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The Most Innovative Tech Brands of 2016

**Consumer Expectations for Innovation Increases 33% over 2015,
Brand-Innovation Half-Life Gets Shorter**

**Airbnb, Snapchat and Shutterfly Join Google, Amazon and Facebook;
Uber and Kickstarter Kicked off list, LinkedIn Loses Link to Innovation**

NEW YORK, NY July 25, 2016 – The 6th annual [Brand Keys, Inc.](http://brandkeys.com) survey of consumer perceptions of innovative tech brands, conducted by the New York-based brand loyalty and emotional engagement research consultancy (brandkeys.com), found consumers' expectations for innovation skyrocketed 33% over 2015.

"Thirty percent (30%) of the top 20 brands are new to the 2016 list," said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president. "Six new brands showed up as consumers' tech innovation leaders for the first time, including: ClassPass, BuzzFeed, and theSkimm."

"It's hard to conceive that there was a time when consumers feared technological innovation," noted Passikoff. "They equated innovation and technology with a greater likelihood of something to go wrong. The 21st century may not yet have delivered flying cars – although we have seen prototypes – but it is clearly meeting its potential in terms of providing products and services that better meet consumers' tech innovation expectations."

Top 20 Most Innovative Tech Brands

This year 4,000 consumers were asked – on an unaided basis – to name companies and brands that they feel are leaders in technological innovation, with the following top 20 results. (Numbers in parentheses indicate movement up or down the list from last year.) **Bolded names** indicate new consumer mentions for 2016.

1. Google (+1)
2. Amazon (+2)
3. Facebook (+4)
4. Apple (-3)
5. Samsung (-2)
6. Netflix (--)
7. HBO (-2)
8. YouTube (+1)
9. **Airbnb** (new)
10. IBM (+2)
11. **Snapchat** (new)
12. Line (+8)
13. **Shutterfly** (new)
14. **BuzzFeed** (new)
15. **ClassPass** (new)
16. Intel (+3)
17. **theSkimm** (new)
18. Microsoft (-7)
19. SoundCloud (-11)
20. Tesla (-3)

New Innovation Leaders

“The consumer’s expectation for constant innovation, and the expansion of technological innovation, accounts for the addition of six new brands to the 2016 list,” said Passikoff. “Each new brand stands for something that advances the category in which they compete and adds real value for consumers.” The six new brands include:

Airbnb (#9): The online marketplace allowing consumers to list and rent homes.

SnapChat (#11): A mobile messaging app to share photos, videos, and drawings, with their newest addition of the “face swap.”

Shutterfly (#13): Internet-based image publishing company whose flagship product is their photo book line.

BuzzFeed (#14): A social news and entertainment company with sharable videos, news, and entertainment.

ClassPass (#15): A no-contract, plan-customizable fitness company.

theSkimm (#17): An email-based news delivery service.

Biggest Innovation Perception Shifts

The biggest movement *up* the list was seen for Line, the app for instant communication on electronic devices, up from #20 to #12, and Facebook, up from #7 to #4. Companies that moved *down* the innovation list included SoundCloud, the online audio distribution platform, down 11 spots to #19, and Microsoft, down 7 places to #18.

Brands That Lost Innovation Resonance

There were also brands and tech companies that weren't mentioned by enough consumers to make 2016's top 20 list. "With such high consumer expectations," noted Passikoff, "companies like Uber, that once were considered 'innovative' spawned enough me-to competitors to make them seem less innovative, or companies that have been around for a while, like LinkedIn, have come to feel 'conventional,' and that erodes the perception of innovation."

The six brands that did not show up on the 2016 list are: Hulu, Kickstarter, LinkedIn, Slack, Square and Uber.

It's clear that consumer attitudes toward innovation have changed dramatically," said Passikoff. "Consumers have come to see innovation and change as an opportunity - not a threat, and clearly something they expect in the brands they want to engage with."

It's also clear that what consumers consider "innovation" takes a variety of forms. "Creativity" like HBO's *'Game of Thrones'* is seen as an innovation. Certainly new forms of social outreach and connectivity are seen as innovative. And, new marketing paradigms for traditional products like ClassPass or theSkimm resonate with the innovation consumers crave."

"From a marketing perspective," noted Passikoff, "Innovation is change that increases emotional engagement and unlocks consumer value, so it's something brands must focus on. If nothing else, the changes on the 2016 Brand Keys Innovation list are proving that the brand-innovation half-life is shrinking rapidly."

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Brand Keys 2016 Consumers' Most Innovative Tech Brands

