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The Key to Customer Loyalty: Delight

Posted by [Barry Silverstein](#) on February 24, 2011 06:30 PM



When Tony Vernon, the president of Kraft Foods North America, [told analysts](#) this week that "we must work even harder at customer and consumer delight," he was mirroring the results of the latest "Customer Loyalty Index."

According to the 2011 [Customer Loyalty Index](#) issued by the customer loyalty consultancy, Brand Keys, today's consumers are looking for the best total experience when they interact with a brand.

Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder, says, "Consumers want meaningful innovation that results in a higher level of experience. Satisfaction has never been more cost-of-entry; delight is the new differentiator."

Its new Customer Loyalty Index found that the strongest impact on customers came from attributes relating to "experience" and "authentic innovation."

Passikoff says that the Customer Loyalty Index predicts coming shifts in the consumer marketplace over the next 12 to 18 months. He observes that "consumers are looking for their favorite brands to make a real difference. Consumers know the brands, know what they do, and know what they're willing to pay for them. They're looking for delight."

The category leaders, then, are the brands that can meet or exceed customer expectations when it comes to customer experience and authentic innovation. Following are the brands that placed at the top of the Index in select categories:

Customer Loyalty Index Category Leaders



Allergy Medicine (OTC)



Athletic Footwear



Automotive



Breakfast Cereal, Adults



Breakfast Cereal, Children

PROGRESSIVE

Car Insurance



Coffee

MARY KAY

Cosmetics

LANCÔME

Cosmetics, Luxury



Diapers



Laundry Detergent



Pasta Sauce



Quick Serve Restaurant



Smartphone



Soft Drink, Diet



Soft Drink, Regular

Details on the methodology:

The Brand Keys Customer Loyalty Engagement Index is an annual syndicated study started fifteen years ago that currently examines customers' relationships with 518 brands in 71 categories.

The sample is made up of men and women 18 to 65 years of age drawn from the nine U.S. Census regions. Respondents (half of them men and half of them women, with an even-age-spread representation) are screened according to category particulars and then asked to assess the brand for which they have been determined to be a "customer."

85% of the interviews are conducted via telephone. The remaining 15% are collected via central-location intercepts among "cell phone only" respondents.