

Rising Importance Of Brand Values

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Commentary

by [Robert Passikoff](#) , Op-Ed Contributor, 2 hours ago

Political polarization, voter tribalism and recent, fervent social movements like #grabyourwallet, #MeToo, and #TimesUp have changed the face of brand engagement and consumer loyalty in virtually every brand sector this year.

Brand Keys 23rd annual Customer Loyalty Engagement Index® has identified *new* consumer values that have combined to create unprecedented shifts that define *how* consumers view categories, *compare* brands and options within particular categories, and how they will *buy, buy again, and remain loyal* to a brand.

The shift in values has resulted in brand leadership changes (and same-store sales and profitability figures) in 60% of the 84 B2C and B2B categories tracked, which includes 761 brands, evaluated by 50,527 U.S. consumers.

These leadership adjustments are startling in-and-of-themselves, but the fact that brands haven't had to deal with this kind of political polarization or social turmoil at the same time is truly noteworthy for marketers.

From a behavioral perspective, brand engagement is best defined by how well a brand is viewed by consumers as meeting their expectations for the values that drive purchase behavior in a given category.

In 2018, the top 5 brand sectors that showed the largest, overall shifts in category values and path-to-purchase dynamics were:

1. Instant Messaging
2. Retail

3. Broadcast and Cable News

4. Financial Services

5. Social Networking

The top 5 sectors reacting most to *Political Tribalism* values were:

1. Broadcast and Cable News

2. Financial Services

3. Banks / Credit Cards

4. Automotive

5. Hotels (luxury)

The top 5 sectors reacting most to values associated with *Social Activism* were:

1. Retail (all sectors)

2. Restaurants (all sectors)

3. Social Networking

4. Smartphones

5. Consumer Packaged Goods