

A young girl with dark hair tied in a bun with a white scrunchie is laughing joyfully, her head tilted back and eyes closed. She is holding a large red cup with a white lid and a red straw. She is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and white overalls. The background is dark with many small, bright green circular lights or confetti floating around. In the blurred background, a man with a beard is also smiling.

Deloitte.

Unlocking value from fan data:
Perspectives from Deloitte professionals

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Unlocking value from fan data: Perspectives from Deloitte professionals

Fan communities represent a potentially untapped revenue and marketing opportunity for media and entertainment companies. Deloitte research shows that engaged fans consistently spend money on their favorite sports teams, music artists, and entertainment franchises, and they also share their enthusiasm via social media.

According to survey data from [Deloitte's Digital Media Trends](#) and [2025 State of Social Research](#):



40%

of consumers express
their fandom through
purchases



roughly
50%

of Gen Z respondents
that being part of a fan
community is important to
their identity



80%

of consumers surveyed
said they've discovered
brands they like as a
result of their fandom



66%

of consumers want
brands to engage with
the fan communities
they belong to

Devoted fans can be highly loyal and profitable customers, but many companies don't have strategies for fan engagement. By analyzing fan behavior and melding that information with market data, companies can improve content ROI and increase revenue. To learn how, we caught up with Wenny Katzenstein, managing director

for Tech, Media & Entertainment, and Elizabeth Ellerhorst, senior manager and sports strategy leader, both with Deloitte Consulting LLP, to learn how media and entertainment (M&E) companies can make the most of fan data.

Harnessing fandom for business growth

Focusing on fans and enhancing data processes to learn more about them can be a game changer. Shifting the client mindset from general consumers to fans is often the initial element of a client engagement, Katzenstein explains, followed by a deeper dive into the client's data gathering and analytics processes.

"In our discussions with clients, a recurring theme is the untapped potential hidden in fan data," she says. Many may have broad consumer strategies, but they may not have considered the opportunities that a dedicated fan strategy can unlock. "One question is, do they understand the power of having a fan strategy? And then, what are the practical steps? How do you assess whether you have the necessary data, and what insights can you derive from it?"

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**Wenny Katzenstein, Managing Director
Tech, Media & Entertainment**

Driving revenue with fan data



The insights that accrue from fan and audience analysis can allow media and entertainment companies to improve ROI, boost profits, and enhance their own spending.

"Focusing on fan strategy can help get people to spend more time and even more money on your brand," Katzenstein says. "There are also ways to monetize a company's existing content portfolio without creating anything net-new. We call it 'shopping your own closet.' You can also find ways to link your existing IP together so that you get a much stronger, full life cycle within your portfolio." Social is one growing area where content can enjoy a "second life." "I think social, particularly as it relates to our younger audiences, is important," Katzenstein says. "Social isn't just a way for people to consume content; it's where they create content and talk about it. It's a breeding ground for fan community and can be a great opportunity to monetize."

Challenges to achieving a unified fan view



“Imagine the difference between an experience with a company that knows nothing about you and one that understands your preferences, past purchases, and can predict what you might want next.”

**Elizabeth Ellerhorst, Senior Manager
Tech, Media & Entertainment**

Once they commit to a fan strategy, Katzenstein says, one challenge many M&E firms face is data availability. “Companies may be disintermediated and not have access to first-party data. Sometimes they’re beholden to streaming services or distributors for performance data. There may be internal obstacles to bringing those pieces together, whether it’s permissioning or regulations.”

When those obstacles are cleared and data is identified, gathered, and centralized, companies should reconcile data from different silos to arrive at a single source of truth. “They can set up a data lake or a customer data platform where duplicates can be weeded out, and then create a centralized system or perspective to ingest all that data and combine it,” Ellerhorst says. “It’s really like connecting the dots—being able to know that the Wenny living in five disparate systems is actually one Wenny, and you should be able to understand all of her engagement across the brand versus five separate accounts that never talk to each other.”

When the first-party data is ready for analysis, third-party information can add 360-degree context. “Having a little bit more data than the competition may not be enough,” Ellerhorst says. Without external data, companies can have a skewed view of their total addressable market. “Imagine the difference between an experience with a company that knows nothing about you and one that understands your preferences, past purchases, and can predict what you might want next,” she adds.

Diversifying data sources for better decisions

Third-party data can help companies see how their fandoms spend and interact in other online contexts, creating a fuller picture of their buying behavior. “Your fans engage daily with airlines and rideshare apps and retailers who know them as buyers,” Ellerhorst explains. “They’re using that data to drive incremental revenue and deepen relationships. Any way you can leverage that to personalize your fan engagement can be a win.”

Katzenstein points out that third-party data can allow companies to identify unexpected partnerships, if the data shows that a certain subset of fans shows a high affinity for a certain product or service. “Take the example of a traditional studio,” she says. “Let’s open up the aperture of where fans overlap with things that aren’t typically

in your purview—like pharmaceuticals or other consumer packaged goods—versus typical associations like quick-serve restaurants and soft drinks.”

This expanded customer view can also help drive more effective decisions and focus resources on initiatives more likely to succeed. “Some companies are taking shots in the dark right now,” Ellerhorst says, “but if they had a good understanding of fandom, they could not only double down on the people who have the most affinity; they could also stop trying to engage with people that are less likely to buy. There can be a lot of time wasted chasing people that companies don’t need to chase. That’s something data can offer that companies may undervalue.”

Getting to the “why”

Understanding the motivations behind fan behavior can help companies create meaningful and personalized interactions. By learning *why* fans engage with a brand, businesses can tailor offerings based on customer needs and target them more precisely.

“It’s important to understand the ‘why’ behind fan behavior, because that helps design touch points that are much more personalized,” Katzenstein states. Fans may have different motivations for engaging with a brand: Some are drawn by themed experiences, others by life stages (like having kids who are fans), and some may be loyal to specific intellectual properties (IP). “At the superficial level, their spending looks the same. But when you put those segments into an app or push offers to them, they likely behave differently.”

With a better understanding of the fan engagement point and the expanded profile data from third parties, companies can design and serve up more personalized experiences.

Propensity modeling and predictive analytics, Katzenstein suggests, can then help drive these personalization efforts at scale. Because fandom tends to revolve around key events (games, song releases,

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and episode drops, for example), she adds, companies should be able to scale dynamically, which is a benefit of cloud-native solutions. And when new opportunities like a fast-moving social trend come up, near real-time processing can enable companies to take advantage quickly.

“Always start with, who are your fans? What about your brand do they love? Who else might love the same thing, and how do we engage them? Use these insights as a foundation for your design strategy,” she concludes.



How Deloitte can help

Deloitte advises media and entertainment companies so they can harness the potential of fan engagement through data-driven strategies that go beyond traditional consumer approaches. Recognizing that today's fans are seeking identity, community, and meaningful interaction with the brands they love, Deloitte advises clients on ways to develop customized fan strategies that can drive deeper loyalty and higher lifetime value.



Starting with data integration and centralization, Deloitte advises companies so they can improve data quality and governance, confirming clear ownership with appropriate access control measures. Data privacy and security are guiding principles for Deloitte engagements, following global privacy and industry standards—and regulatory guidelines—for protecting private data.

Once the data is centralized and structured effectively, Deloitte applies leading practices to facilitate compatibility with advanced analytics, business intelligence, and AI tools. Furthermore, Deloitte's approach prioritizes interoperability and flexibility in data architecture, enabling organizations to remain vendor-neutral and adapt to evolving fan engagement strategies and patterns.

By leveraging advanced analytics and audience insights, Deloitte can advise organizations to identify what resonates with their fan base and ways to build lasting, scalable strategies.

In addition to enhancing engagement, Deloitte advises clients in increasing content ROI by recommending new monetization opportunities, enhancing IP life cycles, and enabling better decision-making through integrated first- and third-party data. Deloitte also provides tax and audit services tailored to the complexities of the media and entertainment industry—including advising on global reporting, IP considerations, digital asset management, and compliance with evolving regulatory requirements.

From identifying untapped revenue streams to designing targeted relationships and personalized experiences, Deloitte's services can advise M&E companies on transforming how they create, distribute, and profit from content. The result can be a more agile, fan-centric business model that allows for measurable growth and long-term success. Visit [Connect Your Brand with Fandom Communities | Deloitte US](#) to learn more.

Continue the conversation



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