

A photograph of Lilly Singh, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a patterned top and a white vest, standing on a stage with her hands raised. The background is a large screen displaying a colorful, abstract graphic.

# YouTube Megastar Lilly Singh's Lessons for Marketers

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For YouTube sensation Lilly Singh (a.k.a. ||Superwoman||), earning viewer love is more important than racking up view counts. Largely without advertising, she's gained 6.8 million subscribers and a fanbase that's followed her offline. Singh talks about her success and what brands can learn from it.

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Indo-Canadian YouTube star Lilly Singh (known as ||Superwoman||) launched her YouTube channel in October 2010 and has since amassed a fandom of over 6.8 million subscribers. Inspired by Indian culture and music, Singh used her unique perspective as an Indo-Canadian woman "to create the kind of content that I didn't think existed anywhere else." This content took the form of irreverent, lighthearted op-ed videos on everyday topics.

After six years of bi-weekly uploads, Singh has developed a strong, reciprocal relationship with her fans. She transformed herself into more than a YouTube star—she became a trusted friend. Recently Singh spoke at YouTube Australia's Brandcast event, touching on her relationship with her fans, why investing in YouTube is essential for brands who want to connect with an increasingly loyal and passionate audience, and why success should no longer be measured by impressions but rather by interest and brand love.



YouTube watch time in Australia has **grown 60% YoY.**<sup>1</sup>

## Engaging YouTube communities online and offline

What makes Singh's relationship with her fans so special? She believes that YouTube has given her the opportunity to truly connect and foster personal relationships with her global audience.

"Our relationship is deeper than casual consumption: it is an active, engaged relationship, like that of two best friends," Singh said. "They support me, and most importantly, they trust me."



Among U.S. teens, **8 of the top 10** most popular and influential celebrities are YouTube stars.<sup>2</sup>

That support has extended to other creative projects and even offline. After announcing her world tour, “A Trip to Unicorn Island,” earlier this year, thousands of fans paid to see her perform in Australia, the U.S., India, Hong Kong, Dubai, Singapore, and the U.K.

Singh has attributed her success to the consistency of her video uploads over the past six years as well as her overall dedication to her channel. And there is an important aspect of her success that she said, directly addressing marketers in the Brandcast audience, “should worry all of you: For the most part, everything I have done, I’ve done largely without the support of advertising.”

## Brand love trumps impressions

According to Singh, advertisers are not maximizing the potential of an incredibly active and passionate YouTube community because they’re focused on the wrong metrics. “I got 12 million views on my channel this week, and that sounds kinda cool, but it doesn’t actually mean anything,” she said. Referencing a quote from another popular YouTube creator, John Green, Singh said what should really matter to brands is how many people love the content they make, not just view it.

She admits that measuring brand love is really hard, but investing in great YouTube content that viewers will love and engage with will put brands ahead of the game because this kind of content drives active as opposed to passive consumption.

“Content from my favourite YouTube creator is something I truly value because I demand to watch it. I *choose* to search for it, consume it and engage with it. And that is the difference between passive and on-demand consumption.”



YouTube now reaches more 18–54-year-olds in Australia than any individual TV channel.<sup>3</sup>

Singh said she knows impressions still matter to many brands, but what should matter more is investing in a community for which YouTube has become a daily go-to destination. This way, brands can “win over this next generation just as you have in the past.”

As a final call to action, Singh reinforced the notion of YouTube’s staying power:

“Gone are the days of testing this platform,” she said. “This model is proven and the community is invested. I hope you are, too.”

### Lilly’s Top Takeaways



Measure success by viewer engagement, not views.



Build a relationship with your customers.  
Authentically engage with them on an ongoing basis.



Make valued, lovable content. That might mean experimenting with new kinds of content, changing the frequency of your uploads or even partnering with popular YouTube creators.

### Sources

<sup>1</sup> Internal YouTube data, Q1 2014–Q1 2015, Australia.

<sup>2</sup> Variety Magazine, Digital Star Popularity Grows Versus Mainstream Celebrities, July 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Roy Morgan Research, based on TV networks viewed in the past 7 days and websites visited in the past 7 days, April 2014–March 2015, Australia.