

SUPERFANS

The Easy Way to Stand Out, Grow Your Tribe, and Build a Successful Business

PAT FLYNN

PAT FLYNN is a podcaster, author, and the founder of several websites. He is best known for his *Smart Passive Income* blog, which has been featured in *Forbes*, the *New York Times* and many other publications. His *Smart Passive Income* podcast has been ranked as high as #3 for business podcasts in iTunes. Pat Flynn's first online business was GreenExamAcademy.com, which offers publications designed to help people pass the LEED exam in the architecture industry. Pat Flynn is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley.

The website for this book is at: www.yoursuperfans.com.

ISBN 978-1-77544-986-7

MAIN IDEA

The name of the game in business today is to create "superfans" – highly engaged customers who will go out of their way to buy and use everything you create. If you can create a tribe of superfans around the world, you future-proof your business.



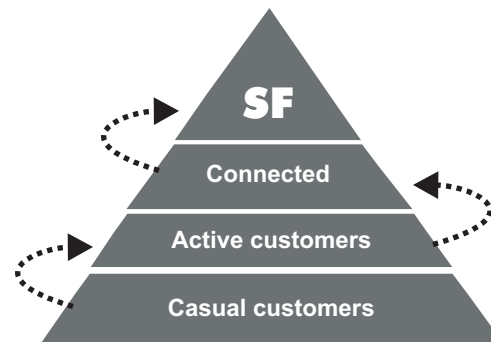
It's common to assume that superfans only exist for musicians, sports teams, and celebrities, but the reality is pretty much every business can create energized superfans. You just have to create a migration path for customers to move from being casual to active, active to connected, and then connected to superfans.

"Build a set of superfans, and no matter what happens, they'll always be there for you. Instead of spending money on ads, spend more time on people. Instead of worrying about the latest growth hacks and strategies, worry about identifying and addressing the biggest pains and problems in your target audience. Instead of figuring out how to optimize your conversion rates, figure out the rate at which you're able to connect authentically with your audience and make them feel special. Fans are important, but superfans are everything."

– Pat Flynn

"All you need is 1,000 true fans. They will drive two hundred miles to see you sing. They will buy the super deluxe re-issued hi-res box set of your stuff even though they have the low-res version. They have a Google Alert set for your name. They bookmark the eBay page where your out-of-print editions show up. They come to your openings. They have you sign their copies. They buy the t-shirt, and the mug, and the hat. They can't wait till you issue your next work. They are true fans."

– Kevin Kelly, senior editor, WIRED magazine, 2008



THE SUPERFAN JOURNEY

Phase 1 – Casual customers → Active customers Pages 2 - 3

Your casual audience is the largest segment of your customer base. These are people who buy your product or service at least once because of the value you provide. Your goal with this group is to create a trigger which signals they are in the right place, that there's something special for them, and that they should become part of your active audience – so casuals come back and do more business in the future.

Phase 2 – Active customers → Connected customers Pages 4 - 6

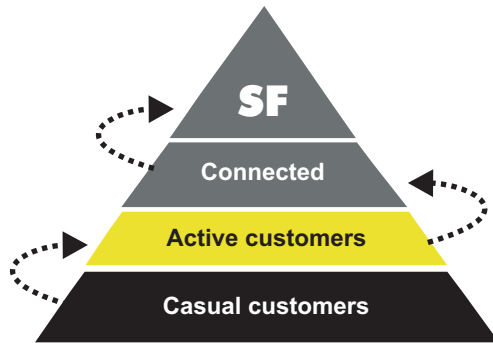
Your active audience know who you are and what you offer. Every time you create something new, they pause and make a decision whether or not to buy. They like your stuff – which is a great start – but they need convincing to act. Your goal with your active audience is to help them become part of your connected community.

Phase 3 – Connected customers → SUPERFANS Pages 7 - 8

Customers in your connected community hear from you regularly and also have conversations with each other. Community members start identifying with your mission, and generate the bulk of your comments, feedback, and survey results. These people love what you're doing, and will validate new ideas which will help your business excel and grow. Your goal with your connected community is to fan the flames of their interest so they voluntarily make the transition to superfans.



THE SUPERFAN JOURNEY



PHASE 1

Your casual audience is the largest segment of your customer base. These are people who buy your product or service at least once because of the value you provide. Your goal with this group is to create a trigger which signals they are in the right place, that there's something special for them, and that they should become part of your active audience – so casuals come back and do more business in the future.

There are five strategies you can use to turn casual customers into active customers:

- 1 LEARN THE LYRICS**
- 2 BREAK THE ICE**
- 3 CREATE QUICK WINS**
- 4 DRIVE THE DELOREAN**
- 5 RETURN EVERY HANDSHAKE**

"When you build a tribe of superfans, you're building a future-proof brand that will allow you to succeed, no matter what the business or technological environment looks like."

– Pat Flynn

1 LEARN THE LYRICS

To build a successful brand, you have to solve problems for your customers. Step one is to identify what those problems are, but equally important is step two, which is to know exactly how those people describe their problem. The language they use to describe their problems should become the lyrics you use all the time.

"If you can define the problem better than your target customer, they will automatically assume you have the solution."

– Jay Abraham, marketing guru

When you use the same language customers use, they're going to say to themselves: "These guys get me. They understand." That's a powerful way to differentiate your company because if you sing the right lyrics, people will stick with you. They will get activated.

To learn the right lyrics:

1. Find all the conversations which are already happening online and take note of how people are describing what they're going through. Take note of how people are talking about issues.
2. Ask some of your existing customers to describe their biggest challenges and then follow up with them to learn more. Reach out for feedback and identify the descriptive terms people are using.
3. Select ten customers and ask them to spend 10 - 15 minutes on a skype or video call with you talking about their biggest problems. Even better, make it your habit to speak with ten of your newest customers each month. Try and pick up on the emotions behind what they say. This will help you create better content, products, and services guaranteed.

A good starting point would be to use any or all of these methods to identify five key phrases your casual customers currently use to describe their problems. You then want to try and integrate those phrases or terms into your outgoing emails, social media posts, blog articles, and other content. Learn the lyrics your customers use rather than trying to force them to speak the language you use yourself.

2 BREAK THE ICE

One of the best ways to break the ice with your customers to share something which you would normally only mention to your friends. Inject some personality or a personal touch into what you're saying, and others will respond.

"It's not about B to B or B to C. It's about P to P: the person-to-person relationship."

– Chris Ducker, founder, Youpreneur.com

How do you do that? Some suggestions:

- Talk about your favorite sports team and how they're doing this year.
- Talk about your family, especially your kids. People will instantly relate to another parent going through similar challenges.
- Talk about your company's mascot. Video software company Wistia talks about Lenny their labrador all the time. It humanizes your company and makes you appeal to others who share that interest.
- Change topics and personalize them. Replace "10 Things You Should Know About Personal Development" with "10 Things Luke Skywalker Can Teach You About Personal Development." That will help you stand out from the other guys.
- Inject a fun 10-second fact about yourself at the start of each podcast. Even some random snippets can be the basis for people relating to you.
- Tie what you do into what you're a superfan for. Pat Flynn believes the greatest movie ever made was *Back to the Future*, so he mentions that fact in every keynote presentation he's ever given. He even turned up for one speech stepping out of an actual DeLorean driven on stage. Every time anything about *Back to the Future* gets mentioned in the media, he gets lots of messages from his fans who are in on the secret.

Just remember to be genuine about this rather than trying to measure the results. This isn't a ploy to try and fool people but a way to connect with like-minded individuals. Use the fact you're a human to your advantage.

3 CREATE QUICK WINS

A great way to engage customers is to create some small, quick wins for them. Give them immediate value and they will be hooked.

"Small wins fuel transformative changes by leveraging tiny advantages into patterns that convince people that bigger achievements are within reach."

– Charles Duhigg, author, *The Power of Habit*

If you play *World of Warcraft*, you might have noticed the first five minutes of the game are incredibly rewarding. You get bumped up to level two almost immediately, and that motivates you to try for level three and onwards. Game company Blizzard has attracted millions of players by giving quick wins.

So how can you create quick wins for your customers? There are several ideas worth implementing:

- Give people a challenge. Pat Flynn challenges his new customers to get their first hundred email subscribers in seventy-two hours and provides tools they can use to achieve that. (100emails.com) When people achieve that goal, they usually set bigger targets to go after.
- Load your first email with something a reader can do in five minutes which will give them a sense of achievement. A fly fishing company can talk about the best ways to tie a fly in less than 10 minutes and have readers post a picture of their creation in social media. That gets people engaged.
- Have a "Getting Started" section on your website which sets out how to take the first few steps. Pack it with resources and information customers will value. Motivate people to look forward to your next email.

If you can create a quick win which involves a wow! moment for your casual customers, there is a golden opportunity for them to become highly active.

SUPERFANS  **SF**

4 DRIVE THE DELOREAN

Admittedly, time travel hasn't quite been invented yet, but if you can tell a vivid story about what will happen when customers become more active, you achieve much the same kind of effect. Painting a picture of what life will be like if they DO take action as opposed to the future if they DON'T take action can be highly motivational.

When you paint a picture of what happens if they DON'T take action:

- Identify the specific problem you're solving.
- Amplify it by including some juicy details.
- Stress the one thing which is most likely to keep them up at night. Don't use fear or shame, but be exact about the consequences.

Once you've made the problem super-clear, you then tell a great story about the outcome if they DO move ahead. For this:

- Provide some case studies of the results and transformations others have experienced.
- Use some testimonials which prove conclusively what you're suggesting is right.
- Talk about people who have experienced dramatic transformations as a result of following your advice.

The bottom line is if you want to activate your casual audience, you need to take them on a preview journey of their possible futures. Bring the decision to life by incorporating some great before and after transformations. Just take care to make it about them, not about you.

"With superfans on your side, you strengthen your ability to serve the wider community; you have more ways, more support, more energy at your disposal to serve a much greater number of people and causes. Your fans want to feel like they're making an impact and are part of something bigger than themselves. When you facilitate and make that happen, you can make great change and service happen, and strengthen those superfan bonds in the process."

– Pat Flynn

5 RETURN EVERY HANDSHAKE

When you're meeting someone in person, people in just about every culture acknowledge each other with a handshake. The same applies online. If someone asks you a question online about one of your posts, and you refuse to answer them, it's kind of like having them extend their hand, and you refuse to shake. Don't leave them hanging.

Put another way, when someone comments on a post, sends you an email, or talks about something you've done, it's a do-or-die moment. If you ignore what they did, they will go away with a bitter taste in their mouth. But if you respond, you have an opening to create an immediate and vibrant superfan relationship with that person.

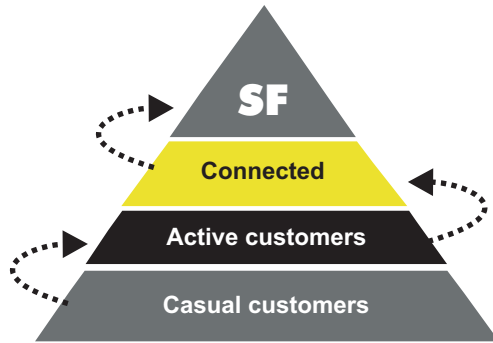
"I like my audience to know that I'm listening to them. For instance, I still accept comments on my blog, and try to reply to each one. Although it's become more difficult to do so as my audience has grown, it's a great way to show that I'm actually listening to my audience and interested in what they think about what I've written. Even though a small percentage of people actually leave comments, responding to each person who leaves a comment can make them feel special, like they matter and they weren't wasting their time by stopping by and sharing their thoughts. Plus, even though only a few people may be commenting on a post, many others are seeing these comments, and if my response to another community member is there for everyone to see, that's a positive outcome for the brand as a whole."

– Pat Flynn

If you're just starting out, this will be easier to do, and people will be bowled over that you've responded to their comments. It will signal that you're listening to them. Just a simple acknowledgment of their comments can create a powerful impression.

You can also gear up to send people direct messages using video. That's a great way to impress your followers and activate them. Showing that you have systems and resources in place to respond will also make you stand out from the crowd.

THE SUPERFAN JOURNEY



Your active audience know who you are, and what you offer. Every time you create something new, they pause and make a decision whether or not to buy. They like your stuff – which is a great start – but they need convincing to act. Your goal with your active audience is to help them become part of your connected community.

The eight strategies which you can use to convert active customers into connected customers are:

- 1 LET THEM TAKE A SHOT
- 2 LET THEM DECIDE
- 3 CREATE A CHALLENGE
- 4 OPEN THE FACTORY DOORS
- 5 STAGE A GIG
- 6 GIVE THEM A NAME
- 7 BRING THEM TOGETHER
- 8 MAKE THEM SHINE

"Within the connected community is where voluntary engagement happens. The group starts to form its own identity. People feel like they want to belong."
 – Pat Flynn

1 LET THEM TAKE A SHOT

If you post an engaging question and then let your audience or your community take a shot at answering it, that can generate a groundswell of new energy. Ask your audience for an answer, create a safe forum for healthy debate, and people will start to feel like they're part of something good they can relate to.

To get started, keep it simple. Choose a topic that's relevant to your audience. Tell a quick story, and then ask: "What would you do?" If you can add some sort of animated gif, all the better. Then sit back and comment as people scramble to give you their best answer.

The perfect example of the power of this strategy is scientist and entertainer Steve Spangler. In 2007, he started his own YouTube channel called *Sick Science*. There, he would post a video of himself doing a science experiment. He averaged around six to ten comments on each of those videos at first.

Then in 2008, he made a small tweak. He would post a video of a science experiment, and then instead of revealing how the science worked, he put a question at the end of the video: "In the comments below, tell me how you think this works." His comments jumped almost immediately to more than 850 per video, and lots of healthy debates broke out among his fans. Within a few years, *Sick Science* became one of YouTube's "100 Original Content Providers" which ultimately led to him being fully funded.

"The crux of this strategy is to ask your audience for an answer—even if you already know it yourself. Now, you might be worried that by asking for an answer it may seem like you don't know the answer yourself. That's not true. You're simply allowing your audience to talk amongst each other, which you may find to be valuable, because—guess what—your audience likely knows a thing or two! You and the rest of the community can learn from each other and have healthy debates about things. Your role is to foster a safe environment for this to happen, one that would be hard for people to find elsewhere. This strategy is beautiful because it's about letting people in and allowing them to tell part of the brand's strategy."

– Pat Flynn

2 LET THEM DECIDE

One of the best ways to make your user community more engaged is to let them co-create your next generation product. Make it feasible for them to come up with products and solutions they think would be incredible.

LEGO has done this exceptionally well. In 2008, LEGO partnered with Japanese company Cuusoo Systems to create a platform where LEGO creators can post their creations. Anything which attracts more than 10,000 votes on that platform then becomes eligible to be manufactured as a real LEGO product and for royalties to be paid to the creator.

"While we have 120 staff designers, we potentially have probably 120,000 volunteer designers we can access outside the company to help us invent."

– Jorgen Vig Knudstorp, former CEO, LEGO

Did this work? LEGO went from being in \$800 million in debt in 2003 to becoming the world's largest toy company with a valuation of \$7.6 billion in 2018 on the strength of this and other ideas. Fortunately though, this is a strategy which also works for the small guys as well.

Simply posting something on social media and asking people to vote on their best choice can be incredibly engaging. The possibilities are endless:

- If you're writing a book, ask your customers to vote for what they want to happen next.
- If you own a candy company, you can have your customers help you select new flavors.
- If you sell clothing, have your audience tell you what to make next.
- If you have a podcast, have listeners vote on who you should interview.

All of these ideas (and more) will make people feel a part of your brand – which has to be good for you. Right? The reality is fans love it when you give them a chance to be part of your decision-making process. They will feel like they're part of the family, and that your brand represents their values. They feel more connected, and that takes them a little further on the path to becoming your superfans of the future.

3 CREATE A CHALLENGE

Challenges are a great way to turn your active customers into a connected community. Simple Green Smoothies (founded by two stay-at-home mums in 2008) added 400,000 Instagram followers through free 30-day green smoothie challenges. The recipes get posted, along with an ingredients shopping list, and then members start talking amongst themselves about how smoothies are transforming their health.

“For thirty days, we are actually in this with you. Our community happiness specialist, Jen, and I, we’re responding to all of the comments. We are engaging with our community; we are cheering them on and we are like all hands on deck, like every email, every comment that is posted on Facebook and Instagram, we are answering their questions or we’re in it for this set time. It is committing to, ‘Here is the start day and here is the end day, and we are in this together.’”

— Jadah Sellner, co-founder

Simple Green Smoothies now has two best-selling cookbooks, a top-rated recipe app, and an incredibly engaged following of fans to its credit. The engine for its growth still remains that 30-day challenge, which happens live and in real time.

“You can’t automate connection and outsource authenticity, and not to say that you can’t transform someone’s life through automating things, but I think there’s something special when you are in it in real time. We’re sending those emails. We can automate schedules when the email will go out each week, but we’re just in it together as a community from the start date to the end date, and that’s how we are able to fully show up with them in that time.”

— Jadah Sellner

“When you create a space for someone to succeed in a supportive community of others trying to do the same, you’re giving them a great way to reach their goals and become a tight-knit member of the clan.”

— Pat Flynn

4 OPEN THE FACTORY DOORS

Pure and simple, humans are always fascinated by how things work. The TV show *How It’s Made* has been screening on network television for thirty-one seasons and more than 400 episodes—and it’s still going strong.

You can do the same. You can take people behind the scenes and open your factory up for public tours. This will help turn your active audience into engaged fans of your connected community in four ways:

1. It will help your audience appreciate the quality and care behind your product. They will see the love and care you put into creating something great.
2. Exclusive behind-the-doors access will make your audience feel unique and special. They will be energized by being made insiders.
3. You can create some human connections between your audience and the people behind your brand. People buy solutions, but they connect with other people. Opening your factory doors seeds your next generation of superfans.
4. You give your audience something to share with their friends. A factory tour gives them bragging rights which in turn supercharges their connections with you.

There are no downsides to taking people behind the velvet rope and giving them exclusive factory tours. Doing this builds a stronger brand, and a more engaged community.

“If possible, try to open your doors related to something trackable each month! This will keep your audience hooked and excited to see how things progress over time. Perhaps it’s miles ran, or carbon emissions avoided, or how much debt paid off. These types of numbers, especially when related to your business, are inspiring and definitely make people feel special for knowing insider info!”

— Pat Flynn

5 STAGE A GIG

Live events can take community engagement to new levels. The energy which can be generated by a live event can’t be captured any other way. A live event (a gig) can be a game-changer for your community.

“Gigs can also take many forms. You could host a training workshop at a local coworking space for a small group of people. You could get a booth on the expo floor during a conference in your niche market to show off your product. Or you could speak on stage at an event. And gigs don’t have to happen live and in person—they can happen live and online, too.”

— Pat Flynn

You may or may not have the resources to bring together a stadium full of fans for a live event, but small events can be equally powerful. It’s feasible to use Facebook Live, YouTube Live, Twitch, Periscope, or other live-streaming platforms to bring your community together and build strong bonds. The key is to do live events regularly so you build momentum.

Lots of companies use an annual live event at a convention center to grow their user communities. The pressure of putting on a live event is similar regardless of its size. Just make sure the event is not about you. Instead, you want to use a live event to bring your community together, and let them energize each other.

“Putting on an event, big or small, can be a little nerve-racking. It’s live, so you actually have to interact and be present, and truly care about the experience of the end user. But, don’t worry—going live, especially online, is not as scary as you might think—and this is coming from someone who avoided the stage and even online streaming for years because I was so scared. Now, it’s something I do regularly. Online, people usually won’t expect you to have everything nailed down. In fact, sometimes it’s the random occurrences, like kids in the background or random things falling off the wall, that make those streams more special. It’s closer to real life, and that’s what will make people love you even more.”

— Pat Flynn

6 GIVE THEM A NAME

Star Trek fans proudly wear the label of Trekkies. Taylor Swift fans are called Swifties. Justin Bieber has Beliebers, Harry Potter generated Potterheads, and Lady Gaga's followers are known as Little Monsters. And that doesn't even take into account Raider Nation (Oakland Raider's fans) and the Seattle Seahawks who refer to their fans as The 12th Man.

"Now, you might be thinking that naming your community isn't possible because you're not a movie, musician, sports team, or TV show. Not true—you can and very much should Give your audience a name! Many YouTubers, for example, have given their fan communities clever monikers. You could try something humorous, like Grace Helbig, an American comedian and YouTuber with three million subscribers who named her community the Gracists. Or something dorky, like the Vlogbrothers, John and Hank Green, who call their fans the Nerdfighters—and they even have an insignia to go along with it. Or there's the straightforward approach, like the one taken by PewDiePie, the most popular YouTuber of all time with more than ninety million subscribers and counting, whose band of devoted followers is named simply the Bros."

— Pat Flynn

Give your user community a name and then hold some meetups (real world or virtual) and you can foster a strong sense of identity which will fuel great engagement. A great name gives your people something to rally around, and makes them more close-knit and engaged.

"I believe the best and most lasting businesses are the ones that focus on serving first. Money is important, but guess what? At its best, money is simply an amazing byproduct of building a small but potent set of superfans. You don't need millions of dollars, or millions of people following you to build a successful business and lead a successful life. You just need a core group of raving fans who will follow you wherever you go."

— Pat Flynn

7 BRING THEM TOGETHER

Gigs are great, but they're planned and scripted. They have an agenda. Another way to turn active customers into part of a connected community is to have a meetup. Everyone gets together at a restaurant to chat and enjoy making new connections. Or you can structure meetings like a mastermind group. The magic of meetups is their flexibility and spontaneity.

The perfect example of this is the Adult Fans of LEGO (AFOL) which holds regular real-world meetups in countries right around the world. LEGO aficionados get together and do some collaborative or competitive building and then socialize. AFOL also runs auctions for rare and collectible LEGO sets. Fans get to spend time with people who are just like themselves. AFOL is a fantastic way for people to blend their passion for LEGO with their interest in being part of an active and engaged community.

"Every month, I host an entrepreneur meetup in San Diego. It's called the San Diego Entrepreneurs Group, and it started in 2016. We have between thirty and fifty people show up each month, plus an annual bigger event before a conference that happens each year in San Diego. (Those larger meetups have up to four hundred people). It's been amazing to help people feel like they're a part of something, and to feel like they're with their people. It's a small commitment, and it's free (hosted at a local WeWork coworking space), but it's actually helped my business. Several people have invited others into the group, and it's a great way for me to stay connected to my audience."

— Pat Flynn

When you bring people together and assist them to connect, you can set in motion something which becomes bigger than you or your company. These gatherings are great places for new friendships and new collaborations to form. These meetups are places where you can continue to learn and grow, assisted by your peers. The connections which get made can end up being invaluable and irreplaceable. This is the right stuff for growing superfans.

8 MAKE THEM SHINE

Another great way to grow superfans is to bring the limelight to active audience members who are doing great work. You can and should go out of your way to feature your community members in everything you do.

Look at what Chubbies has achieved in this regard. Chubbies makes men's shorts. Their ideal customer is a weekend barbecuer who also enjoys parties by the lake. To build their fan base, they simply featured their community members doing what they do.

"In the world of Instagram, one of the things that we saw from day one is that when people got the product, they started sending us photos. It was amazing, and they're just the most diverse, ridiculous group of people. That's the fuel for our Instagram feed. So if you look at our Instagram feed, for 95 percent of all the posts in there, those are customers."

— Tom Montgomery, founder, Chubbies

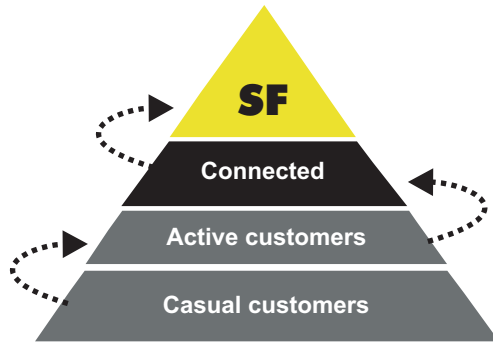
As simple as that may sound, Chubbies fans go crazy whenever the company releases a new product. Since 2015, the company has also gone out of its way to hire male models who are actual customers and fans of the brand. That authenticity and showcasing members of the community has seen the company's sales and revenues grow by leaps and bounds.

"If you have customers, showcase them in some way using your product. But don't make it about your product—make it about their experience: where they were before, and where they are now. Show examples of things that have happened to them since using your product. Instead of you selling your product, your customers will do it for you, but in a natural, organic, nonaggressive way."

— Pat Flynn

The Foo Fighters are famous for letting their fans come onstage and jam with the band at their live concerts. Those moments generate hundreds of thousands of comments on social media for the band. Open the stage and highlight the work of your best customers. All your other customers will love you for it.

THE SUPERFAN JOURNEY



Customers in your connected community hear from you regularly, and also have conversations with each other. Community members start identifying with your mission, and generate the bulk of your comments, feedback, and survey results. These people love what you're doing, and will validate new ideas which will help your business excel and grow. Your goal with your connected community is to fan the flames of their interest so they voluntarily make the transition to superfans.

To help members of your connected community make the final step to becoming superfans, there are at least four strategies you can use:

- 1 REMEMBER THE LEMONS**
- 2 UNEXPECTED MESSAGES**
- 3 GET THEM INVOLVED**
- 4 OFFER PLATINUM ACCESS**

"No matter your size, you can also use your following to help serve the community outside of the arena of your brand, to move your superfans to make positive change in the world."

– Pat Flynn

1 REMEMBER THE LEMONS

If you're a server in a restaurant, and a regular customer always comes in and asks for three lemons and a glass of water, you should take note. If you then bring out those lemons the next time they come in without being asked, you can create a customer for life.

In a similar vein, if you can find ways to provide individualized service to the people in your community, you can fuel their transition from customers into superfans. Even something as simple as remembering their name and greeting them whenever they come into your place of business can be powerful.

"Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language."

– Dale Carnegie

Remembering something about your customer's business, their family, or their hobbies can be awe inspiring for them. It's not so much the details that you remember that's important as the fact that you went out of your way to take note of something that matters to them. That's what this strategy is all about.

"Be human. Be curious about people. Show that you're excited to see them, and that you care about their needs and interests and the details of their lives. They'll notice, and they'll love it."

– Pat Flynn

"I love to put this strategy into action when I attend live events. When I'm at a conference, I always make sure to look out for people in my audience I recognize, whether it's folks who've bought my courses, active members of the Facebook community, or people I've talked to over email. It's as simple as remembering who people are and making your interactions with them about them, not you."

– Pat Flynn

"The rare individual who unselfishly tries to serve others has an enormous advantage."

– Dale Carnegie

2 UNEXPECTED MESSAGES

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, people used to look forward to receiving e-mail. America Online became famous for its "You've got mail" announcement. Today if your computer advised you each time you received e-mail, you'd switch it off as fast as possible.

To generate superfans, it's now feasible for you to send people not just e-mail but small, quick, personalized videos. Apps like Bonjoro.com enable you to send new customers personalized video messages via social media. If you get into the habit of sending your new customers a small, unexpected video thank-you along with some quick instructions on getting started, that can transform connected customers into superfans.

"Realize that this isn't anything innovative. Anyone can send anyone a video for any reason—but it's not a strategy a lot of people and brands are putting to good use yet, so the novelty factor is still high. Video still offers the opportunity to stand out from the crowd."

– Pat Flynn

Video messages in 2019 are what email used to be back in the 1990s. If you send someone a video message, they're going to open it because they don't receive many. People will consider you've done something unusually thoughtful, and they will be self-motivated to tell others about what you did. That's the essence of becoming a superfan.

The great thing about this strategy is there's no absolute right or wrong way to send videos out. You can send as many as you like, as often as you like, using any of the tools which are available. If a fan is impressed and speaks up on social media, the few minutes it takes you to generate a personalized video can generate an impressive number of comments, likes, posts, upvotes, endorsements, and so on.

"Individualized video messages are an awesome and easy way to personalize and humanize your interactions with your connected community and Give them even more than they expect from you. Going above and beyond like this is a huge key to making people into superfans."

– Pat Flynn

3 GET THEM INVOLVED

A great strategy for turning members of your connected community into superfans is to give them a little bit of a say in the direction you take. If you do this, they will feel a sense of ownership and pride because they have invested their time, thought, and energy into what's going on.

Ideally, you want to create a superfan journey so good people can start off as volunteers or casual customers, then evolve into engaged and valued members of your community, and then "if they're interested" into administrators and so on. The ultimate end of this journey is you should make it your policy to hire your fans and make them a permanent part of your workforce and your executive team.

The idea here is to let the cream find its way to the top. You've got to be careful not to put out a general call like "Who would like to be my community leader?" That will bring a flood of people with their own agendas. Instead, you should look for those who are already contributing a lot to the community, and are obviously enthusiastic about being involved. Really good people will self-select themselves for bigger roles.

Another good strategy is to let people volunteer for events so you can get to know them personally. You can see who has fire in their belly and the capacity to lead out quite quickly. You can then continue the conversation with the right people by email or social media. Make sure your volunteers get great value for their time, and that you recognize them publicly, and that you're not taking advantage of them.

"When you make an intentional decision to cultivate your connected community into a legion of superfans, giving people the honor and responsibility of serving as a member of your team and a steward of your community will seem like a natural step. It's really a wonderful thing when your fans become integral members of your team."

– Pat Flynn

4 OFFER PLATINUM ACCESS

A great catalyst for growing superfans is to offer exclusive VIP access to something you're doing. This is the ideal way to satisfy, delight, and reward your superfans.

Spotify does this well. It has a "Fan's First" program, which provides Spotify's fans with early sale concert tickets, special ticket offers, exclusive merchandise, backstage access at events, and more. By doing this, those people almost invariably end up becoming superfans of Spotify as well.

"When you give your people special, platinum access, to anything, be it backstage at a concert or insider info that isn't public knowledge yet, it gives those people a huge reason to share."

– Pat Flynn

Whenever you create an event, make sure you also build in a VIP package which adds real, tangible value to the overall experience. For example:

- Include a lunch with your keynote speakers.
- Provide a special entrance to the event for VIP users only, and early access to the venue or front-row seating.
- Offer photo opportunities with high-profile attendees.
- Provide cool swag like T-shirts, bags, pins, action figures, signed books, etc.
- Run exclusive Q&A sessions for your VIPs.
- Offer behind-the-scenes experiences.
- Include lunch or dinner and snacks.

"By now, you've likely already developed some superfans, so give them the VIP experience they crave—and give the other dedicated fans in your audience a superfan nudge, something to look up to and plan for the next time they attend your event."

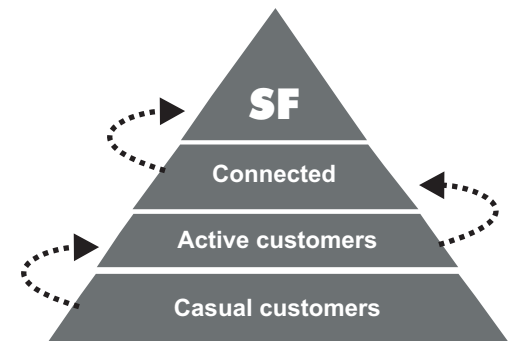
– Pat Flynn

Just one word of caution about the concept of creating superfans. There are some potential pitfalls which might crop up when you start building superfans. Specifically:

- Having a group of people who are watching your every move can feel a little spooky at times.
- You might let the fame and money go to your head and turn into an egomaniac.
- You might lose sight of the fact you've got to keep serving your customers week-in and week-out.
- Some of the things your superfans do might reflect badly on you.
- Your audience might become so big you simply cannot respond to everybody.
- You might end up feeling burned out.
- Your fans might show up at your house.

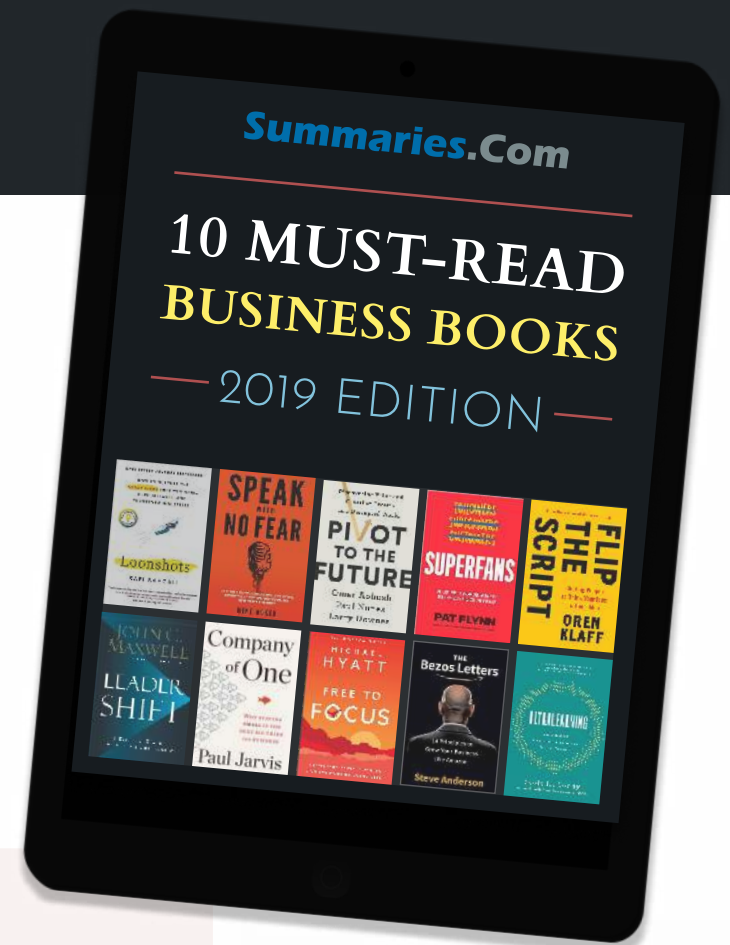
Make sure you don't ever use your home address for anything or post any video which shows any items (like vehicle license plates) which people can use to get your home address. Also turn off location sharing on social media. Be smart and keep your family safe.

Those concerns aside, superfans can provide you with very positive experiences. There's nothing like meeting someone who has achieved great things with your help. Enjoy it. Figure out how to add even more value all the time. Just remember to stay grounded, and don't let it go to your head. Building a solid core of superfans is the ideal way to future-proof your business. Your superfans await.



FUEL YOUR BRAIN AND **IGNITE** YOUR CAREER WITH

THE 10 MUST-READ BUSINESS BOOK SUMMARIES OF 2019



These summaries will help you...

- > Get a high-level view of the **key concepts** in each book;
- > Learn from the author's 20+ years of experience, in just 30 minutes reading;
- > Get fresh ideas, strategies & motivation that could be **worth millions** to you;
- > Follow emerging trends & **catch the wave** before your competitors do;
- > Become a self-directed learner. The more you learn, the more you'll earn.



ACHIEVE MORE IN YOUR BUSINESS, CAREER & PERSONAL LIFE

Claim your **FREE** copy of 10 must-read summaries at summaries.com/2019