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## **The 2012 Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders List IDs New Categories, New Brands, New Engagement Levels – Consumers Opt For Social, Emotional, and Electronic Connections**

**NEW YORK, NY October 23, 2012** – Apple, Amazon, Samsung, YouTube, and Twitter lead the 2012 Top 100 Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders List, the annual survey conducted by Brand Keys ([www.brandkeys.com](http://www.brandkeys.com)), the New York-based brand and customer loyalty and engagement research consultancy.

“This is our 16th year aggregating the brand loyalty leaders, and it’s the first time we’ve seen such a seismic shift in loyalty leadership in terms of new categories and brands making their appearance in the top-100,” said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president. “Brand loyalty has always been primarily driven by emotional engagement, and the rankings on this year’s list make it crystal clear that connection is everything.”

With 598 brands in 83 categories for consumers to rate, there’s a lot of competition for the top 100 spots. “This year certain categories rose to the top because of the high levels of engagement that consumers show, and what they deliver versus consumers’ expectations,” said Passikoff.

### **Twenty-One New Brands Make the 2012 List**

“Twenty-one new brands showed on the 2012 list,” noted Passikoff. “Most new arrivals account facilitate social outreach: tablets, smartphones, and social networks,” with Apple and Amazon taking the top two spots.

The top-10 Brand Keys loyalty leaders rank:

1. Apple: tablets
2. Amazon: tablets
3. Apple: smartphone
4. Amazon: online retail
5. Apple: computer
6. Samsung: tablet
7. Call of Duty: major league gaming
8. Samsung: cellphone
9. Halo: major league gaming
10. Twitter: social networks

### **Outreach Is Cellular and Social**

Twenty-three percent (23%) of the top-100 brands account for consumer outreach and engagement via cellular and social networks, and the phones, smartphones, computers, and tablets needed for the “instant-gratification access consumer expectations cry out for,” said Passikoff

### **Personal Care Brands Get Trimmed**

Last year beauty and personal care brands accounted for nearly a third of the top-100 but this year represent only 18% of the top-100 brands. “The emotional engagement that women share with their favorite beauty brands can be very powerful, but again, consumers are looking harder for a reason to believe and a reason to bond – and buy – one brand versus myriad ‘me-too’ products on store shelves,” said Passikoff.

### **Retailers Ring Up Fewer Ratings**

Retail brands were down nearly a third – looking at bricks and clicks providers – on this year’s list. “We believe that the inability for retailers to provide meaningful differentiation – beyond low-lower-lowest pricing strategies – has seriously eroded loyalty levels in the retail category,” said Passikoff.

Amazon.com is still high on the list (#4), but emotional bonds have weakened across the retail category. Zappos (#6 last year) moved down the list to #19 this year; the next ranked retailer is Target, at #36.

### **Drinking and Driving**

Five (5) automotive brands made the top-100 on the Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders List, including: Hyundai (#25), Ford (#39), Toyota (#46), General Motors (#68), and KIA (#99). This is the first time GM and Kia have made the top-100 rankings.

Alcoholic beverages appeared nearly 2:1 versus auto brands, with nine vodka and tequila brands making the list, slightly down from last year. Grey Goose maintained its loyalty lead in the #13 spot, up two spots, followed by Ketel One (#24) and Stolichnaya (#34). Don Julio led the tequilas, ranked #42.

### **Loyalty Leaders Top-100 Winners and Losers**

The brands that showed the greatest loyalty gains this year were:

Sephora (+60)  
Starbucks (+55)  
Ford (+47)  
Samsung smartphones (+30)  
Costco (+24)

Brands that saw the greatest erosion of loyalty and engagement included:

Netflix (-69)  
Bing (-60)  
Blackberry (-40)  
B.J.’s Price Club (-31)  
Flickr (-29)

“Some brands suffered losses because of the economy as consumers shifted to less expensive brands that still held some degree of meaning,” said Passikoff. Some of the shifts are due to the creation and adoption of new categories that help to better meet – or even exceed – customer expectations. But brands that understand that real emotional connections can serve as a surrogate for added-value will always top the list – no matter the state of the economy.”

## **Methodology**

The Loyalty Leaders analysis was conducted in September 2012 and includes assessments from 49,221 consumers, 18 to 65 years of age, drawn from the 9 US Census Regions, who self-selected the categories in which they are consumers, and the brands for which they are customers. Seventy-five percent (75%) were interviewed by phone, 20% via face-to-face interviews (to account for today's of the population who are cell phone-only consumers,) and the remaining consumers assessed categories and brands online. Loyalty Leader assessments examine 83 categories and 598 brands.

Unlike economic use models, which rely heavily on historical data and profitability conjecture, the Brand Keys Loyalty Model and rankings are 100% consumer-driven, and are predictive, leading-indicators of brand and corporate profitability. “The good news is that brand loyalty is understandable. The better news is, it can be quantified and predicted,” said Passikoff. “And, in these economic times, knowing what's coming down the road gives a brand an extraordinarily powerful advantage.”

For the complete top-100 2012 Loyalty Leaders List, please visit:  
<http://brandkeys.com/syndicated-studies/loyalty-leaders-list>

## **CONTACT:**

Robert Passikoff,  
President, Brand Keys  
212-532-6028, x12  
[robertp@brandkeys.com](mailto:robertp@brandkeys.com)