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BRAND KEYS UNVEILS DIGITAL PLATFORM GPS at OMMA GLOBAL CONFERENCE

**Brands Can Identify the Intersection of Strategies and 14 Digital Platforms
– MLB, Ford, Apple, Coke, Call of Duty, McDonalds
Among Brands at their Digital Best**

NEW YORK, NY March 19, 2012 - The debut of the Digital Platform GPS by Brand Keys, the New York-based brand and customer loyalty and engagement consultancy (www.brandkeys.com) at the OMMA Global conference, *Digital Moneyball*, in San Francisco today provides marketers with the ability to break down the wall between digital technology and brand strategy.

“It’s true that digital involvement has been growing at an extraordinary rate, but the truth is that when it comes to brands, digital is where TV was in the 1950s,” said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president. “Brands know a lot about who is using the platforms and that helps in knowing *where* to target, but it doesn’t provide much insight into *what* the brand should actually be doing on the digital communication platforms.”

The Digital Platform GPS was identified in this new 2012 study – the Digital Platform Engagement Index (DPEI) – that examined 83 product and service categories and identified how digital platforms connect with drivers of category and brand engagement, and help harness the power of category consumers engaged with digital. “As pervasive as digital is, surprisingly there was no single-source that identified the categories of digital platform available to marketers,” noted Passikoff. “We looked at the top-500 digital platforms on the basis of visitation and then sorted them into 14 specific categories”

The 14 digital platforms included the following: blogs, brand’s website, browsing portals (i.e. Yahoo), classified, digital magazines, digital newspapers, email, gaming, mobile apps, music, online video, search, shopping portals (like Amazon), and social networks.

This year, among the 598 brands and 14 digital communication platforms examined, the following brands were identified as doing their digital best on specific digital platforms:

Blogs: Major League Baseball, Netflix
Brand’s Own Website: Macy’s, Amazon
Browsing Portals: Samsung Flat-Screen TVs
Classified: Hyundai, FORD

Digital Magazine: Home Depot
Digital Newspaper: Expedia
Email: Costco, AT&T Wireless
Gaming: Patron Tequila, Coors
Mobile Apps: Apple iPhone
Music: Coke
Online Video: Call of Duty, Kindle
Search: Hilton Hotels
Shopping Portals: Skechers
Social Networks: Coke & McDonald's

"The truth is, most brands have not actually answered the 'should we be on Facebook?' question. They participate by default because they're afraid not to, putting their most friendly face forward," said Passikoff. "But behind closed doors, CMOs don't really know if social media matters when it comes to brands. Or, if it does, exactly how it should link back to what drives loyalty and engagement in their category. And, that's just Facebook. Those questions exist for the other digital platforms and must be solved if brands are to finally operate strategically in the digital space."

The study also measured self-reported category-specific of ranges of Digital Involvement, the time consumers spent weekly on any or all of the set of 14 digital platform archetypes. Across the 83 categories usage ranged from a low of one hour to as much as 84 hours a week. "There are amazing differences when you look at category-specific digital involvement and don't lump it into a single activity," said Passikoff.

"One size doesn't really fit all. For automotive brands the range is from one to 45 hours. For cell phones it runs two to 84 hours. And depending upon the range, there are differences in how digitally involved consumers emotionally and rationally view the categories and what they actually expect from brands, and that can truly affect branding and messaging and where individual digital platforms will have their greatest influence."

"Currently we're calling those consumers who fall into the top-20% of digital category involvement 'Digitals.' But the way digital marketing and adoption is going, when it comes to brand strategy, you might as well call it the 'future,'" added Passikoff

Methodology

The Brand Keys Digital Platform Engagement Index survey comprises 49,000 customer interviews, M/F, 18-65 years of age, drawn from the nine US Census regions. Respondents self-classified for category and brand participation in 83 categories with 598 brands. Results are generalizable at the 95% confidence level using a methodology that has been independently validated. The DPEI provides a unique perspective on digital usage, platforms, category, and brand, and offers marketers the following:

1. Category-specific identification of **ranges of Digital Involvement**, *i.e.*, time spent weekly on any/all of a set of digital platform archetypes (Social media networking, blogs, mobile apps, etc.).

2. The ranking of each digital platform in your category, based on the percent-contribution the platforms make to engagement and loyalty, offering a hierarchy that can finally inform **where to best allocate resources in the digital space**;
3. Exactly how those digital platforms connect with the emotional and rational drivers of consumer decision making in your category, allowing you to **customize content when using those digital platforms**;
4. How consumers with high-digital involvement see your category versus the general population to help you **steer brands into a digitally-pervasive future**;
5. **Identification of electronic devices providing the “best” interaction** with each of the digital platforms for each category.

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