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Brand Keys 2013 Sports Fan Loyalty Index Names Heat, Spurs, and Knicks As Fan Favorites

NEW YORK, NY April 16, 2013 - The National Basketball Association Playoffs begin on April 20th, two days after the end of the regular season preceded by the release of Brand Keys 2013 *Sports Fan Loyalty Index* rankings for the NBA teams. This is the 21st annual fan survey conducted by Brand Keys, Inc. (www.brandkeys.com), the New York-based brand and customer loyalty research consultancy.

The *Brand Keys Sports Fan Loyalty Index* was designed to help professional sports team management identify what drives fan loyalty in their home and national markets. "These insights enable league and team management to identify areas, particularly the emotional ones, that need strategic brand coaching," said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys' founder and president.

While only 16 of the 30 league teams make the playoffs, eight from each conference, Brand Keys assesses all teams by interviewing fans from the teams' DMAs. The current 2013 NBA top-5 and bottom-5 brand standings are as follows:

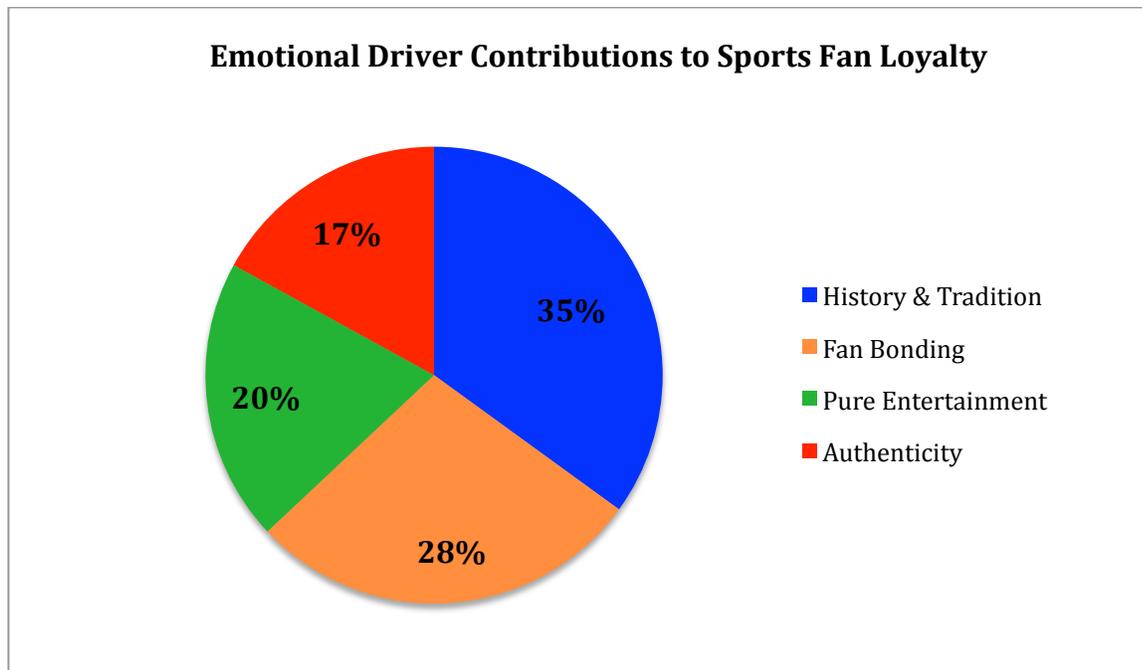
National Basketball Association

<u>Top-5- 2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
1. Miami Heat	(#6)
2. San Antonio Spurs	(#1)
3. New York Knicks	(#10)
4. Boston Celtics	(#2)
5. Oklahoma City Thunder/ Brooklyn Nets	(#5 and #14)

<u>Bottom-5 2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
30. Charlotte Bobcats	(#30)
29. Sacramento Kings	(#29)
28. Minnesota Timberwolves	(#27)
27. Washington Wizards	(#26)
26. Cleveland Cavaliers	(#22)

The Sports Fan Loyalty Index provides an apples-to-apples comparison of the intensity with which fans within a team's DMA support the home team versus corresponding values for fans of other teams or other leagues in that market.

"Winning is the only thing when it comes to a conference or playoff championship, said Passikoff, "but when it comes to loyalty, it's not the only thing. Fan loyalty correlates very highly with broadcast viewership, merchandise purchase, and ticket revenues, and there are three other emotionally-based factors that must be taken into account." The four emotional drivers of fan loyalty, and their overall contribution are:



Pure Entertainment:

How well a team does, sure. But even more importantly than a win-loss ratio, how exciting is their play?

Authenticity:

How well they play as a team. A new stadium and, often, new managers, can help lift this driver.

Fan Bonding:

Are players particularly respected and admired?

History and Tradition:

Is the game and the team part of fans' and community rituals, institutions and beliefs?

The NBA currently ranks 3rd of the four Major League Sports Brand Keys tracks. The National Football League is currently 1st followed by Major League Baseball. "Not surprisingly," noted Passikoff, "the National Hockey League comes in last. Overall league and team rankings – no matter which league – correlate with viewership and merchandise sales, and since rankings can be influenced depending upon how loyalty drivers are managed, it's critical that team marketers are

as strategic as the coaches,” said Passikoff.

“It was NBA great, Phil Jackson, that noted, ‘Not only is there more to life than basketball, there’s a lot more to basketball than basketball.’ The ‘lot more’ he was referring to are what drive teams and what drives real fan loyalty too,” noted Passikoff. “For teams with emotional team measures it's always a win-win.”

Contact: VISIBILITY
Len Stein
cell 914 527 3708
Lens@VisibilityPR.com
www.VisibilityPR.com