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**Brand Keys 2014 Sports Fan Loyalty Index Names
Spurs, Thunder, and Clippers As Fan Favorites**

NEW YORK, NY April 30, 2014 – The 2014 NBA playoffs are just underway, and while it may be unwise to jump to conclusions as to which teams will ultimately reach the finals, fan loyalty turns out to be much more than just the teams’ win-loss ratios. This is the 22nd annual fan survey conducted by Brand Keys, Inc. (brandkeys.com) the New York-based brand and customer loyalty research consultancy.

The *Brand Keys Sports Fan Loyalty Index* was designed to help professional sports team management identify what drives fan loyalty in their home and national markets. “These insights enable league and team management to identify areas, particularly the emotional ones, that need strategic brand coaching,” said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys’ founder and president.

Brand Keys assesses all teams by interviewing self-classified fans from the various teams’ immediate metropolitan catchment area. The current 2014 NBA top-5 and bottom-5 team standings are as follows:

Top-5 2014 **2013**

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| 1. San Antonio Spurs | (#2) |
| 2. Oklahoma City Thunder | (#5) |
| 3. Los Angeles Clippers | (#7) |
| 4. Miami Heat | (#1) |
| 5. Chicago Bulls | (#7) |

Bottom-5 2014 **2013**

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 30. Sacramento Kings | (#23) |
| 29. Minn. Timberwolves | (#22) |
| 28. Charlotte Bobcats | (#24) |
| 27. Milwaukee Bucks | (#19) |
| 26. Cleveland Cavaliers/
Washington Wizards | (#20, #21) |

The Sports Fan Loyalty Index provides an apples-to-apples comparison of the intensity with which fans within a team's local catchment area support the home team versus corresponding values for fans of other teams or other leagues in that market.

"Winning may be the only thing when it comes to a conference or playoff championship," said Passikoff, "but when it comes to loyalty, it's not the only thing. Fan loyalty correlates very highly with broadcast viewership, merchandise purchase, and to a certain degree, ticket revenues. While teams can count on some lift from a conference or championship win, there are three other emotionally-based factors that must be taken into account when calculating real fan loyalty:

Pure Entertainment:

How well a team does, sure. But even more importantly than a win-loss ratio, how exciting is their play? "Teams don't jump to the top of the loyalty roster just because they win a playoff or a championship. It adds to the loyalty bond," noted Passikoff, "But you need the complete package."

Authenticity:

How well they play as a team. Sometimes a new stadium and, often, new coaches, can help lift this driver, but the question is 'Are they really a team?' "Interestingly, said Passikoff, "while the world has become more-and-more mobile viewing, this is the driver most connected to actual game attendance and ticket purchases."

Fan Bonding:

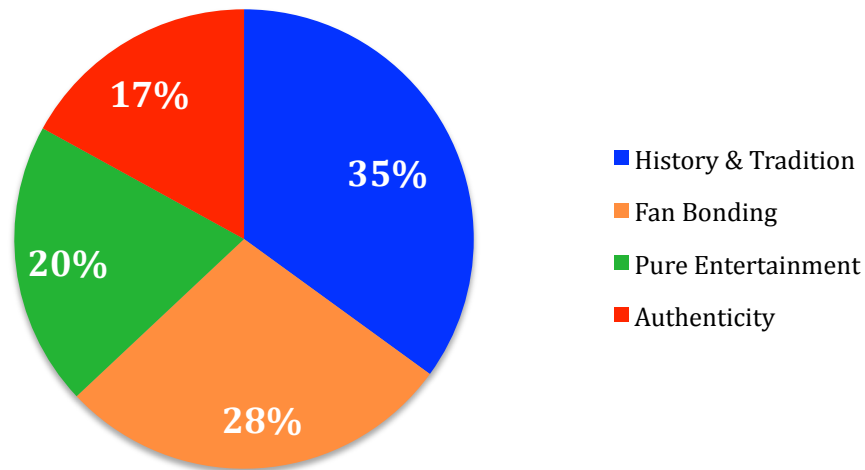
Are there players that are particularly respected and admired? "If you have to think about who that might be on your team, Fan Bonding is likely low," said Passikoff.

History and Tradition:

Has the game and the team become part of fans' and community's rituals, institutions and beliefs? "Tis is the strongest driver when it comes to fan loyalty in Major League Sports, noted Passikoff. "For some teams it accounts for the lion's share of loyalty. Think about a team like the Utah Jazz, only a reasonable level of History & Tradition keeps them out of the bottom-5."

"Each driver of fan loyalty contributes something different, and has different values," said Passikoff. "Currently they look like this:

Emotional Driver Contributions to Sports Fan Loyalty



The NBA again this year ranks 3rd of the four Major League Sports Brand Keys tracks. The National Football League is currently 1st followed by Major League Baseball. The National Hockey League comes in last. “Overall league and team rankings – no matter which league – correlate with viewership and merchandise sales and ticket sales, and since rankings can be influenced depending upon how loyalty drivers are managed, it’s critical that team marketers are as strategic as the coaches,” said Passikoff.

“NBA great and new New York Knicks President, Phil Jackson, noted, ‘Not only is there more to life than basketball, there’s a lot more to basketball than basketball.’ The ‘lot more’ he was referring to are what drives teams and what drives real fan loyalty too,” noted Passikoff. “For teams with high fan emotional scores it's always a win-win.”

Contact: VISIBILITY
Len Stein
cell 914 527 3708
Lens@VisibilityPR.com
www.VisibilityPR.com