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**PRESS RELEASE
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Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders 2021

***Desperate For Return To Normalcy, Loyalty Shifts As Consumers
Seek Solace In Established Loyalty Leaders:
Amazon, Apple, Domino's, Netflix, Discover & Instagram***

***Number of New Brands Entering Top-100 Lowest In A Decade:
TikTok, Levi Strauss, Red Bull, Apple TV & Walmart.com Make The List***

After Loyalty Hiatus McDonald's, Shake Shack & Konica-Minolta Return To Top-100

NEW YORK, NY, September 20, 2021 – The 2021 annual Loyalty Leaders List, conducted by Brand Keys (brandkeys.com), found consumers chose to recognize brands with established loyalty bonafides rather than acknowledge new brands. This year's survey, a cross-category examination of brand loyalty conducted by the New York-based brand loyalty and customer engagement research consultancy, included 1,260 brands in 112 categories.

"This year's loyalty rankings describe a desperate desire by the consumer for a return to normalcy." Over the past year loyalty has experienced a COVID-induced medical and marketplace trial-by-fire, the toughest test of customer loyalty we've measured in nearly forty years conducting loyalty research," noted Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president.

Brands As Surrogate For Solace

Brands can act as surrogates for emotional values absent from consumers lives. But brands with high levels of customer loyalty can provide solace too *and* are six times more likely to fulfill that role in uncertain circumstances, including lockdowns, product shortages, and supply chain SNAFUs. This year, brands like Home Depot, PayPal, Clorox, Hulu, and Purell managed to maintain loyalty leads established during the initial year of the pandemic.

2021 Top-20 Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders

(#s in parentheses indicate 2020 loyalty rankings)

1. Amazon: online retail (#1)
2. Apple: smartphones (#4)
3. Netflix: video streaming (#2)
4. Domino's: pizza (#5)
5. Amazon: video streaming (#3)

6. Disney+: video streaming (#7)
7. Google: search engines (#6)
8. WhatsApp: instant messaging (#9)
9. Instagram: social networking (#11)
10. Nike: athletic footwear (#12)
11. Home Depot: home improvement retail (#8)
12. Discover: credit cards (#16)
13. PayPal: online payments (#13)
14. Samsung: smartphones (#10)
15. Apple: tablets (#15)
16. YouTube: social networking (#17)
17. Hyundai: automotive (#18)
18. Hulu: video streaming (#19)
19. UPS: delivery (#21)
20. Trader Joe's: natural food retail (#20)

New, Returning, and Departing Loyalty Leaders

"The COVID and economic crises hit certain categories harder than others," noted Passikoff. "And while these loyalty assessments reflect true brand allegiance, it's fair to note there were categories consumers either did not have access to or immediate need of. Additionally, there are always new brands which end up in the top 100, - albeit significantly fewer this year." Brands returning to the list this year are truly representative of consumers' desires for a return to marketplace and lifestyle regularity.

Brands new to the Loyalty Leaders List this year include: TikTok (#21), Apple TV (#26), Levi Strauss (#46), Red Bull (#61), Walmart.com (#64), Crest (#65), Svedka (#86) and Lululemon (#90).

"Brands returning to the loyalty list are reflective of a partial marketplace return-to-normalcy," noted Passikoff, and included McDonald's (#72), Shake Shack (#80), Mastercard (#81), Call of Duty (#82), Konica-Minolta (#93), and iTunes (#95).

Brands out of the top-100 this year included Cosmetic brands (Lancôme, Estee Lauder, and Clinique), Vodka brands (Grey Goose and Ketel One), Insurance brands (Progressive and Farmers), as well as LG, Ben & Jerry's, and Sam Adams. "Individual brand loyalty diagnostics can clarify reasons for why these brands didn't make the cut this year," said Passikoff.

2021's Biggest Loyalty Winners and Losers

Loyalty metrics are always predictive of future consumer behavior. "It's axiomatic. The more loyalty, the better the behavior shown toward a brand. The better behavior, the stronger a brand's bottom line," added Passikoff.

Brands with the largest loyalty-list gains this year included Pinterest (+22), Chobani (+21), Lyft and Old Navy (+17), GEICO, Ford, and Dick's Sporting Goods (+15), Purell (+14), Chase (+12) and Square (+10).

Brands who saw the greatest losses in customer loyalty rank included Zara (-27), Costco (-23), USAA and Budweiser (-19), T-Mobile and State Farm (-18), Haagen-Dazs (-16), New Balance and Sam's Club (-14) and Zappos (-9).

Loyalty Is Emotional. So Are Consumers. Do This:

“Loyalty is always about connection and expectations,” said Passikoff. Brands that connect emotionally with consumers *and* can meet consumers’ mostly-emotional expectations, *always* do better during crises – six times better. The 2021 Loyalty Leaders List *proves* brands with high levels of customer loyalty can emerge from watershed moments stronger than before.

“Brands that do loyalty right,” declared Passikoff, “*Always* do better than their competition. And brands that make loyalty and emotional engagement a priority, show up on our Loyalty Leaders List. More importantly, they show up on consumers’ shopping lists.”

Methodology

Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders analysis was conducted during August and September 2021. It includes 53,222 assessments (M/F, 16 to 65 YOA, recruited from 9 US Census Regions). Respondents self-selected categories in which they are consumers and then assessed brands for which they were customers. The 2021 survey assessed 1,260 brands in 112 categories.

Unlike economic-use models that rely on historical data and profitability conjecture, Brand Keys’ rankings are 100% consumer-driven, measuring the emotional *and* rational aspects of each consumer’s decision process in the moment. “The good news is real brand loyalty paradigm is easily understood. The better news is it can be quantified, predicted, and integrated into any brand’s research efforts,” said Passikoff. “The best news is that loyalty correlates very highly with customer behavior and sales.”

For the complete 2021 Top 100 Loyalty Leaders List, click here: <https://brandkeys.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2021-Loyalty-Leaders-Top-100-List.pdf>

For more information regarding the Brand Keys 2021 Loyalty Leaders List, your brand’s position on the list, or information about integrating predictive loyalty and emotional engagement metrics into your marketing and branding efforts, please contact Leigh Benatar at leighb@brandkeys.com.

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