Even if you’re my age, you’ve probably heard of her. In a very short period of time Lady Gaga became a phenomenon. So how did this performer climb to the top of the pop music charts?

It took more than just talent. The music industry is one of the most difficult and competitive of any profession.

Rather than simply rely on her talent, Gaga used superb business instinct, a unique style and the desire to incite attention that makes her a standout. If you’re finding that your job search or your business is flat, you might want to try a few of Gaga’s strategies.

First: Flaunt your talent. Get it out onto center stage. While Lady Gaga loves to sing, she gives of her talent to entertain others. She flaunts her talent by adding over-the-top costumes and an element of surprise to her persona. That attracts and retains interest.

If your talent is sales or marketing or designing or consulting or teaching or whatever, what does your talent give to others? What about your talent attracts others and retains their interest/support? If your answer is nothing, get an agent, a coach or a mentor.

Once you figure this out, sing it loud and proud. Just make it a song that your target audience wants to hear. Gaga didn’t try to reinvent the ’60s. She’s hip and now. You need to be current and relevant, too.

Second: Get business savvy. Gaga studied success. Her look was inspired by role models like Bowie, Grace Jones, Cindy Lauper and others. Gaga started by studying Madonna’s success to see how she could improve upon that business model to make it her own unique brand. Embrace competition and learn from it.

Three: Be unique. From the time we’re old enough to know what it means, we all want to fit in. But in business, this is the kiss of death. If nothing makes you better, smarter, more valuable, nicer, more affordable, more dependable, more productive, more interesting, easier to work with, higher quality, more consistent ... why should I care?

Four: Incite attention. None of us wants to be the industry’s best-kept secret. Gaga aligned herself with people in the business who could help her. She wrote music for others, besides writing for herself, to get more exposure. She took her look and made it extreme to attract attention. But rather than create a signature look, she created a signature brand that’s all about change and innovation. Gaga knows getting attention is one thing. Keeping it is another.

The good news is you don’t have to bleach your hair platinum or walk around in clothes made of beef.

Build a strong network, get testimonials, referrals and endorsements for your work, stay current, be visible online and off, watch and set trends, get out into the industry and/or community as a known expert or leading provider by participating in associations, organizations, civic groups, boards of directors and chambers of commerce. The key here is to participate as a headliner, not a groupie.

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