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Rohit is a popular "non-boring" keynote speaker who has spoken at TEDx, in Davos, and at hundreds of other events around the world.

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For free online resources, visual chapters, and exclusive content, visit [www.likeonomics.com](http://www.likeonomics.com)

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## PRAISE FOR **Likeonomics**

"Rohit Bhargava's wise and wonderful book proves that your mother was right, after all: people respond to those who treat them right. Companies and organizations need to heed this lesson and use *Likeonomics* to steer their thinking on ways to become more open, accessible, and trustworthy in the marketplace—and find success doing it."

—**Daniel H. Pink**, author of *Drive* and *A Whole New Mind*

"In *Likeonomics*, Rohit reinforces the popular notion that culture eats strategy and makes the case that likeability is an indispensable part of success. Rohit encourages us to create person-to-person connections that are authentic, relevant, and accessible. Gone are the days when alpha dogs rule. . . . In the era of *Likeonomics*, personal connection is king."

—**Jonathan Becher**, Chief Marketing Officer, SAP

"Rohit Bhargava gets to the heart of what underlies and sustains relationships—likeability. If you want to be successful in business, don't leave trust to chance—keep *Likeonomics* and its online workbook close at your side and you'll be on the path to success."

—**Charlene Li**, author of *Groundswell* and *Open Leadership*; founder, Altimeter Group

"This is a bold, fresh, and—most important—likeable book. Rohit reveals why networking must die, and the gap that should keep you up at night is your 'likeability gap.'"

—**Christopher Graves**, Global CEO, Ogilvy Public Relations

"*Likeonomics* is the *How to Win Friends and Influence People* for a new generation. Rohit shows us how to be more likeable and believable and, as a result, more popular and relevant, which are the keys to success in any endeavor. Highly recommended."

—**Michael Port**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Think Big Manifesto*

"If you want to be successful, you need to read *Likeonomics*! Rich in relevant, entertaining stories, and takeaways you can easily and immediately use, Rohit proves why being more likeable is the driving force behind building sustained relationships and exponential success."

—**Peter Guber**, CEO, Mandalay Entertainment; author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Tell to Win*

Also available as an e-book



Bhargava

Likeonomics

"Being more successful in business and in life often requires the same thing. If you want to do both, read this book!"

—**Deepak Chopra**, author of *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*

**Rohit Bhargava**

**likeonomics**

THE UNEXPECTED TRUTH BEHIND  
EARNING TRUST,  
INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR,  
AND INSPIRING ACTION



\$24.95 USA/\$29.95 CAN

The future isn't about the next social media tool or clicking a "Like" button. Instead, people decide which organizations to trust, what advice to follow, and who to forge personal or business relationships with based on the simple metric of *likeability*. This is no longer a "soft" quality and it is not the same thing as just being nice. With today's "modern believability crisis," earning the trust of your customers, employees, and colleagues is much harder to do. *Likeonomics* offers a new vision of a world beyond Facebook, where real relationships and personal values such as unabashed honesty, extreme simplicity, and basic humanity are the keys to success. There is a real ROI to likeability, and exactly how big it is will amaze you.

*Likeonomics* uncovers five key principles to win trust (or win it back)—and keep it. You'll learn how to use the TRUST formula (Truth, Relevance, Unselfishness, Simplicity, and Timing) to power every relationship. Being more believable is the real secret to standing out—whether you are trying to grow your business, win an election, or find your next job—and this book will help you get there.

*Likeonomics* provides real-world stories of brands and people who have used these principles to become wildly successful, including:

- An unknown Portuguese singer who used YouTube to rack up more than 30 million views and launch her professional career
- The leader of a tiny island nation who put his country on the map with an unexpected meeting that got the world talking about global warming
- A regional team of financial advisors that went from being ranked 173rd out of 176 branches to first, and stayed there for thirteen of the next fifteen years
- An independent sports agent who achieved the impossible by landing the number-one player in the NFL draft as a client through the power of relationships

Learn how to stand out in a good way, avoid the hype and strategic traps of social media, and be more successful by being more likeable, believable, and (most of all) trusted.

## Praise for *Likeonomics*

“*Likeonomics* offers a clear path to boosting your believability, which is the secret to sales and marketing success. The premise of the book is scientifically sound: People reciprocate, especially when we elicit their emotions. Great stories, clear tips and a strong point-of-view make this a rich read.”

—Tim Sanders,  
author of *The Likeability Factor* and  
former Chief Solutions Officer at Yahoo!

“*Likeonomics* shows us that you have to be liked to be trusted. And trust me, you are going to like—really like—this book.”

—Ed Keller,  
author of *The Face to Face Book* and *The Influentials*  
and CEO of the Keller Fay Group

“To succeed in business you need to be more than nice, you need to be likeable—and those are two different things. *Likeonomics* offers a simple premise which I LOVE—that your ability to build strong relationships is the real path to prosperity and happiness.”

—Linda Kaplan Thaler,  
CEO of the Kaplan Thaler Group  
and author of *The Power of Nice*

“A fascinating look at the unexpected science and power of likeability to sway our beliefs and decision making. I loved the idea behind this book!”

—Ori Brafman,  
coauthor of *Sway and Click*

“Want to build a business that customers can’t wait to refer to others or that employees love to work for? This is the book for you.”

—John Jantsch,  
small business marketing expert and author of  
*Duct Tape Marketing* and *The Referral Engine*

“It’s true. Likeability matters. Rohit Bhargava brilliantly and succinctly explains why likeability and authenticity are central to creating a trustworthy brand. In a cynical world where people are looking for things and individuals they can believe in, *Likeonomics* is a roadmap for growing your business.”

—Karen Kerrigan,  
President, Small Business and  
Entrepreneurship Council

“Having sat through hundreds of pitch meetings, I can tell you one thing for sure . . . unlikeable entrepreneurs never get funded. In business and in life, the people who enchant us are the ones who get our attention. If you want to be among the rare few who manage to do it, read this book!”

—Guy Kawasaki,  
author of *Enchantment*

“The simple but powerful stories in this book prove that values like truth, relevance, and timing matter far more than the hard sell and the seductive lure of data. We need these precepts to bring humanity back to a business world that has forgotten it.”

—Josh Bernoff,  
co-author of *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed*  
by *Social Technologies* and *Empowered: Unleash Your Employees,*  
*Energize Your Customers, and Transform Your Business*

“Finally a book that gets to the heart of why likeability is so important for both relationships and branding. Rohit Bhargava’s book *Likeonomics* is a great read with well defined principles, interesting case histories and insights that uncover what really drives customer and relationship loyalty.”

—Porter Gale,  
former VP of Marketing for Virgin America and  
author of *Your Network Is Your Net Worth*

“Likeability is the new currency for success. Grounded in both research and experience, Rohit shares practical insights that will stand the test of time. *Likeonomics* is a must read that will forever change the way business is conducted.”

—Gautam Gulati, MD, MBA, MPH,  
Chief Medical Officer & SVP Product Management,  
Physicians Interactive and Adjunct Professor of Medical Innovation  
and Entrepreneurship, Johns Hopkins Carey Business School

“Rohit Bhargava has it right with *Likeonomics*! There are more currencies than just money and time. Building real trust involves creating a personal connection with your employees and your customers, and this book will show you how. Pay attention to *Likeonomics* and profit from being more believable than your competition.”

—Chris Brogan,  
President of Human Business Works and  
*New York Times* bestselling author of *Trust Agents*

“Rohit has hit the nail squarely on the head in terms of showing how we can better work with others to improve our chances of success in all that we do. He demonstrates through real-world examples why being liked is so critically important. ‘Likeability’ in the public affairs community, whether military or civilian, is critical to one’s success. If you can’t work and play well with others, no matter what your credentials, the results you hope to achieve will often be beyond your grasp.”

—Kevin V. Arata,  
Colonel, U.S. Army\*

\*The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the  
official policy or position of the United States Army,  
Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

“*Likeonomics* explains the importance of great relationships and building long-lasting, enduring brands.”

—Tony Hsieh,  
*New York Times* bestselling author of *Delivering Happiness,*  
and CEO of Zappos.com.

“In this highly entertaining book, Rohit Bhargava proves just how important being likeable is to making a compelling argument. For anyone who needs to be persuasive, deliver a great presentation, or just inspire anyone else—*Likeonomics* will help you do it.”

—Nancy Duarte,  
CEO of Duarte, and author of *Slide:ology* and *Resonate*

“*Likeonomics* is a wake-up call to companies and customers that the critical new business currency is brand likeability. Using insightful stories and case studies, Bhargava explains how your brand uses truth to earn trust, leverages relevance to inspire loyalty, and fosters meaningful relationships to create the most powerful competitive advantage today—likeability.”

—Simon Mainwaring,  
author of *New York Times* bestseller *We First*

“Every once in awhile a book comes along and changes everything. *Likeonomics* is that book. Rohit Bhargava is a modern day Dale Carnegie, in that he has pinned a new personal development classic. I will now replace my annual read *How to Win Friends and Influence People* with *Likeonomics*.”

—JB Glossinger  
founder of MorningCoach.com  
(#1 Rated Self-Help Podcast on iTunes)

For too many of us, there is a gap between what we do and what we dream of doing. It doesn't have to be this way. For anyone who wants to close this gap of intent and really achieve your dreams, *Likeonomics* can help you get there!

—Mallika Chopra,  
founder of Intent.com

*Likeonomics* finally puts into words so many of the things I have done to build my company from the ground up. The book itself is a case study in what Rohit preaches; he is believable, honest, relevant, and of course, likeable! His focus on storytelling instead of just theorizing makes *Likeonomics* one of the most readable business books out there.

—Scott Jordan,  
CEO and founder of ScotteVest

If there is one professional fact of life, it is that having strong technical skills will only get you so far in your career. In order to boost your personal brand and make a name for yourself, you need to be likeable. If you want to build a winning career or business, then you need to read *Likeonomics*. In it, Rohit shares the truth about how likeability, unselfishness and trust are the real keys to success!

—Dan Schawbel,  
personal branding guru and  
Managing Partner of Millennial Branding

At the first skim of the table of contents, I was intrigued . . . but after reading *Likeonomics*, I was hooked! This book offers the rare combination of a highly practical primer filled with real world ideas for how to succeed in building your business, along with step by step guide to building trusted relationships in any situation.

—Ann Handley,  
Chief Content Officer—MarketingProfs  
and author of *Content Rules*

“At multiple points throughout life, your ability to build a meaningful relationship will make all the difference. From the quiet student in your chemistry class, to the cheerleader you admire from the sidelines, to the co-worker on your project, to the ideal prospect you are meeting for lunch, to the boss who will decide whether or not you get a raise—regardless of your situation, you need to be likeable. Rohit’s masterful book *Likeonomics* will show you how TRUST (truth, relevance, unselfishness, simplicity, and timing) is the secret to getting the connections you desperately seek.”

—Joey Coleman,  
Chief Experience Composer at Design Symphony  
and author of *Your Personal IPO: Taking Yourself  
Public to the World*

Being truly liked as a brand is not about the size of a number. It’s about being human—trustworthy and believable. Rohit will draw you in with his engaging storytelling style and his principles of *Likeonomics* will inspire you to rethink how you look at marketing.

—David Alston,  
CMO, Salesforce Radian6

Finally, likeability is no longer a black box! Bhargava has unearthed prime forces that will help you make an impact in what matters most to you.

—Scott Belsky,  
CEO of Behance,  
author of *Making Ideas Happen*

Wow! I loved this book! Rohit Bhargava has written an engaging manifesto for our times that should be required reading for everyone who wants to be a success and make a lasting difference in the world. This is a great follow up to *Personality Not Included*.

—Garr Reynolds,  
author of *Presentation Zen* and *The Naked Presenter*,  
and Professor of Management,  
Kansai Gaidai University

“*Likeonomics* picks up where Dale Carnegie left off by applying important principles to the modern hyper-socially connected era, in which relationships now transcend online and off with equal importance and regularity.”

—Frank Gruber,  
CEO and co-founder of Tech Cocktail

“In a world exploding with information and competition, the biggest question facing each of us is how do we know which information to trust? Rohit Bhargava’s *Likeonomics* offers a powerful strategy that every professional woman needs to hear—that your ability to build powerful and likeable relationships with others is the ultimate key to identifying the best choice of information.”

—Marsha Firestone, PhD  
Founder and President, Women Presidents’ Organization



# **likeonomics**

**The Unexpected Truth Behind Earning Trust,  
Influencing Behavior, and Inspiring Action**

**Rohit Bhargava**



**WILEY**

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*“The more people trust you, the more they buy from you.”*

*—David Ogilvy*

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# Warning: Unexpected Honesty. . .

## **This Book Is *Not* about the Like Button!**

This is not a book about Facebook. It is not really about social media, either. If you are looking for a book about either of those topics, *I would highly suggest that you do not buy this book.*

Not many books start off with a declaration of why you shouldn't buy them, but maybe more should. Maybe more businesses should do the same thing. Honesty isn't something that comes easily today. In our society of constant manipulation, everyone from businesses to politicians to the media want us to buy something, believe something, or do something.

The biggest crisis in our world today is one of believability. It makes it tougher to build a successful business, find and keep a job, or convince anyone to do or believe in anything.

This is a book about trust. But it is not another obvious declaration that trust matters. I think you probably already know that. The big idea behind Likeonomics is that you cannot build trust without being likeable. In the 1980s, Japanese businessmen adopted the word *dochakuka* to describe the idea that communities and people could think globally but act locally.

*Likeonomics* is a word to describe a similar idea. It is a way of looking at the world simultaneously on a large and

**The most important global currency isn't made of paper anymore — it's made of relationships.**

small scale. Whether you are launching your own business, or trying to land a job, or working to win an election—the principles are the same.

As you'll see in *Likeonomics*, the idea of likeability goes far beyond getting people to like you on a superficial level. It is not just about being nice. Instead, we will look at how people and organizations lose trust, how they can get it back, and what it really takes to be more believable.

My first step in building a relationship with you is to make sure you're buying this book because you know what you'll get out of it. My second is to try and offer a nonobvious and entertaining roadmap for how to be more believable in an irrational and information overloaded world. So let's get started.

# Prologue:

## How a Lard Salesman, an NFL Agent, and a YouTube Star Explain Likeonomics

Just over 10 years ago, I was part of a pitch that I knew we would win. I was leading one of the hottest and fastest growing digital production teams in Australia. We had built a glowing reputation in our market, won tons of creative awards, and boasted a long list of top-notch references.

More importantly, our creative concept and strategy for the potential client we were about to meet was perfect, and we knew it. We had such an original approach, in fact, that we knew none of our competitors would even come close.

By the pitch day, our team had rehearsed for two days straight and we were supremely confident. It showed. The meeting went almost perfectly. Everyone knew their part, and the client asked the right questions. As we walked out, we allowed ourselves to enjoy a momentary feeling of triumph.

We were ready to take a victory call the next day and accept the client's business. It was just a matter of time. Like clockwork, we got the call the very next day, as expected. Only the outcome wasn't what we expected. We had lost.

In the weeks afterward, our team went back over every step. What did we get wrong? How could we have lost? We simply couldn't understand. It was one of those rare situations where if we had the chance to go in and pitch again, we wouldn't have done anything differently. We longed to know the amazing idea that we lost against. Unfortunately, we never got a good answer. It was the first time in my career when I learned the frustrating lesson that sometimes you lose and never really get to know why.

A year later, I was at an industry conference and happened to see that same client we had pitched to. I asked her how they were doing, and exchanged some polite conversation. With nothing to lose, I then asked her the question really on my mind: *Why didn't we win?* She looked at me and told me something I have never forgotten: "You guys had great ideas and they did, too," she admitted. "Honestly, we chose them because we just liked their team better. *We wanted to work with them.*"

It didn't seem fair. It still doesn't—but now I understand. Since that time, I have had countless pieces of business won or lost over this single metric of team chemistry, but relatively few clients with the personal insight and ability to understand or admit how critical this piece was to their decision.

The fact is, the significance of this goes far beyond just the world of business.

**People trust and choose to believe people they like.**

We all choose our friends and teammates for everything from work to hobbies based on likeability. Relations-

ships, not logic, power almost all of our decisions. **In order to be more believable and more trusted—you need to be more likeable.** That is the simple idea behind this book.

To see why this idea matters so much, let's begin the journey by going backward in history to 1912 and a dusty classroom in Harlem, New York, where one of the most enduring philosophies of modern business was first born—even though no one there that night knew it.

## The Lard Salesman

It was 6 p.m. in a dimly lit classroom at the YMCA Harlem Evening School in early 1912, and the instructor was nervous. His topic that



night was public speaking, and even though more than half the seats were empty, his heart still raced. At 24 years old, he had already dropped out of college and failed as a young actor. His only modest success in his short career so far had been rising to become the number one salesman of “the highest quality tins of lard” (yes, lard) in western South Dakota.

That night he had walked to the classroom from his small, roach-filled apartment in a part of New York City that easily lived up to its nickname of “Hell’s Kitchen.” He certainly didn’t look too well, as his biographers would later write: “You could tell he had come upon hard times . . . [as] though one warm bowl of soup might have been enough to restore an appearance of health.”

Standing there in his ill-fitting gray suit and wire-rimmed glasses, he was struck by a sudden sense of panic.

*What was he doing here?*

*Why would anyone want to listen to him?*

His mind went blank.

By any account, he was an unlikely character to teach anything, much less public speaking. His voice was often described as possessing a slow, rambling Midwestern twang. He wasn’t a politician, or a famous athlete, or even a radio personality. He was the poor son of a pig farmer in Missouri who desperately wanted more than anything else to avoid becoming a farmer like his father.

If he was going to become famous, it certainly wouldn’t be from his chosen topic for that night either. In the early 1900s, public speaking was not as popular a professional skill as it has become today. Despite his ambition, the obscurity of his topic meant that he had already been turned down by both Columbia and NYU for his lecture. In desperation he had made a deal with the director of the YMCA to deliver his course by agreeing to forego the customary night teacher salary of \$2 per course. Instead, he would share in the profit—with the unspoken understanding that there probably wouldn’t be any. Finally, after all that work, his first class was happening and he could feel his big chance fading away before it had even begun.

In his moment of panic that night, a sudden burst of inspiration hit him. He asked a man in the back row of the classroom to stand up and talk about himself and his life. Then he asked another student to do the same. And then another. That simple format got people talking because they were each listening to personal stories that brought them together.

In this moment, he would learn an important insight that would shape his career from then on. There is nothing people care about more than being able to build better relationships with the others around them. This was, in fact, a skill that they would even be willing to pay to learn.

There was a phrase for this new skill . . . *human relations*. It started to be used to describe the ability to get along with and influence other people. So that year, building on his original insight, he formally named his new and improved course on human relations after himself: *The Dale Carnegie Course in Public Speaking and Human Relations*.

He would go on to fanatically refine and improve the course for the next 24 years. In one class he would use improvisational acting techniques; in another he would have participants do one-on-one exercises. The course spread to thousands of students and turned Carnegie into something of a business celebrity. He was filling large auditoriums with willing students, but it was in 1936 (almost a quarter of a century after starting his course) that he would achieve his biggest claim to fame.

That year a persistent editor at Simon & Schuster finally convinced Carnegie to write a book based on his course. The title would be easy: *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. The book was an instant best seller. Over the next decade, the book became the second bestselling book of its time, after the Bible.

Meanwhile, Carnegie's course grew into a full training Institute. In 2011, his Institute celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the book's first printing. In that time, the book has been translated into over 60 languages and sold more than 16 million copies worldwide.

Today, everyone from business executives to political leaders from around the world have studied the principles and are using them to transform the way they relate to other people. More than 2,700 professional trainers offer Dale Carnegie's course in 80 countries and 27 languages. The Institute has trained over 7 million graduates across the world.

## **The NFL Agent**

In law school, you don't spend too much time learning how to win friends. Chitta Mallik, however, never wanted to be an ordinary lawyer.

His real passion was football, but sports law was about the closest he expected to get. After graduating law school, he accepted a job at Latham & Watkins, one of the largest and most respected firms in the United States.

In October of 2004, after realizing that he had billed 434 hours that month (an average of 14 hours a day, every day, including weekends!), he decided it was time for a change. A lifelong sports fan, he knew that he wanted a career in sports. And despite working in sports law, Mallik realized what he really wanted to do was become an NFL agent. Unfortunately, it was an almost impossible field to break into.

Around the same time, a former standout NFL player named Tony Paige had been growing his own services as a highly successful NFL Agent. Paige had been a starting fullback in the NFL for nine seasons, an extraordinarily long career in a dangerous sport where the average career lasts only about three years. He got his accidental start as an agent shortly after he retired by agreeing to help a desperate former teammate renegotiate his contract. He did more in a week than the player's agent had done for him in years. As anyone inside the NFL knows, there are generally two types of players: those that get attention from their agents and those that don't. Agents are notorious for following the money, focusing their time and attention on their most highly paid clients—and shortchanging the rest. Most of them have little idea of what it takes to succeed in the NFL. Of the over 600 agents officially licensed by the NFL Player's Association to represent players, less than 15 are former players themselves.

So Paige had a natural advantage, but he also started in the business with a unique philosophy. While most agents cared about the player, he also tried to care about the person. This meant he would become a part of his player's lives. He would advise them on everything from buying a house to donating their time to charities. He was a genuinely good guy in a job where that was sadly uncommon.

In the spring of 2008, Mallik met Paige for the first time through a personal connection. Within 5 minutes, it was clear that the two men shared the same business philosophy and morals. Paige quickly convinced Mallik to join forces and help him run the Football Division at Perennial Sports and Entertainment, a full-service sports agency. Later that year, one of the first players they signed together was a 6-foot-2, 315-pound offensive lineman named Cecil Newton Jr. Newton had

played college football at Tennessee State University and entered the NFL draft in 2009. Unfortunately, he wasn't selected, but Paige and Mallik worked hard to find him a home in the NFL. They paid for his training, and reminded him that as long as he was in the building, he had a chance. Newton finally landed a rookie contract with the Jacksonville Jaguars. That year, he made it onto the field and actually played. The NFL is full of small victories like Newton's but the story doesn't end there.

Two years later, Cecil's younger brother Cameron was about to enter the NFL draft. Cameron, or "Cam," Newton had been a star quarterback who had won the Heisman Trophy (the highest individual award offered to college football athletes) and led his Auburn Tigers college team to the BCS National Championship. For the 2011 draft, he was anticipated to be among the first 10 players picked overall. As a result, he had his pick of an NFL agent, and 12 agencies were all courting him.

But Cecil's father had promised Mallik and Paige they would have a chance to meet with Cam—and he kept his promise. They met with him in January of 2011, amidst 11 other agencies desperately selling their own services. Yet, instead of talking to him about his future as a player, they talked about his future as a man.

They asked him what he wanted to be known for. They talked about what life after football would be like. And they talked about his brother. At the end of the first round of meetings, Cam and his father called back Perennial Sports. In January of 2011, Newton announced that he had selected Paige and Mallik along with Bus Cook, another agent.

It was like a real-life moment from the film *Jerry Maguire* where the agent wins the client based on his principles.

Six months later, Cam Newton was drafted by the Carolina Panthers with the number-one overall pick in the 2011 NFL draft, and signed to a four-year, \$22 million contract. In his first game ever, he became the first rookie to throw for 400 yards in his regular NFL-season opening game. Through the rest of his first season, he would go on to break more than a dozen other rookie quarterback records.

For Paige, Mallik, and Perennial Sports, landing the #1 overall pick in the NFL draft was a defining moment. The following year, they were

two of the hottest agents in the league and went on to have their most successful draft class ever.

## **The YouTube Star**

For Ana Gomes Ferreira, the first YouTube video was just for fun. It was January of 2007 and she was sitting on her bed with a guitar in her lap. With a friend holding the video camera, she recorded her own version of Sheryl Crow's "Strong Enough to Be My Man" and uploaded it under her stage name, "Ana Free." As song goes on, the camera zooms in and out randomly. The audio is muffled and you can tell that she isn't entirely comfortable in front of the camera.

You would never, at any point during that video, have mistaken Ana Free for anything more than a girl just having fun. It would be a nice story if she was discovered by an enterprising music executive, but that's not how her future would go. Her first video didn't get a million views. She was never meant to become another viral one-hit wonder—but that was perfectly fine for Ana.

As a child in Portugal, Ana didn't grow up wanting to be a singer. She went to an international school, studied hard, spoke five languages, and studied international trade and game theory while majoring in economics at the University of Kent in the United Kingdom. She had the sort of background that would usually have led a smart, young enterprising woman toward a career at a big institution like the World Bank or IMF.

All of which makes what would happen over the next five years even more extraordinary.

Every day, dozens of budding musicians look to the Internet as a place to get discovered and perhaps duplicate the phenomenon of Justin Bieber—by launching themselves and their music careers. Almost no one succeeds.

Ana, however, had one important thing going for her—she didn't start uploading her videos in order to be famous. She started by performing songs that she loved and then sharing them honestly with her audience. And unlike so many other musicians, she didn't avoid playing cover songs or gaining popularity by playing songs that people recognized.

Despite having written hundreds of her own original songs, every few weeks she would record a video of a new cover song that people recognized. Each song featured her sitting on a bed or a couch playing her acoustic guitar and singing directly to the camera. She has a great voice and slowly gets more and more comfortable in front of the camera. The audio improves. She buys a tripod. You can actually see her getting better from video to video. Yet the thing that sets every one of her videos apart is that they are all a surprisingly intimate musical experience.

When she sings and looks directly at the camera, it *feels* like she is singing directly to you. She shares outtakes where she breaks guitar strings and forgets lyrics. And her audience has grown because she is so genuinely passionate about the songs she sings, even when those songs have been written by someone else. As one music critic wrote, “The thing about Ana Free is her voice . . . [it] has a rawness that seems to reach into my chest and pluck on my heart like a guitar string. Not too high, more of a husky tenor.”<sup>1</sup> Before long, each of her songs started routinely getting thousands and then tens of thousands of views.

By early 2012, Ana had posted over 125 songs onto her YouTube channel—and almost every one had more than 10,000 views. More than a dozen have over 100,000 views. Several of her songs racked up more than 2 million views each, and her channel on YouTube has passed 31 million views overall and more than 80,000 subscribers. In June of 2010, her cover performance of Shakira’s World Cup 2010 theme song “Waka Waka” was so popular that it inspired Shakira’s production team to invite Ana Free to be an opening act for a Shakira concert in South America.

She has played at international music festivals around the world, and in 2008, her independently released debut single “In My Place” shot to the number-one spot on the Portuguese music charts. Three years later, she released her first EP, called *Radian*, and she will soon be releasing her first full-length album in 2012 (thanks to a highly successful social media–led fundraising effort from engaged fans).

Perhaps the greatest symbol of her ever-growing influence comes from looking back at YouTube itself. In 2011, a group of four young female fans of Ana Free launched their very own group who go to her concerts and record their own videos as a tribute to her influence. Their “anafreecrew” YouTube channel has already generated more than 25,000 views.

## The Big Question

What do a Portuguese singer who launched her career on YouTube, a reformed lawyer who became a successful sports agent, and the author of the world's most popular personal development book have in common?

Ana Free had the ability to connect personally with her audience in a deep and meaningful way by authentically sharing her personality and singing songs that people already knew and loved.

Chitta Mallik achieved the greatest goal of a NFL sports agent (getting a client who goes number one in the draft) by building a personal relationship with his client's family and becoming a trusted expert.

Dale Carnegie's success was based on the relationships he was able to cultivate with others, and his ability to teach people to learn the same skill—what he called human relations.

Each of these stories, in its own way, is about the power of relationships. Humans are social creatures. We choose to build relationships and do business with people we know and like. In a world of crowded media, with lots of organizations, politicians, and people competing for our attention, the key to success is your ability to earn trust. Trusted businesses are more profitable. Trusted people are more influential and successful. Trusted ideas are more likely to inspire belief. And being more believable is the toughest challenge for anyone today, which leads to the question at the heart of *Likeonomics* (see box) . . .

**How can any person, organization, or idea become more trusted and more believable?**

The rest of this book will be dedicated to answering that question.

## Why Likeonomics Matters

At first glance, the idea behind Likeonomics might seem like an oversimplified way of looking at the world. After all, don't real technical skills or talent matter more than likeability? When it comes to business, can't likeability be faked by people who just want to take our money and sell us stuff? And perhaps the most common challenge against likeability: Isn't making a great product or offering a great service more important than likeability on any level?



In *Likeonomics*, I'll tackle each of these objections. We will look at examples of everything from getting movies made in Hollywood to winning contracts to clean toilets. The people featured in *Likeonomics* come from around the world and range from some of the world's most recognizable CEOs to up and coming creators. What they all have in common is a shared understanding of how our world works.

It is a world where the most trusted people and organizations always win. It doesn't matter if you are looking for your next job, or trying to turn your own business into a success, or just build better relationships in your local community. This book is about how to earn and keep trust—and be more believable.

To see how, let's start with what might be one of the most powerful and global examples of the power of likeability and how it helped to change the fortunes of an entire nation.

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