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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**In Wake of Election Poll Debacle and Facebook & Nielsen Queries,
Brand Keys Issues 8th Annual “What Happened?”
Predictive Research Challenge**

**Engagement & Loyalty Metrics Proven Best Predictors
of Consumer Behavior**

NEW YORK, NY (JANUARY 9, 2017) – The 8th Annual “What Happened?” audio recording series addressing predictions of brand, marketing, and advertising success and failure were posted today by Brand Keys, the New York-based emotional brand engagement and customer loyalty research consultancy (<http://brandkeys.com>).

“In light of how traditional research stunningly flubbed predicting the 2016 election results,” noted Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president, “It seems as if making predictions is far more popular than actually providing measures marketers and advertisers can rely upon. Very few researchers actually put their predictions to a test until they turn out to be wrong, so we decided to issue a challenge to the industry. Many ‘leading’ research companies talk about ‘predictive metrics’ and how they forecast consumer behavior, but they don’t! Their ‘silver bullets’ turn out to be lead, and many audience measurements have come under attack by advertisers and marketers,” said Passikoff.

NBCUniversal has raised concerns regarding Nielsen’s cross-platform viewing measurement, indicating that the industry is in dire need of comprehensive and clear total audience measurement, but the Nielsen solution fails to deliver. “Bad, inaccurate, and misleading data is worse than no data at all,” said Passikoff. “Otherwise you might as well just guess. The evolution of an increasingly digital world is putting extra stress on traditional research structures that weren’t up to 21st century code in the first place,” noted Passikoff.

In September, Facebook acknowledged metric inaccuracies in key video measures with discrepancies in counting four Facebook measurements. “That’s something that should

cause marketers and advertisers to demand more accurate methodologies, and not just after-the-fact restatements of data,” said Passikoff.

The Brand Keys annual review proves that emotional engagement and brand loyalty were best predictors of consumer behavior. The methodology has been independently validated to accurately measure what’s *going to happen*. In addition to 9 critical trends for 2017, this year’s recording series includes:

1. 2016 Presidential Election: [Trump Triumphs](#)
2. Athletic Footwear: [The Sole of an Athlete](#)
3. Natural Foods: [Lettuce Discuss Loyalty](#)
4. Millennial Retail: [The Good, the Bad, the Logo-less](#)
5. Fast Food: [You Want A Hot Apple Pie With That?](#)
6. Super Bowl Advertising: [Super \(Bowl\) ROI](#)
7. Airline Fare Wars: [Come Fly With Me](#)
8. Brand Disengagement: [Failure Isn’t An Option. Wait. It Is!](#)
9. Brand Re-Invention: [The Innovation Zone](#)
10. The Chipotle Collapse: [Best Queso Scenario](#)
11. Alcoholic Beverages: [Beers Without Peers](#)

“If traditional survey-based research methods’ levels of prediction are so good, why are brands unable to accurately predict course-corrections when brands suffer losses? Why doesn’t the research match up with actual market results? Storytelling and entertainment and social networking are all well and good for buzz, but buzz isn’t a really acceptable substitute for real ROI,” noted Passikoff.

“We aren’t big fans of nostalgia – especially when it comes to helping brands predict how to engage an ever-evolving consumer in an ever-more complex and digital mediascape,” said Passikoff. “We’ll leave the postmortems to the research also-rans, although we think it’s fair to point out that when it came to Mr. Trump, Brand Keys called it.”

“If nothing else, we hope our challenge – and our recordings – will inspire marketers to demand more from their research, and maybe do a little digging of their own. Ultimately marketers want to know, ‘What happened?’” said Passikoff. “And ultimately it’s hard to argue with the real world.”

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