

## From liking to love: how fan pages build brands

Millward Brown and Dynamic Logic joined forces with the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) to better understand how social media fan pages build brands, and what it takes to optimize them. The first phase of the study was interviews with 24 digital marketers from multinational companies. The second phase was interviews with 3,687 brand fans from 24 different fan pages. These pages were mainly global, US and European pages from major global advertisers, covering the confectionery, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, personal care and telecoms categories.

This study does not claim to provide definitive learning about how fan pages should be used by all brands but it does provide fascinating initial insights into what drives value. More research on a greater number of fan pages will enable us to develop these learnings.

Advertisers will need to place this study alongside existing published and internal research about how best to recruit and retain fans, the media value generated by fans, the tone required to build successful long-term relationships as well as considering their own specific KPIs.

### Phase 1 – learning from talking to marketers

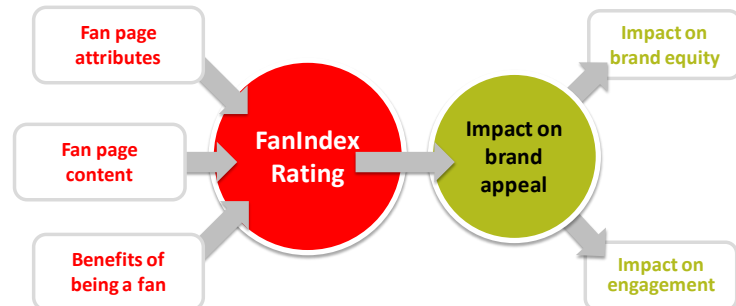
- Social media is clearly a growth area – almost all marketers (96%) expect to spend more time and money on social media in the next 12 months. This is despite the fact that most are not yet sure of the return on investment ( 50% unsure, 23% good return, 18% average, 9% poor)
- Measurement has to date focused mainly on the challenge of generating an audience (hence metrics such as number of fans and visitation frequency). Web analytics and buzz monitoring have so far been the primary evaluation techniques – few respondents have yet undertaken more in-depth attitudinal research.
- Once fans are recruited, the most popular content formats to keep them engaged are videos, contests, new product information, conversation and photos.

The ‘value of a fan’ means a variety of different things to marketers. Overall, WFA members are clear that fan pages are mainly about generating insight, advocacy, loyalty and engagement, and much less about increasing either short or long-term sales. This understanding shaped phase 2 of the research among fans, where we set out to explore exactly how marketers might be able to optimise their pages to deliver these objectives.



## Phase 2 - methodology

- Having talked to marketers about what they were trying to achieve, in Phase 2 we spoke to brand fans about the perceived value of the fan pages. Surveys were launched directly from the fan pages for 24 major brands. Based on these responses, an overall FanIndex Rating was calculated. This one-number score comprises fans' overall opinions of the fan page, the likelihood that they will return in future, the level of advocacy it generates and a rating of how much attention they pay to brand posts in their news feed. Ratings of specific fan page attributes, content and fan benefits have been used to identify which elements might improve the overall rating. Further questions explore how the page is improving brand appeal, equity and engagement over time.



## Phase 2 – learning from talking to fans

- The number of fans is important for a fan page, but it is not a surrogate for how well the page itself is performing. While there is a correlation between the FanIndex rating and the number of fans, some relatively small pages achieved above average ratings, and the page with the largest number of fans that was studied had one of the lowest overall ratings.
- The more brands put in to their fan pages, the more they get out in terms of brand response. Among the fan pages studied, as a general rule the brands that posted more frequently generally achieved higher attitudinal ratings and were more lively communities.
- Among the attributes, content and benefits that fan pages can deliver, there are five health checks: regular posts, trustworthy brand news, new product information, contests and special offers. These are elements that most fan pages are achieving.
- Fan pages that can also deliver either a sense of fun, variety, innovation, interactivity or community have a better chance of standing out from other pages and generating a stronger brand response. These elements had a high correlation with our overall FanIndex rating, but are not currently being delivered by many fan pages. There is no silver bullet and brands may find it tough to deliver strongly on all of these. It may be best to focus on those areas that fit most closely to the brand objectives.

