs. Remember, you are trying to use the words that your Raving Fans would use to describe their situation and experience. This helps you understand your right audience even more deeply.

Before:

Now:

I Recommend This To:



*This exercise helps you identify the “hero's journey” of your Raving Fans, both before they experience your Great Work, as well as their results.*



## Compelling Set of Needs

Remember, not everyone who share your common interest are going to be your raving fans. Those folks will have a compelling set of needs that, when you meet them, will stimulate loyalty to your business:

**Belonging/Unity.** Not everyone wants to join a movement or start a revolution, but if there's resonance for who you are and what you stand for, Raving Fans want to align themselves with that as a means of feeling like they are a part of something bigger than themselves.

**Individuality.** Raving Fans don't just want to be another face in the crowd. Sure they're part of something bigger than themselves, but they also want to be seen, heard, and acknowledged for the individual person that they are.

**Safety.** It takes courage to show up fully as yourself and express your individuality. Even more so in a group setting (even a virtual one). Belonging stimulates a sense of like-mindedness, but rather than become part of some "steamrolling machine," Raving Fans want to know they can trust you. They want to feel a sense of security and certainty among like-minded people – whether that is you or other members of your growing fan base.

When you take the time to listen for these needs within your audience, and when you make the invitation to provide these things to your audience, your Raving Fans will become self-evident.

One of the ways I've done that is to create a "follow list" within my social media accounts to "hear" what my raving fans are saying when they are not talking directly to me. For example, I have a list inside Facebook that consists of no more than 20 people. I check the posts of those 20 people regularly to see what they are talking about, what interests them, and what they are looking for outside my business, so that I can better understand who they are and what matters to them. But I'm getting ahead of myself.



## A Specific Organizational Structure

When your Raving Fans start raising their hands, looking for belonging, individual recognition, and safety, you've got to have a means of providing those things. Robinson suggests three necessary "structures" to help meet those needs. How they show up in your business can vary. I've provided examples from my own business below:

**Connection.** The ability to connect with you, your company, and even other members of the community feeds the ability to stimulate trust and belonging. In my own business, I have several social media outposts where I am active, as well as a blog, a video channel, and regular email updates. I have made a point of being accessible, since that is part of my brand. Not everyone wants or needs this level of accessibility. One entrepreneur I know hosts a weekly video series and only communicates with her audience on her blog. All other company communications come through her team of VA's and support staff. While *she* is not accessible, but her company is.

**Support.** Knowing there is support available should an individual need it enhances trust, and also gives someone courage enough to show up as themselves and be recognized as an individual. The facebook list I mentioned earlier gives me a way to show support to my Raving Fans by re-sharing their content, posting words of encouragement on their feeds, or simply "liking" whatever they've shared that week..

**Consistency.** Knowing what to expect, as well as what's expected of them, is the key to establishing trust and augmenting a sense of belonging. When Raving Fans can rely on you to be consistent – in the delivery of a quality offering, in the way you show up and share your Great Work, as well as how you respond to their needs, they can relax and enjoy a deepening relationship with you. In my own business, I make a point to deliver a weekly email message to my audience, post regularly on selected social media channels, and do so in a way that is in integrity with my values. You won't see me showing up half naked on the interwebs - because it's not in alignment with



how I want people to remember me, my Great Work, or my brand. You *will* see me offering inspiration and education in a fun and approachable way for creative entrepreneurs, because that is what my work is all about.

If you haven't already, begin to consider how you are already showing up in your marketplace. Think about the response you've already gotten from your existing Raving Fans – and see if it matches up with the response you created for yourself in the previous exercises. If you're brand new, concentrate your thoughts around what you can begin to do to start generating the kind of response you created for yourself in the previous exercise. If it's true that you focus on expands, then it makes sense to focus on how you want to be seen in the world – as a creative, as an entrepreneur, and as a human being.

## Advanced Evolution

If you've gotten this far in Robinson's framework, you've probably created a community of fans and followers that enjoy your work, and maybe even enjoy who you are. And you might even like them, too!

Sadly, this is where many companies stop, and then scratch their heads wondering why this group of fans they've created constantly say they love hem, ***but don't actually buy anything.***

Can you relate?

I remember a period in my own business where I was creating lots of content – something new and useful every single week. Whether it was a song, a blog post, a video, or a training program, I was cranking out “free content” like a machine – and people were eating it up.

The problem came when it was time to make an investment and actually buy from me. I had essentially trained them to expect so much for free that I had unintentionally created a community of what I lovingly call “tire-kickers” – people who want to try before they buy, but always seem to have a “reason” for not buying from you.





To make matters worse, I often saw my potential clients choosing to do business with someone else, even after they'd gotten free content from me! That's when I realized, I was missing something.



*You are not running a non-profit. Even non-profits make money. If you are not making a profit, you have an expensive hobby that is running **you**.*

Here are Robinson's three elements that advance the evolution of a community of fans and followers into fiercely loyal Raving Fans:

**Pride.** When your fans have been connected to you and your company long enough (which is a subjective definition, unique to each member's needs), Raving Fans begin to see their participation as part of their identity outside your community. Think "I'm a Mac" or the fascinating lore behind [Lady Gaga's "Little Monsters"](#). This is where your Raving Fans start buying and wearing your merchandise in public, proudly displaying their membership in your fanbase like a badge of honor.

Think about the company logos you take pride in wearing, the places you brag about shopping at. Your Raving Fans behave much the same way. Are you giving them reasons and means to brag about you?

**Trust.** Raving Fans believe you have their back. They also support and encourage one another because of how deeply they trust who you are and what you have come to offer them on a consistent basis. Robinson says that when trust is deep, "a spirit of mutual reliance, faith and transparency dominates the community culture."



If you're just starting out, be careful to not over-invest yourself in your community. The danger here is that you'll spread yourself too thin as your clan of Raving Fans begins to grow. Taylor Swift was once told that if she wanted to sell a million records, she'd have to meet a million people. Swift would stick around for hours to sign autographs, have conversations, and connect with her fans. The strategy paid off, but not without costs. Today, Swift is often unable to stick around because the crowds are so big and the lines are so long after her shows. She simply wouldn't make it to the next stop on her tour! That leaves a lot of broken-hearted fans standing in long lines without the possibility of getting to connect with her like before.

Still, it's mostly a good problem to have because now she could choose to offer a paid level of fan club membership that includes an exclusive level of access to the artist before or after the show.

In my own business, I've offered different levels of sponsorship for my Raving Fans. While the average price for a digital song download sits around \$1, I can regularly charge \$32 or more through my sponsorships – and my Raving Fans gladly invest with me because they know they are getting more than just a song. For example, with my album [\*The Fine Line\*](#), a \$500-level sponsorship included an autographed copy of my album, the digital downloads, a copy of my book, as well as a new digital song every month for a year.

The idea here is to reward your very best clients and customers because, as the research continues to suggest that it's more costly to get new customers than it is to retain the ones you've already got. A study from Lee Resources International suggests that it costs five times as much.

**Passion.** This is when your Raving Fans have a burning desire to not only connect with you, your work, and the other fans, but to share your work as if they have a vested interest in doing so. In a way, they do. By sharing their excitement for your upcoming project, they position themselves as being “in the know” among their friends. They get to be the hero, the first to share



something they think is truly awesome with their community – a community that may never have heard of you before.

When you consider your business, what are ways you can advance the evolution of your fans? Logos, apparel, secret handshakes, and other insider tools are just the start. Spotting your clients, sharing their wins, and giving them public recognition even in small ways do a lot to stimulate a sense of pride – both in themselves and as it relates to you. Being consistent and doing what you say you'll do – and being true to who you say you are – make a big difference in the minds of your fans. Psychologically, Raving Fans associate those powerful, positive feelings with you and your Great Work. In short, it pays to stoke the fires of pride, trust, and passion.

For more on Fierce Loyalty, check out my three-part interview with Sarah Robinson:

[Part One: Business Evolution](#)

[Part Two: The Fierce Loyalty Model Explained](#)

[Part Three: Fierce Loyalty Accelerators](#)





## About Lisa

Known as "The Courage Catalyst," **Lisa Robbin Young** believes the best way for creative entrepreneurs to be successful is to be yourself - fully and completely, and define success on your own terms.

With more than 20 years as both a performing artist and entrepreneur, Lisa has helped hundreds of clients make more money, have more impact – and more fun – doing what they love. Lisa's mission is to help you Noble Empire and live an inspired life – without selling your soul.

An award-winning author and composer, Lisa has three albums to her credit, including ***The Fine Line***, a collection of pop-infused jazz and blues tunes. When she is not coaching clients, Lisa is currently working on a project to record 300 songs. She is also the author of the international best-selling book, ***The Secret Watch***, a success parable written specifically for entrepreneurs.



*This is the third module in a four-module training series.  
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