

# From Signal to Shelf

## Emerging Guest Behaviors Through the Bandwagon Society LLC

**Project Type:** Cultural Trend POV / Consumer Insights

**Context:** Small business–driven, field-based observation

**By:** Becca Bochna

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### Project Overview

**The Bandwagon Society LLC** operates at the intersection of fandom, nostalgia, and self-expression—selling artist-designed accessories and goods online and in person at conventions and markets.

This Cultural Trend POV translates **real guest behaviors** observed through direct selling environments into **actionable retail opportunities**, demonstrating how emerging cultural signals can inform product strategy, storytelling, and experiential retail design.

#### **Objective:**

Identify fandom-driven guest behaviors and translate them into scalable, consumer-centric retail opportunities.

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### Signal

#### *What's emerging*

Across conventions, social platforms, and e-commerce touchpoints, consistent cultural signals emerged:

- Short-form video demonstrations showing how products are worn, styled, or customized
- Outfit photos where accessories function as identity anchors
- Fandom symbolism driving emotional attachment beyond utility
- Guest-led customization through mixing, matching, and collecting
- Repeat purchases tied to emotional resonance rather than need
- Language that frames purchasing as “collecting,” not shopping

**Pattern:**

Guests are using retail objects as **belonging signals**, not functional goods.

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**Observation**

*What's happening in real life*

Through direct guest interaction at conventions and markets:

- Guests frequently share personal fandom stories before asking about price
- Purchase decisions are justified with emotional language:
  - “This feels like me”
  - “This reminds me of my childhood”
  - “I’ve never seen merch like this”
- Guests return to:
  - Complete sets
  - Purchase multiples
  - Bring friends back to experience the brand
- Products are often worn immediately and photographed for social sharing
- The booth experience itself becomes part of the product’s perceived value

**Observation:**

Retail engagement extends beyond the transaction into social and emotional validation.

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**Insight**

*What this behavior reveals*

**Fandom-driven purchasing has shifted from affiliation to identity performance.**

Guests use accessories and small goods too:

- Publicly express nostalgia in low-risk, wearable ways
- Signal taste, humor, and emotional alignment
- Participating in fandom without the commitment of full cosplay

- Create moments of play and self-expression in everyday settings

This reflects a broader cultural shift toward:

- Emotional commerce over functional retail
- Low-commitment identity signaling
- Community validation through shared visual symbols

### **Core Insight:**

Guests seek retail experiences that allow them to play, remember, and belong—without asking for permission.

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### **Opportunity**

*What could this become*

### **Product**

- Modular or collectible accessory systems
- Limited drops tied to cultural moments rather than traditional release cycles
- Products designed to be styled, shared, and re-contextualized

### **Experience**

- Retail environments designed for discovery and interaction
- Try-on-first, photo-forward layouts
- Guest language that invites storytelling and emotional connection

### **Packaging & Storytelling**

- Packaging that functions as a keepsake, not a container
- Copy that validates emotion and identity
- Clear signals that products are meant to be worn, shared, and seen

### **Retail Shift:**

Transactional → Emotional → Communal