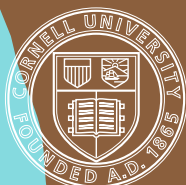


# HumanEcology



## POWERFUL Collaborations



Cornell University

# Chart TOPPERS

Gogi Gupta crunches the data that drives music sales

## On Grammy night, Gogi Gupta '00 and his 50 employees

assemble at company headquarters in Boston, ready to spring into action. Founded 11 years ago, Gupta Media develops digital ads, web and video content, and technology solutions to give the top acts in music—names like Beyonce and Taylor Swift—a boost in sales. On music's biggest night, the team allows itself only the 25 seconds it takes a winner to walk on stage to start moving units.

"Our goal," says Gupta, "is to pivot the massive exposure and excitement generated by the wins into sales and fans."

Raised in the suburbs of Buffalo, Gupta credits his performance under pressure to surviving the rigors of Cornell, guided by adviser Rosemary Avery, chair of the Department of Policy and Analysis and Management. "Gogi was one of those rare students who, despite his struggles adapting to the pace at Cornell, had a vision for, and confidence in, his future," says Avery. "He told me before he graduated, 'Don't worry, Professor Avery. I'm going to be successful and make you proud.' And he has!"



Launched in 2005, Gupta Media has risen swiftly in the music industry.



Gupta and employees watch the 2016 Grammy Awards. Right: Gupta Media helped the *Guardians of the Galaxy* soundtrack reach Platinum sales.

It took Gupta a few false starts to find his niche in the marketing world, but after successfully selling digital advertising for websites, he switched to buying ads and promptly snagged Disney Music Group as his first account. Today, with a client list that includes Sony, Universal, and Warner, he finds that his arms-length relationship to music has come in handy.

"You don't get blinded by your own fandom," he says. Instead, it's his passion for technology and data that drives his business. "From the public policy portion of my Cornell education the idea really stuck that you can put a price to a risk and make decisions based on that. It has to be cold and precise. When there aren't emotions involved, the good decisions and bad decisions make themselves apparent."



To put the company's success in Gupta's language of metrics: In 2014, it was the lead digital agency on 49 of the 52 number one albums, combining its team of marketers and engineers for big impact. "We're able to report the performance of your ad campaign twelve times a day to a tenth of a penny," says Gupta. "It's like I can push this lever, and three CDs will fall off the shelf somewhere in America."

With its product smartURL, which directs users to different destinations, including iTunes and Spotify, based on their device and geographical location, the company supports as many as 130 visitors per second. Looking forward, he is bullish as the music business gains more control of its revenues from physical and digital sales and streaming services.

"We are moving to a model of mass personalization, for example, with services such as Spotify, that will drive more consumption and more passion," says Gupta, who plans to expand his company further into live events, sports, and TV networks. "Our job as marketers is to find a way to make commerce out of it, and we're the best agency at what we do in the entire world."

Gupta's competitive drive and confidence in his team creates a close-knit spirit at "the clubhouse," as his wife Seana Richardson Gupta, Engineering '00, and mother to his three daughters calls Gupta Media headquarters. "What makes Gogi rare and unique is that, despite his success in business, he has never lost his sincerity and connections with those close to him," says Avery. "He has his feet firmly on the ground of what is and is not important in life."

— Olivia M. Hall