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Brand Keys Surveys the ‘Most Patriotic Brands’ in America

Disney Joins Jeep to Lead the Patriotism Parade

Levi Strauss, Ralph Lauren, and Ford are #2, #3, #4

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Consumers Nominate a New Slate of ‘Patriotic’ Brands

NEW YORK, NY (June 27, 2016) – A new Brand Keys survey of iconic American brands has revealed the brands consumers consider the most patriotic: Jeep, Disney, Levi Strauss, Ralph Lauren, and Ford lead the parade.

“Being an election year,” said Robert Passikoff, founder and president of Brand Keys, Inc. (brandkeys.com), the New York-based brand loyalty and emotional engagement research consultancy, “and as issues regarding ‘patriotism’ have been raised to even higher levels of debate than usual, it seems an apt time to again look at how consumers see brands when it comes to the value of ‘patriotism.’”

“Election years, and holidays like Independence Day, give marketers opportunities to help citizens celebrate – and brands leverage – particular emotional values. In this instance, brand advertising and social outreach typically features patriotic flag-waving and red-white-and-blue motifs,” said Passikoff. “Marketers cue the Sousa marches and Uncle Sam look-alikes in attempts to leverage patriotic emotions, and, as this competition doesn’t end at the voting booth but includes the marketplace, all is done in the cause of increased sales.”

Top 50 Most Patriotic US Brands

A national sample of 4,750 consumers, 16 to 65, were asked to evaluate which of the 248 brands included this year were most resonant when it comes to “patriotism.” Consumers identified the following brands as leading 2016’s patriotism parade. Percentages indicate brands’ emotional engagement strength for the *individual value of patriotism*. **Bolded names** indicate brands that marched into this year’s top 50.

- 1 **Jeep/Disney** (98%)
- 2 **Levi Strauss** (96%)

- 3 Ralph Lauren (95%)
- 4 Ford (94%)
- 5 Coca-Cola/Jack Daniels (93%)
- 6 Harley Davidson/Gillette (92%)
- 7 Apple/Coors/Sam Adams (91%)
- 8 Gatorade/Amazon (90%)
- 9 Zippo/Hershey's/Kellogg's (89%)
- 10 American Express/Wrigley's (87%)
- 11 Colgate/**Starbucks** (88%)
- 12 Coach/New Balance (86%)
- 13 AT&T/Google (85%)
- 14 Marlboro/Converse (84%)
- 15 L.L. Bean/Facebook/**J. Crew** (83%)
- 16 McDonald's/**Kraft**/KFC (82%)
- 17 John Deere/Louisville Slugger/Walmart/**ABC TV**/**Nike** / (81%)
- 18 Craftsman Tools/GE/Wells Fargo (80%)
- 19 49ers/Cowboys/NFL/Patriots/MLB/NY Yankees/Wrangler/Wilson Sporting Goods/**Old Navy** (79%)

Authenticity Matters Six Times More

"When it comes to engaging consumers, waving an American flag and having an authentic foundation for being *able* to wave the flag are entirely different things, and the consumer knows it," added Passikoff. "More importantly, believability and authenticity are key to emotional engagement. The more engaged a consumer is with a particular emotional value and the associated brand, the more likely they'll act positively on that belief. Where a brand can establish real emotional connections, consumers are six times more likely to believe and behave positively toward the brand."

Armed Services Rate 100%

The Brand Keys annual survey focuses on for-profit brands, but – as they are every year – assessments for the United States armed services – The Coast Guard, Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy – were included. "Consumers gave all branches of the armed services an engagement strength of 100% when it came to the value of patriotism," said Passikoff. "We recognize that again this year and thank them all for their service."

American Icons Lead the Parade

"It's not surprising that many brands consumers put in the top 50 are American Icons," said Passikoff, "which is confirmed by the movement *up* the list into the top 50 of modern-day examples including: Starbucks, J. Crew, Kraft, ABC-TV, Nike, and Old Navy. "It's important that brands accurately measure these values," advised Passikoff. "Values are how consumers define what they expect from a brand. Meet or exceed those expectations and you have a differentiated brand, an engaged customer and, pretty much always, increased sales."

Brands Grow Patriotic Values

"There are always expected, minor positional shifts up and down a list of this nature," noted Passikoff. Major shifts of brand values are indicated by an increase or decrease of five percentage points, which is significant at the 95% confidence level. The five brands appearing

among 2015's Most Patriotic Brands that showed significant engagement growth this year when it came to the value of "patriotism" included:

Kellogg's (+13)
Converse (+11)
McDonald's (+10)
Sam Adams (+9)
KFC (+5)

"It is important to note that these brand rankings and 'patriot' nominations *do not* mean that other brands or people are *not* patriotic, or that they don't possess patriotic resonance or intention. Rational aspects, like *being* an American company, or being 'Made in the USA,' or having nationally directed CSR activities and sponsorships, all play a part in the make-up of any brand. But if you're a brand that wants to differentiate via emotional values, if there is believability, good marketing just gets better," said Passikoff. "In most cases, six times better."

"Every time we post the survey results we receive comments about how some of the top 50 most patriotic brands don't actually belong because their products aren't manufactured in the United States," said Passikoff. "That reflects a reality of the global economy and but one aspect of the rational side of the decision-making process. One thing marketers should have learned about 21st century brands is the ones that can make a meaningful emotional connection with the consumer *always* have a strategic advantage over competitors when it comes to the battle for the hearts, minds, and loyalty of consumers. Make that connection and consumers will not only stand up and salute, more importantly, they'll stand up and buy," observed Passikoff.

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