

5 lessons from the breakout creators at this year's streamy awards



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Make sure to charge your smartphone because the 6th annual Streamy Awards, dedicated to highlighting creativity and innovation in online video, will stream live on YouTube tonight at 9 p. m. Eastern.

This year, five social media stars have been nominated in the category. They range in age from 13 to 27 and have millions of fans across multiple platforms -- all who eagerly await their next post.

Even if video platforms such as Vine, Musical.ly, Instagram and Snapchat remain a mystery to you, or if you aren't in the entertainment industry, you can still learn valuable lessons from these savvy young entrepreneurs.

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1. Invite your customers into your process.

Ariel Martin is a 15-year-old Floridian who has more than 1.6 million subscribers on and 4.5 followers on . She is the top user with more than 12

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million followers on , a year-old social platform where users can create short, shareable videos, especially lip-syncs.

Martin's most popular YouTube video is a Musical.ly how-to. In the video (above), she breaks down her process, offering tips such as how to find natural light and how to use the phone camera to create effects.

If you have a product or service that is a major seller, take your customers behind the scenes like Martin does and show them how you do what you do.

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2. Follow your passion.

Jacob Sartorius is a 14-year-old musician from Oklahoma with more than 10 million followers on Musical.ly (he's the second-most followed user after Martin) and 5.9 million followers on , though he got his start on Vine.

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Sartorius began his career by making wildly popular lip sync videos on Musical.ly, and now he is making music professionally. His most watched upload is a music video for "Sweatshirt" (above), an original song that has gotten more than 31 million views since Sartorius posted it in June.

Let this teen sensation inspire you: Don't be afraid to pursue a big goal, but realize that small steps will take you there.

3. Work with people whom you trust.

Ethan and Grayson Dolan are 16-year-old twin brothers from New Jersey who have been making Vines since 2013, and each has more than 3 million followers on the platform. The pair have a channel with more than 2.4 million subscribers, and they have 1.4 million followers on their Instagram.

The Dolans' most popular video (above) captures Grayson on the way to get his wisdom teeth removed -- and immediately afterward. Is it a bit juvenile

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and ridiculous? Of course, but Grayson's willingness to be filmed in a pretty embarrassing scenario results from the rapport the siblings have.

It's a great reminder that, when launching a creative endeavor, you should try to find people to work with who share your sensibilities.

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4. Listen to your customers.

Cristine Rotenberg is a 27-year-old Canadian with a talent for eye-catching nail art. Her YouTube channel has more than 2.7 million subscribers, and she has 1.4 million followers on .

Though she is known for creating intricate, sparkly and metallic looks, her most popular video (above) is a bit simpler. Rotenberg's fans asked her if she would put on more than 100 coats of nail polish, and she did. It took an entire day, but while scarfing down pizza and entertaining her cat with her

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free hand, Rotenberg called up fans on Snapchat just to say hello and thank you -- even if she had started to go a little stir crazy.

Don't forget: Your brand lives and dies by your customers' investment.

Convert them to fans by listening to their requests and communicating with them.

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5. Showcase your personality.

Twenty-year-old Texan Liza Koshy is known for her high energy and comedic timing. She has more than 4 million subscribers, more than 6 million followers on and more than 5 million followers on Vine, where she got her social media start.

Koshy's most popular YouTube video (above) is a pun-filled chronicle of a shopping trip at her local dollar store. By showcasing her bright and quirky
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personality, she turns what could have been a mundane errand into an adventure.

In your social media presence and in business, make sure to play to your strengths.