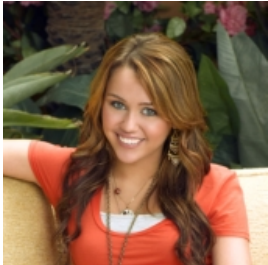


Teen Celebrity Entrepreneurs

[Melanie Lindner](#), 05.28.09, 06:45 PM EDT

A look at some preternatural brand builders who span multiple genres and industries.



It's hard enough to land a line in a TV commercial, let alone snag a starring role in a feature film. Or bag a record contract. Or a chunky book advance. Or a snazzy endorsement deal.

But achieving all of the above, with some philanthropy on the side? Now that's serious entrepreneurship--and it's all in a day's work for a rarefied clique of teenage celebrity entrepreneurs who have star power to spare.

These preternatural brand builders have dabbled in multiple entertainment genres, bagged endorsements, raised money for charity and even sold their personal stories to the tabloids. Their secret? They "really want it, have the talent and have the right machine behind them," says Fred Goldring, a Beverly Hills, Calif.-based entertainment lawyer.

For many young celebrities, that machine is [Walt Disney](#). The Burbank, Calif.-based entertainment company has churned out mega stars like Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake and Christina Aguilera. The reigning celebrity princess--and product of the Disney machine--is Miley Cyrus, best known for her role as Hannah Montana, a teen pop star who uses the "Hannah" name as her alias so she can have a normal childhood. The series has become a classic case of life imitating art, launching Cyrus' own singing and acting career, as well as putting her face on everything from Hannah Montana merchandise to a sold out concert tour with tickets being scalped for as much as \$20,000.

Cyrus made her feature film debut in the 2008 animated Disney film *Bolt*, then reprised her role of Hannah Montana in the 2009 film *Hannah Montana: The Movie*, which has grossed more than \$75 million worldwide. Her two solo albums, *Meet Miley Cyrus* and *Breakout*, have sold a combined 4 million copies. At the tender age of 16, Cyrus penned her autobiography, *Miles To Go*, which hit shelves in March and has sold 86,000 copies, according to Nielsen BookScan.

Triple- and quadruple-threat celebrities tend to hit their stride by tackling two entertainment staples: TV and music. (Fox's *American Idol* offers that one-two punch in one place.) While it's hard for adult celebrities to transition from acting to music, the teen audience is more accepting of multi-talented stars. "Teenage fans, particularly girls, have voracious appetites for knowing everything about stars' lives," says Goldring. "So when teen actors go into music and fashion, their fans follow because they already love them."

David Archuleta, 18, knows the drill. He got his big break in 2008 on season seven of *American Idol*, where he won second place with more than 40 million votes. He signed with Jive Records that June and came out with his first, self-titled album which has sold more than 500,000 copies. Since then, Archuleta has made guest appearances on Nickelodeon's *iCarly* and Disney's *Hannah Montana*, and he is scheduled to go on tour with fellow teen celeb Demi Lovato this summer. **Archuleta is also making a name for himself as a philanthropist working with [DoSomething.org](#) to encourage teenagers to assist in disaster relief programs.** (For more on creative giving strategies, see "[Give Like An Entrepreneur](#).")

Hayden Panettiere, 19, has been a working entertainer since her diaper days as a model in PlaySkool advertisements. As a child, she took small roles in Disney's *Remember The Titans* and on the soap operas *Guiding Light* and *One Life To Live*, and later landed guest spots on *Ally McBeal*, *Malcolm in the Middle* and *Law & Order SVU*. She nabbed her most famous role, Claire Bennet on NBC's *Heroes*, at age 17 and has since become a regular at sci-fi conventions like GenCon and New York Comic-Con. She's also been in more than a dozen feature films including *Bring It On: All Or Nothing* and starred alongside Kate Hudson in *Raising Helen*.

If that weren't enough, Panettiere also lent her voice to the animated character Dot in the Pixar film *A Bug's Life* and Kairi in the Kingdom Hearts videogame series for PlayStation 2. Not that she's forgotten her modeling roots: Her face has appeared in Neutrogena, Got Milk? and Candies ads. Oh, yeah, and she traveled to Japan in 2008 to protest whale hunting.

For the Jonas Brothers--Kevin (21), Joe (19) and Nick (16)--celebrity entrepreneurship is a family affair. Nick was the first to dive into entertainment at the age of 6 by starring in the Broadway play "A Christmas Carol," which led to other Broadway roles; later, in 2004, he recorded a Christmas song and signed on with INO Records, a division of Columbia Records.

His big brothers got involved writing his debut album, and soon the Jonas Brothers were a trio act. In 2007 they landed a guest spot on (surprise) Disney's *Hannah Montana*. Recently, they released their first feature film called *Jonas Brothers--The 3-D Concert Experience*, and now are filming a Disney Channel series, called *JONAS*, loosely based on their lives. Their first book (yes, these boys have one of those too), called *Burning Up: On Tour With the Jonas Brothers*, has sold 170,000 copies.

All that fame and money notwithstanding, the kids also know how to give back: They recently donated \$1.2 million to their Change for the Children Foundation--which they started and fund--to support Diabetes research, children's hospitals and performing arts summer programs.

Not all teen celebrity entrepreneurs start in entertainment. Shawn Johnson, 17, rose to fame as an Olympic gymnast in the 2008 Beijing Games. The world watched as Johnson won the gold medal for balance beam and the silver medals for all-around gymnastics and floor exercises.

Soon enough Johnson landed a slew of endorsement gigs for [McDonald's](#), [Coca-Cola](#), Crest toothpaste, CoverGirl, Secret deodorant and Cheerios. She made her acting debut in 2008 on an episode of the ABC Family TV show *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*. In November 2008, Johnson's first book, *Shawn Johnson, Olympic Champion--Stories Behind the Smile* hit shelves and has sold 50,000 copies, according to Johnson's agent.

To cap it off, Johnson became the youngest competitor ever on the eighth season of ABC's TV series *Dancing With the Stars*. She won.