

Brands breeding loyalty through digital



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Building brand loyalty is one thing. Marketing smartly through digital platforms is another. And strangely, the two don't always walk hand in hand. Some of the brands with the most loyal customers are notoriously traditional when it comes to their marketing efforts. And some of the most digitally savvy brands out there still have to contend with relatively flaky customer bases.

But digital marketing and fostering loyalty aren't mutually exclusive -- far from it. The best digital marketing is designed to do just that. So which brands are best leveraging digital platforms to really *drive* loyalty? Until recently, it's been hard to know.



Recognizing this knowledge gap, research consultancy [Brand Keys](#) debuted its Digital Platform GPS earlier this year. The platform is designed to help brands match marketing strategy and digital communication in their categories and -- most critically -- to build loyalty.

"It's clear that brands are struggling to identify the intersection of consumer engagement with digital and what drives loyalty with their brands," said Amy Shea, EVP for global brand development at Brand Keys. "As pervasive as digital media is, surprisingly there was no single source that identified how various digital platforms engage -- and nothing that connected it to how consumers engage specifically with a brand's category."

To shed light on this issue, iMedia Connection partnered with Brand Keys to leverage its new tool to identify the brands that are best leveraging digital platforms to build customer loyalty. To do so, Brand Keys examined 598 brands and 14 digital platforms. Here are the top 20 brands on the resulting list. If you're looking to jumpstart or improve own online engagements with customers, you'd do well to take a page from these brands' playbooks.

McDonald's

As the dominant face of the fast food industry, McDonald's is an easy target for criticism. Yet, McDonald's remains one of the most popular brands in the world, with customers lined up daily to satiate their craving for "*two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese...*" But it takes more than a consistent product and catchy jingle to maintain loyalty amidst public criticism in a connected world - a notion McDonald's continually proves with social media.

Among McDonald's faithful, the McRib is legendary. Making rare appearances only to fall off the radar shortly thereafter, the McRib's scarcity makes it a treasure to be discovered. Accordingly, McDonald's launched "The Quest for the Golden McRib" Facebook app. The

quest allows fans to hunt for 10 virtual "Golden McRib's" and awards customers with badges for their profile pages, while encouraging them to share their adventures on Twitter using the hashtag #McRib. Durable brand loyalty is born from product passion and conversation. As the company states, "Our head of social media is the customer."



To establish strong connections with humans, a brand must show its humanity. Thanks to a relatable Twitter feed, McDonald's maintains a *natural* relationship with its more than 450,000 followers. Rather than a constant barrage of product promotions, the company posts positive Twitter updates similar to that of a typical user:



Not only do McDonald's Twitter representatives post positive remarks, but they also take time to respond to individual comments or questions, even rewarding followers with free products:



McDonald's clearly understands that it's not about the number of followers, but about strong connections created through various platforms of engagement, providing every customer with an opportunity to interact.

Coke

The combination of music and marketing is nothing new, but offering deeply engaging and rewarding experiences for consumers through music is still a challenge. In the 1970s, The Coca-Cola Company hoped to "teach the world to sing." Today, the beverage giant continues to strengthen its connection to music through unique partnerships and interactive programs.

In 2011, aiming to connect with teens across the globe, Coca-Cola launched a music marketing program that enabled Maroon 5 to create a new track in one day. The "24 hour session" was streamed live on [Coca-Cola Music](#) and prompted fans to interact with the band -- posting tweets, messages, and votes that were broadcasted within the studio. In addition, audience members directly contributed to the song itself, as their recorded hand claps were featured in the track.



Not only did the "session" provide a peek into professional music production, but it also gave fans a glimpse into Maroon 5's down time (filled with yoga and ping pong), which is relatable content that helps establish a deeper connection among consumers. As Coca-Cola's project lead and global brand PR representative, [Judith Snyder](#), explains, "This is an experiment to connect with teens in a new, fresh, engaging conversation. We are always collaborating, and Coca-Cola Music allows us to leverage our scale and share stories." It is in the reciprocal exchange of content that demonstrates a brand's awareness of fan value to consumers.

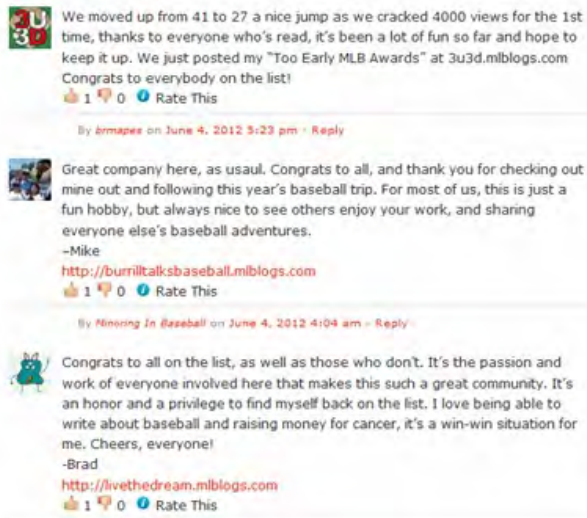
For Coca-Cola, loyalty comes from connecting with consumers by creating unique content and experiences. By not only offering fans free music, but also by providing an outlet for customers to take part in music creation, Coca-Cola proves, once again, why it holds nearly unanimous acceptance across the globe.

Major League Baseball

As America's favorite past-time has grown, it has undergone continuous innovation. And Major League Baseball's internet and interactive branch, MLB Advanced Media (MLBAM), continues the commitment to innovation. As CEO Robert Bowman has notably stated, "Whatever your business is, talk to your customers and provide them with what they want. It makes sense." One of the best ways to open up the conversation with consumers is through blogs. This notion is clearly expressed through MLB's community blogging site, [MLBlogs.com](#) -- currently the host of 12,000-plus blogs.



MLBlogs provides the platform for everyday aficionados to rub virtual shoulders with its "pro bloggers." Rather than allowing new bloggers to struggle aimlessly to create a digital presence, MLB representatives provide useful posts updating users on new features for personal blogs, such as the post entitled, "[New: Embed MLB.com video in your blog.](#)" By teaching bloggers to post MLB.com video rather than content leading away from its site, MLB maintains traffic on its own site. In addition, MLB's monthly post "[Around the MLB.com Blogs](#)" aids users in their search for valuable content within the community. Furthermore, MLB rounds up the most popular blogs ranked by page view every month in its "[Latest Leaders](#)" post. The comments beneath the list make clear a sense of competitiveness and pride among users -- solid fuel for building loyalty.



By creating a welcoming environment for a wide variety of fans to share their passions, MLB allows the *fans* to step up to the plate. By empowering the consumer to perform digitally, the brand nurtures the deep connection necessary for sustained engagement.

Macy's

According to a recent study, seven out of 10 Americans visit a Macy's store or its website at least once a year -- *that's 70 percent of America*. As Macy's CMO Peter Sachse [states](#), "We saw we don't need more customers -- we need the customers we have to spend more time with us. Therein lies the whole idea of loyalty. We put the customer at the center of all decisions we make." To build this loyalty, the retail giant launched its "My Macy's" campaign four years ago, which it still upholds today. The campaign capitalizes on the large stream of consumers that interact with Macy's by creating a highly personalized, omni-channel shopping experience that underscores its consumer-centric strategy.

The Macy's website receives a strong flow of visitors to its "[My Macy's shop ahead services](#)." For example, the feature allows online customers to check the size, color, and availability of a dress at a local store. By seamlessly blending the in-store experience with its digital platform, Macy's drives consumers online to the store -- and vice versa.

In addition, Macy's recently launched a new strategy to secure the loyalty of Millennials through two digital experiences. "[mStyleLab](#)," aimed at ages 13 to 22, is an online community that "collects the opinions and thoughts of youth across a broad range of topics." This feedback is used to improve Macy's products, programs, and overall shopping experience. mStyleLab members spend time online discussing topics and answering questions regarding shopping habits, interests, etc., and the company compensates these members with gift certificates. In addition, "[Impulse](#)," serving customers 19 to 30, is a microsite within Macys.com that highlights key fashions, tips, and events.

Patron Tequila

According to Brand Keys, hard alcohol breeds hard loyalty. At around \$50 a bottle (750 ml), Patrón does not create loyalty out of everyday affordability. Rather than appeal to drunken college crowds on spring break, Patrón uses its marketing dollars to establish an elite club for those that consume and appreciate their ultra-premium tequila.



When asked about Patrón's strong consumer connections online, the company's Greg Cohen explained, "Recognizing the importance for a luxury brand like ours to engage consumers, a number of years ago we created [The Patrón Social Club](#), an online members-only gathering spot for Patrón aficionados." Club members are given access to unique cocktail recipes, the latest tequila trends, and chances to win special prizes. As Cohen states, "We're a firm believer that brands should talk *with* consumers, not *to* consumers, and the Patrón Social Club fosters that two-way communication."

In addition, the Patrón Secret Dining Society invites members via email to exclusive dinner parties. For example, Chicago members followed a series of clues leading to a candlelit warehouse, in which Chef Rick Bayless prepared food while skilled mixologists made tequila-based cocktails.

According to Cohen, "In addition to the Patrón Social Club, we've also built a loyal following on our [Patrón Cocktail Lab](#) on Facebook. The application encourages fans to create winning cocktails, and the winners are given prizes and access to events, while their cocktails receive a spot on Patrón's official recipe list.

Jennifer Long, brand director for Patrón Spirits, [explains](#), "By leveraging a social networking site like Facebook, we are able to provide our loyalists access to share and build drink ideas." In rewarding those with the best recipes, Patrón creates loyalty by stirring up emotion -- a potent ingredient in the loyalty cocktail.

Home Depot

For DIY enthusiasts, the Home Depot is a trusted companion. Not only does the company offer a low-price guarantee, but it also provides a progressive loyalty rewards program.

Striking a loyalty chord with in-store customers is not the only way the Home Depot maintains strong connections. Online video is the perfect medium for reaching the DIY community, and one look at the company's [YouTube channel](#) proves it understands the value of topical video content. Rather than repurposed TV commercials, the videos feature Home Depot DIY experts detailing specific products or taking viewers step-by-step through home improvement projects.



By producing how-to content that engages the viewer, the Home Depot reinforces the approachability of DIY projects, which continually funnels consumers back to the store and online.

The Home Depot also offers an impressive digital magazine that helps customers discover unique home improvement projects, trends, and design ideas. The magazine is produced quarterly with content tailored for each of the seasons.



In addition, the company launched "The Home Depot Style Guide" app for the iPad. The app features a series of articles with clickable images for more information. For instance, one article pictures an unadorned hallway that gradually fills with design changes, demonstrating how little alterations can have a large effect. In addition, the app links to the Home Depot website, custom-made for tablets, wherein all items within the app are available for purchase.

By providing the knowledge and goods for consumers to act on their ideas, the Home Depot empowers a sense of accomplishment within the consumer. Once an individual completes a project from start to finish, there is a strong likelihood that that person will be back for more.

Hyundai

In an industry as competitive as the automobile market, brand loyalty is crucial. And in the last two years, Hyundai has made a swooping surge to the top of the automobile loyalty list. Once the butt of jokes about poorly made vehicles, Hyundai has made big moves to secure the loyalty of automotive aficionados. One way the brand has accomplished this is by offering reasonably priced, sleekly designed cars paired with America's best warranty. In addition, the brand discarded its "cheapest car in America" title by increasing the quality (and price) of its 2012 Accent, which has worked wonders on consumer perception.

In addition to traditional big event sponsorships, Hyundai aims at developing a rich brand story through online video. On [Hyundai's YouTube channel](#), videos detail new vehicles and offer insights into the Hyundai world, including glimpses into Hyundai's own steel plant, built to answer environmental concerns and questions of steel quality.



Rather than spending millions sponsoring a band's tour, Hyundai leveraged the power of digital content distribution and social sharing to produce a documentary film. Hyundai picked five world-renowned DJs to travel the globe (Hyundai vehicles at their disposal) and reinterpret regional music for the brand's "Regeneration" campaign. The finished full-length documentary can be viewed on [Hulu](#), and the company gave away five tracks created during the documentary to their fans. The following is a trailer for the film:



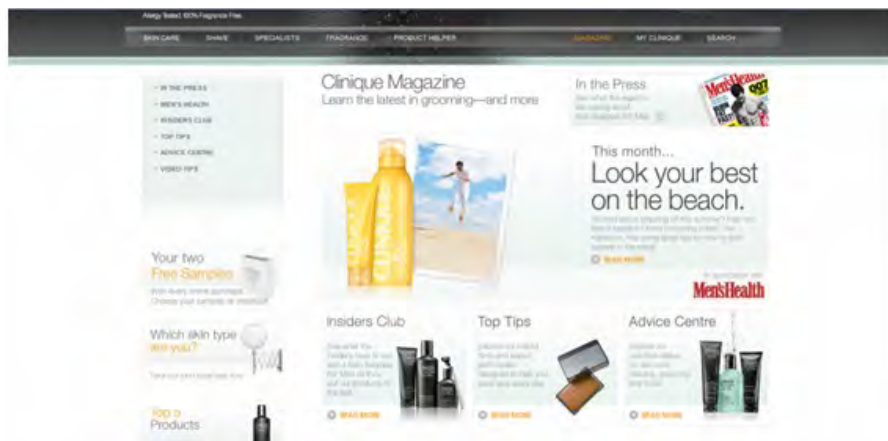
By blending a more traditional approach to advertising with new ways of interacting with consumers digitally, Hyundai is able to connect with multiple demographics, solidifying its position at the top of the automobile loyalty ladder.

Clinique

Not only does Clinique offer high-quality products that emphasize technology and dermatologist recommendations, it also garners loyalty by offering its [three-step skin care](#) system that centers on individual needs and diverse skin types. Using interactive online questionnaires, the system matches customers to a compatible set of skin-care products.

Digitally, Clinique was one of the first cosmetic companies to offer online shopping and has a strong Facebook and Twitter presence, allowing fans and followers to share product experiences, take surveys, and receive free samples. In addition, the company launched the "Clinique Beauty Forecast App," which provides geo-targeted weather forecasts and offers expert skin-care tips related to the current weather conditions.

Realizing its failure to tap into the male demographic, Clinique's recent marketing efforts have focused on breaking into this valuable market by re-launching "[Clinique for Men](#)" online and producing targeted content for a richer consumer experience. The new site includes a skin assessment guide that aims to make the line more approachable to less knowledgeable skin-care customers. In addition, the brand partnered with Men's Health magazine to create [Clinique Magazine](#), which seamlessly blends lifestyle content into the shopping experience.



The magazine features monthly updated news and product reviews from the "Insiders Club," which provides customer feedback on product launches. In addition, customers are given the opportunity to become "Clinique Skin Supplies for Men Insiders," provided with the latest skin care and grooming products to test. Clinique builds brand loyalty by providing personalized shopping experiences that demystify the skin-care procedure.

Costco

For many, a trip to the seventh largest retailer in the world is a weekend ritual. But are quality goods at respectable prices enough to create and sustain customer loyalty? According to Paul Latham, Costco's VP of membership, marketing, and services, they just might be:

"Costco really doesn't have a strategy for 'creating and sustaining brand loyalty,'" he says. "We have a strategy for running our business. We simply believe that if we provide our members with the products and services they're looking for at the lowest prices possible, do it in a clean and safe environment, and provide efficient and courteous service, we will be rewarded with loyal members."



The way in which Costco runs its business demonstrates a commitment to return customers. In a recent iMedia Connection article entitled, "[The truth about engagement](#)," the author writes, "You want engaged consumers? Give them something to hunt." Costco might be tapping into this notion. As Latham states, "We try to create a 'treasure hunt' atmosphere in our warehouses, where our buyers source unique items that our members might not expect to find." Keeping customers engaged in the continuous hunt for fleeting products is a strong way to induce return customers.

In addition, Costco's email marketing strategy keeps customers coming back for more. According to Latham, it's all about efficiency: "Our email efforts are effective largely because we are very selective and careful not to inundate our members with marketing messages. Our members appreciate the fact that we use email sparingly, so our open rates tend to be strong." Although the retailer's success comes from the selling bulk items, its marketing efforts are applied sparingly. Give consumers what they want, and interact with them only enough to show them they are valued.

Apple iPhone

Despite waves of complaints from customers across the globe at the launch of new products and software, Apple customers are the most forgiving and patient in the business. Apple devotees know that new technology can be problematic. Rather than jump ship to join another captain when issues arise, Apple customers wait patiently for the company to fix the problems.

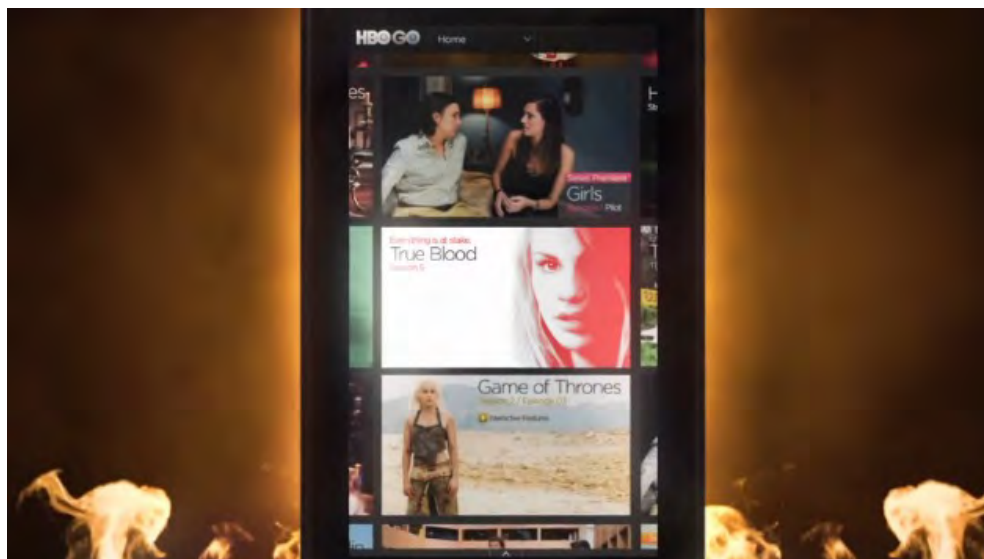
In the mobile marketplace, Apple leads the loyalty competition. According to a recent report released by the research firm GFK, 84 percent of iPhone users surveyed said they would choose the iPhone again. Conversely, 60 percent of Android users said they would stick with the Android OS if given the opportunity. These statistics make clear the two-party smartphone system in which consumers reside. When choosing a smartphone, consumers typically face the question: iPhone or Android? What makes the decision easy for most iPhone users are its apps. In fact, according to a recent study by [Futuresource](#), 54 percent of iPhone users "commit to the Apple brand in order to keep the apps they have come to depend upon."

Apple's App Store is a dynamic hotbed of downloadable tools and games. As the iPhone OS has been in existence long before the Android, its app store naturally provides more offerings. However, it is not the sheer volume that maintains customers, but the quality of apps it allows into its store. Apple's commitment to providing the customer with the best offerings available is underscored by its app store, which in turn helps secure loyal customers.

Kindle

Across the board, Amazon is No. 1 in brand loyalty, recently overtaking fanatically supported Apple. As the largest online retailer, its sheer selection of goods is enough to continuously reel in customers. However, a company does not get to the top of the loyalty charts by treating people like fish.

"Amazon Prime" is a membership program that gives users unlimited shipping for \$79 a year. Not only does the program offer free shipping on goods, but it also provides a wide array of free digital services. Prime members can access unlimited, commercial-free, instantly streaming online videos through [Amazon Prime Instant Video](#). And with the release of its new Kindle, the Android-powered Kindle Fire, Amazon provides an affordable tablet on which to view content.



Although Amazon is hesitant to reveal the numbers, according to [comScore](#), the Kindle Fire makes up 54.4 percent of the total Android market, likely due to Amazon's loyal customer base and the tablet's low price (\$199). This market domination has attracted the attention of big brands like HBO, as the HBO Go service is now available on Kindle Fire. HBO Go provides members access to HBO's original shows, such as "True Blood" and "Game of Thrones."

A new licensing agreement with MGM will add hundreds of movies and TV shows to the Amazon's video catalog, which now offers more than 18,000 videos. According to [Brad Beale](#), Amazon's director of digital video content acquisition, "Our customers tell us they love having tons of movies and TV shows to choose from, which is why we are focused on adding even more titles to our already extensive Prime Instant Video library." Once again, the key to happy customers is listening.

Expedia

Nowadays, nearly every vacation begins with an online journey. Web-hopping from travel site to travel site can be as draining as a red-eye flight, but many find that the personalized experience, DIY satisfaction, and extra money saved from online booking are worth it. If

you have recently planned a trip, the odds that you visited Expedia (or its affiliate network of travel sites) are high. In fact, one of every 20 hotel rooms a night is booked through Expedia -- the world's largest travel company.

To reinforce its dominance, Expedia launched "Expedia Everywhere," which places social media and mobile at the center of its marketing strategy. For instance, in 2011, the company created the largest Facebook-hosted sweepstake game, "FriendTrips," which gave away five trips entitled, "Trips of a Lifetime." According to [Expedia](#), the game increased the company's fan count by 750 percent.

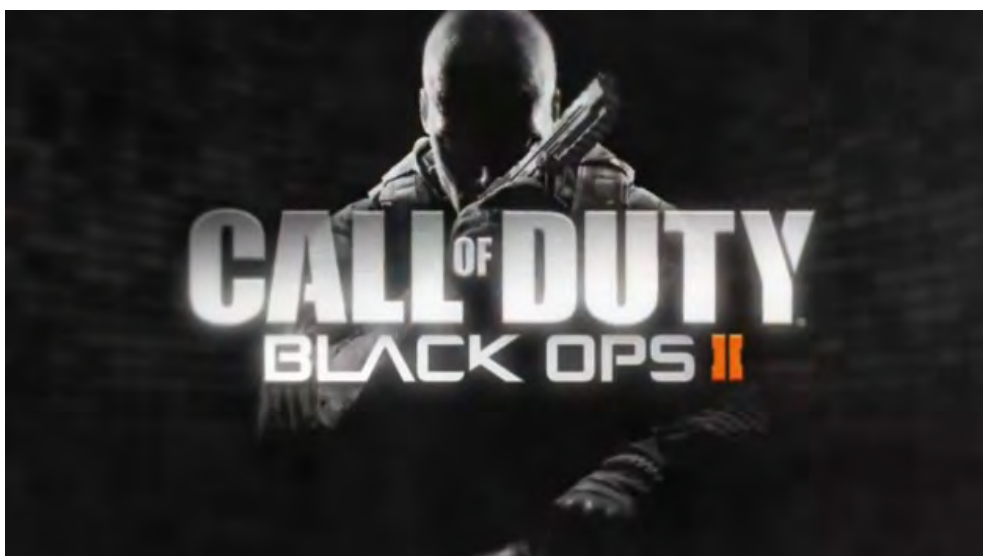
By developing strong relationships with influential bloggers, Expedia understands the value of travelers' sharing stories with others. In late 2011, the company invited 16 top travel bloggers to lunch and to a corporate suite at the Seattle Seahawk's football game. In addition, the company sponsors road trips with travel bloggers, such as the "[Touring California with Travel Blogger Spencer Spellman](#)" feature.



Another online platform Expedia uses to develop positive relationships with consumers is the digital newspaper. Expedia partnered with [NYTimes.com](#) to serve as the exclusive online booking engine for its travel site. Visitors to [NYTimes.com Travel](#) are able to access Expedia travel content and book hotels, flights, rental cars, and cruises. To develop customer loyalty, Expedia makes sure the individual knows they are just that: individual.

Call of Duty

Activation Blizzard's "Call of Duty" franchise has taken the world by storm. The company has released a total of eight remarkably successful games. Activation Blizzard's most recent offering, "Modern Warfare 3," sold 6.5 million copies within 24 hours -- making it the biggest entertainment product launch of all time. The fact that each sequel was more successful than its predecessor points to both loyal customers and powerful marketing.



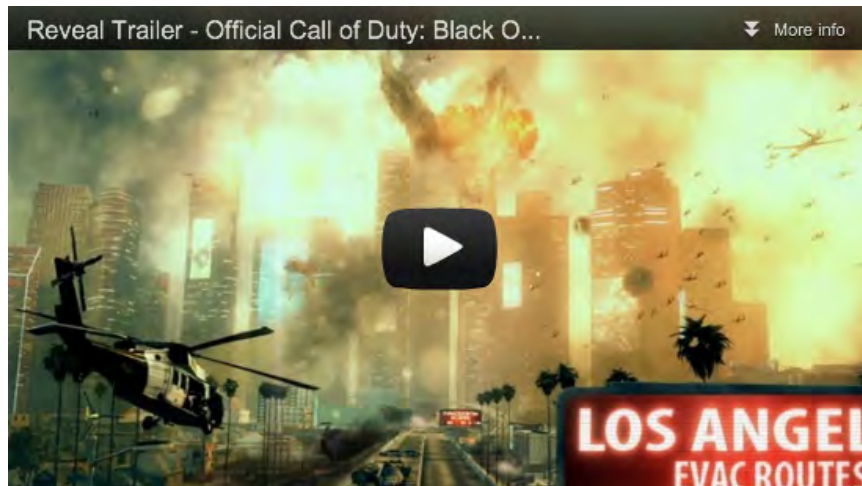
One area in particular that demonstrates Activation Blizzard's marketing prowess is online video. To promote its upcoming "Black Ops

II," the company created an unsettling documentary video featuring future war expert P.W. Singer and Lt. Col. Oliver North. Both individuals propose nightmare scenarios of war. For example, North states, "I have a nightmare scenario that a hacker breaks into our system that controls satellites, UAVs, and even the launch of missiles. Consider what it would be like to have friendly fire from U.S. weapons overhead."



"Black Ops II" is set in the year 2025, in which unmanned weaponry controls every element of war. By creating a credible video with expert perspectives detailing plausible real-life conditions of future wars that mirror the conditions within its game, Activation Blizzard thoroughly engages customers with its forthcoming video game by adding relevancy and verisimilitude to what is really just a fictional creation. Although the video was created to sell video games, its goal is consumer connection, and the company does not interrupt the connection with overt advertising.

In addition, the "Call of Duty: Black Ops II" [site](#) in which other online videos and game trailers can be viewed. The following is the official gameplay trailer, which, by the way, had 23,855,832 views as of August 3. (I wonder how this game will do...)



Samsung

Many would name Samsung as Apple's chief competitor. Recognizing the strong personal connections individuals develop with their mobile devices, Apple and Samsung have been locked in a public battle for smartphone customers. Trying to capitalize on the strong relationship consumers have with their iPhones, Samsung created a video mocking Apple fanatics waiting in a never-ending line for a new offering. Those in line are then persuaded to join Samsung users dancing in the streets, shouting "We're free!"



By depicting Apple iPhone devotion as "blind" and Samsung devotion as liberating, Samsung paves the way for the transference of loyalty from Apple to Samsung.

In an arena not as polarized as smartphones, Samsung had managed to engage customers in another powerful way. In order to promote its flat-screen TVs, Samsung opened its "[Samsung TV Portal](#)." Content on the portal includes how-to videos, how-to walkthroughs, product spotlights, and more. For instance, the portal features the following video, "How to Use Social TV: Samsung Smart Minute."



The mission of Samsung's TV Portal is to "provide the information and insight you need to make your Samsung TV experience every bit as enjoyable as you want it to be." Aware that television technology changes rapidly, which subsequently leaves many consumers apprehensive to embrace new offerings, Samsung created a browsing portal to keep its customers up to date. Not only does Samsung sell more products by keeping the public informed, but the company also builds customer loyalty by providing engaging content that ensures each consumer enjoys (and is not frustrated by) his or her purchase.

Skechers

OK, so Skechers' rocker-bottom shoes failed to magically transform consumers into Kim Kardashian or Joe Montana. But the company continually delivers strong customer service and rewards, underscored by its consumer-centric approach.

Making sure customers are heard is at the center of the footwear brand's digital strategy. According to [Adweek](#), Skechers.com features 60,000 products reviews and 32,500 questions and answers. Is this because Skechers' customers are inherently vocal online or because the company has provided an ideal forum for digital interaction? After browsing the company's website, the answer is clear.



In order to provide shoppers with timely, relevant information, Skechers partnered with PowerReviews to implement the vendor's "Social Answers" question-and-answer tool. When shoppers click the "Questions" button, they are able to pose specific product questions that are quickly sent to customer service *and* to customers who have previously purchased the item. Within three hours, the customer is sent a follow-up email answer, which links to the product's page.

According to Skechers' ecommerce merchandising manager [Timothy Lakin](#), "Because a customer who submits a question is already engaged, if we can give them the answer they want in a timely fashion, they usually buy the shoe." And he is right, as [PowerReview reports](#) that "80 percent of answer notification emails were opened, and more than half of those emails resulted in a conversion."

To boost the success of its site, Skechers motivates its customers to share online by monetizing their content. Members of Skechers' "Elite Reward" program receive points for submitting reviews and answers to questions posed by fellow consumers. Customers save their earned points for discounts on Skechers.com.

InterContinental Hotels

With 4,400 hotels across the world, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) is the world's largest hotel company. Accordingly, IHG provides the world's largest hotel loyalty program, [Priority Club Rewards](#), in which club members receive 10 points for every dollar spent.

To connect with consumers digitally, IHG has launched a number of apps including the "Priority Club Rewards" app for the iPhone and the "Concierge Insider Guide" for the iPad. With the Priority Club app, users can book, change, or cancel hotel reservations as well as redeem reward points, view hotel photo galleries, or receive GPS-enabled hotel directions. The iPad app provides travelers with concierge recommendations, video tours, insider tips, room bookings, and more.

Not only does InterContinental have a strong mobile presence, but the company also recently launched the first global, multi-language shopping portal in the hotel industry. [IHG's shopping portal](#) features 600 leading online retailers, from Target.com to Nordstrom, and Priority Club members receive points for every online purchase.

Once again, companies with strong followings ensure loyalty through special rewards and a consumer-centric focus to guarantee a personalized experience.

Walmart

Walmart was built on offering "low prices, always," which its customers cite as the principle reason for patronage. In fact, according to journalist [Charles Fishman](#), about 140 million Americans shop at Walmart every week.

Traditionally, low-income Americans are less likely to spend time online. However, as more and more shopping occurs digitally and bargain hunters become increasingly tech-savvy, Walmart has greatly increased its digital efforts.



Appealing to customers without access to credit or those fearful of identity theft, Walmart.com developed a "pay with cash" option, allowing customers to order merchandise online and pay in-store. As [Internet Retailer states](#), "Because of the new payment option, Walmart.com has attracted new online customers, as nearly 30 percent of those who have chosen the 'cash' payment option are new to the site." By doing so, Walmart reduces the risk suffered by other brick-and-mortar retailers. For example, consumers at Best Buy view items in-store only to purchase them online elsewhere at a lower price. By prompting customers online to come pay in-store, Walmart isolates its customers in an environment where all further purchases are made at Walmart.

Most recently, Walmart initiated its "endless aisle" program, allowing in-store customers to scan QR codes that provide access to a broader range of Walmart products online. Realizing a growing number of their loyalists wanted to shop online, Walmart initiated a number of innovative programs to smooth the transition from brick-and-mortar to digital.

Coors

In "Smokey and the Bandit," Burt Reynolds (Bo "Bandit" Darville) is offered \$80,000 to make the illegal haul of 400 cases of Coors beer from Texas to Georgia and back in 28 hours, all because Big Enos Burdette "is thirsty." That's beer loyalty -- and Burdette is not alone, as Coors continually ranks high on Brand Keys' loyalty charts.

Coors Banquet has been a longtime staple of American beer drinkers. To tap into America's nostalgic feelings about the brand, MillerCoors recently released four commemorative cans whose front designs hail from 1880, 1936, 1959, and the 1950s.

Keeping the past in mind while moving forward is a marketing strategy the brand continually embraces. Pete and David Coors recently embarked on a road trip from Golden, Colo., to New York City to celebrate "the famous trek that many Coors Banquet fans took before them" in pursuit of beer. In a 1940s Coors Banquet delivery truck, Pete and Dave made various pit stops along their journey to share stories with customers and bar owners, thoroughly chronicling their journey on [Facebook](#).

In addition, as part of Coors "Grab a Piece of the Legend" campaign, fans were able to log onto the Coors Banquet Facebook page to share their own stories. The result was this [video](#), created as a culmination of the various stories shared. As a Coors' fan in the video states, "I have been drinking Coors since I have been drinking beer. I don't get into fads. I try to stay true to my roots." Coors maintains strong loyalty by implementing digital campaigns that emphasize the importance of heritage (or "staying true to one's roots").

Hilton

Building on the success of its global multi-channel "Stay Hilton, Go Everywhere" campaign, Hilton launched the hospitality industry's first iAd interactive extension for Apple devices. Embracing the power of imagery, Hilton's interactive iAds for the iPhone and iPad take users on virtual vacations around the globe.



At the bottom of the screen, a compass allows users to navigate between various images of destinations with a swipe of the finger, making the ad the first to employ the three-axis gyroscope on Apple devices. According to [Dave Horton](#), global head of Hilton Hotels & Resorts, "This iAd reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of our brand as one that ventures beyond the norm to ensure it stays as relevant today as when it was first created."

Hilton's commitment to staying relevant with modern, tech-savvy consumers is evident in the following video, which details the company's "Lobby Initiative" -- a strategic plan to redefine the lobby experience to best engage guests.



In addition, rather than broadcasting ads across social media, Hilton listens to its customers and provides relevant responses -- evident in the following Facebook post:



Hilton is a forward-thinking brand, ensuring that discounts and added value are extended to every consumer. As the 2012 Gay Pride Season commenced, Hilton launched the "Stay Hilton, Go Out" package, which provided lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) travelers and friends of the LGBT community traveling to Pride Season celebrations with special offers. By staying relevant and focusing on its guests, Hilton thoroughly engages its customer base.

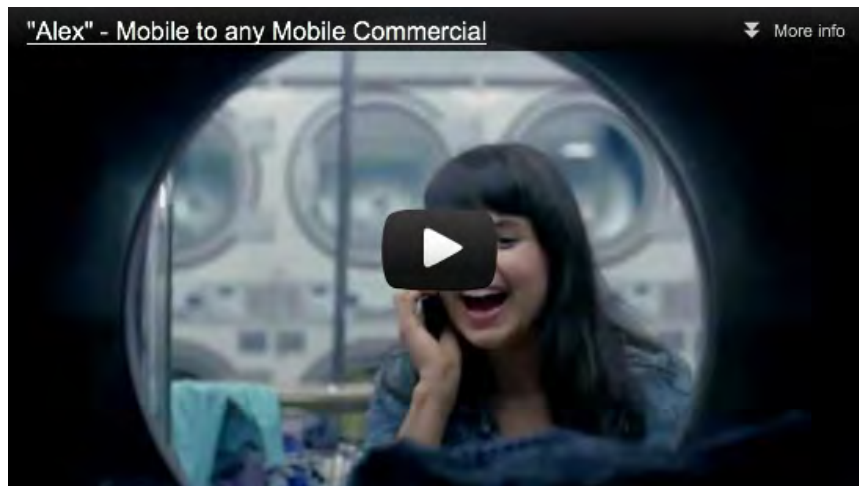
AT&T

In the digital marketing world, mistakes are common. Before AT&T developed an advanced email marketing strategy, it made a few mistakes. For example, the company's VP of general marketing sent customers a generic email detailing AT&T's planned infrastructure spending. The email infuriated recipients, who quickly swarmed AT&T's Facebook page with complaints. Ready for the onslaught, AT&T representatives responded to each and every post, tempering consumer's anger. As a result, AT&T now bolsters customer loyalty by sending personalized and geo-targeted emails.

More than 2 million people a day visit AT&T's website, which is a lot of customers to maintain. According to AT&T's SVP of consumer digital experience, [Phil Bienert](#), the most critical activity for great customer service is to listen: "From formal surveys to digital analytics to social media to crowd sourcing, we're constantly gathering feedback from our customers in a number of different areas to ensure we're continuing to improve."

And listening closely appears to be working. In 2011, [AT&T wireless recorded](#) the "fewest number of Better Business Bureau (BBB) complaints and received the lowest BBB complaint rate among the four largest national wireless carriers."

Yet, AT&T still suffers from a common symptom among wireless carriers: Despite loving their smartphones, customers feel a "disconnect" with their smartphone carriers. And customer connection breeds customer loyalty. In order to improve its relationship with consumers, AT&T continues to evolve its "Rethink Possible" campaign to center upon human experiences. For instance, take the following video. Rather than flaunt AT&T network speed, the video highlights the phone's ability to allow individuals to share their exciting new experiences with others.



"Marketing concept: pixelated words Customer loyalty" image via Shutterstock.