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Is it just me, or are we witnessing a vigorous and sustainable shift in marketplace muscle? Are smaller groups of hardcore fans using their collective clout – made possible by the state-of-the-art technologies; nearly unilateral worldwide broadband connectivity; increased reliance on mobile devices, and a more open Internet culture – to ensure that corporate marketing executives endure more sleepless nights?

Will this phenomenon continue to grow and demand that companies alter their “blockbuster” business models and begin to mine smaller groups of consumers who won’t tolerate traditional “dumbing down” and mass appeal tactics?

I couldn’t help ponder the answers to these questions as I reread a USA Today article that was published this past summer (July 25, 2007) on “fanboys” - and the less frequently cited, “fangirls” - those elusive 30-something males who are already driving the music and movie industries.

Their purchasing clout may be intimidating to some but I believe they’re a symbol of a cultural phenomenon unlike any we’ve seen in the recent past. They remind us that alone we cannot ban a crummy movie, force a dishonest huckster out of business, or draw the nation’s attention to a musical genius... but together we drive the economy.

Change will continue to occur rapidly... only this time it will be person by person. Increasingly, consumers will use powerful and easily accessed web-based tools to expand their social networks and share interests with likeminded people worldwide. And the companies that prosper will be those that forgo their “one-size-fits-all” business models and work hard to discover and meet the needs of previously ignored sub-segments within their target audiences.

What do you think?

To Your Success

David and Mary Scarborough