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**PRESS RELEASE  
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**Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders List 2017**

**Digital Brands, Online Access Own Lions Share of Consumer Loyalty**

**Amazon, Google, Apple, Netflix, Samsung, Facebook Lead**

**'Traditional' Brands Make Successful Loyalty Offensive Into Top 20  
Representation Doubles as Dunkin', Nike, Trader Joe's,  
Hyundai, Domino's and Ford Make Loyalty Leaps**

**NEW YORK, NY October 10, 2017** – More than a third (36%) of the 2017 Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders are represented by digital technology, social networking brands, or brands that facilitate digital or social, in the 21<sup>st</sup> annual survey conducted by Brand Keys ([brandkeys.com](http://brandkeys.com)), the New York-based brand loyalty and customer engagement research consultancy. Brand Keys examined 740 brands in 83 categories to provide an insightful and comprehensive, cross-category perspective of brand loyalty today.

“Since 2000 it’s been more difficult for non-digital or non-social networking brands to increase engagement that resonates with consumers’ emotions and builds loyalty,” said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president. “We predicted this precise situation would force traditional brands to work harder to create the emotional connections necessary to foster loyalty. Some have worked harder recently, with traditional brands using more digital and social outreach to boost brand loyalty. This year’s list proves the point”

**2017 Top 20 Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders**

(Numbers in parentheses indicate last year’s loyalty ranking)

1. Amazon: online retail (#2)
2. Google: search engines (#1)
3. Apple: tablets (#3)
4. Netflix: video streaming (#4)
5. Apple: smartphones (#6)
6. Amazon: video streaming (#9)
7. Samsung: smartphones (#14)

8. Facebook: social networking (#5)
9. Amazon: tablets (#7)
10. YouTube: social networking (#8)
11. Dunkin' Donuts: coffee (#13)
12. Nike: athletic footwear (#15)
13. Trader Joe's: grocery (#37)
14. WhatsApp: instant messaging (#14)
15. iTunes: video streaming (#15)
16. Hyundai: automotive (#22)
17. Starbucks: coffee (#18)
18. Ford: automotive (#16)
19. PayPal: online payments (#12)
20. Domino's: pizza (#43)

### **Brands Learn Loyalty Lessons**

"Interestingly (16%) of the brands that made the 2017 year's list moved up more than 20 positions," said Passikoff. "And while digital and social brands have held their positions at the top of the list, the number of 'traditional,' non-digital, non-social brands have doubled in the 2017 Brand Loyalty Leaders List top 20."

### **Loyalty's Rule of Six**

To compound the challenge of rising into the top 20 in a cross-category competition for loyalty, a number of brands were represented in multiple categories. Amazon appears in three categories: Online Retail, Tablets, and Video Streaming; Apple appears in the Tablets and Smartphones categories.

"We call that the *Rule of Six* loyalty, which means if consumers use a brand's products or services in one category," noted Passikoff, "They will be six times more likely to use the brand's products and services in other categories. That reality makes it harder for other brands - in and out of those categories - to break into the top 100, let alone the top 20," noted Passikoff.

### **Category Loyalty Leaders: Digital, Social, and . . .**

Digital technology, social networking, and brands that facilitate digital and social, comprised the most Loyalty Leader brands again this year, representing 36% of the 2017 list, up 2% YOY. But other categories represented by Loyalty Leader brands provides an interesting picture of where consumer loyalty is centered:

- Retail: 16%
- Automotive/ Auto Rental/Ride Share: 12%
- Restaurants: 9%
- Financial: 8%
- Cosmetics: 7%
- Alcohol: 7%
- TV News: 2%

## **Seven New Brands Replace Seven Old Brands**

This year seven of the top 100 Loyalty Leaders are new. Two more than last year. Two represented the TV News category: FOX (#47) and MSNBC (#58). Another two represented Restaurants: Shake Shack (#99) and 5 Guys Burgers & Fries (#100). Two were automotive-related: GEICO (#88) and Lyft (#95), and one brand, Zara (#89), replaced two retailers that fell out of the top 100, GAP and J. Crew. Other brands that slipped from the top 100 included: Burt's Bees, Chipotle, Google + and PacSun.

### **2017's Biggest Loyalty Winners**

Loyalty and emotional engagement are leading-indicators of future consumer behavior with loyalty driving behavior. "The better consumers behave toward a brand, the better the brand will do in the marketplace, which ultimately shows up on brands' bottom lines," added Passikoff. The five brands that showed the greatest loyalty leadership gains in 2017 were:

- Vanguard (+56 to #44)
- Forever 21 (+46 to #37)
- Home Depot (+39 to #45)
- Jack Daniels (+35 to #57)
- Lowes (+33 to #66)

### **Biggest Loyalty Losers**

The five brands with the greatest loyalty erosion, but still maintaining a spot in the top 100 included:

- Zuprowka Vodka (-53 to #74)
- L'Oreal (-40 to #91)
- Sam's Club (-35 to #82)
- Bose (-27 to #72)
- Under Armour (-23 to #51)

### **Loyalty's Bottom Line**

When it comes to loyalty - no matter the category - brands that understand that emotional connections can serve as surrogates for added-value will succeed. "Brands that have made loyalty and emotional engagement a strategic priority," noted Passikoff, "always appear high on the Loyalty Leaders List. More importantly, they always appear at the top of consumers' shopping lists."

### **Methodology**

Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders analysis was conducted in September 2017 and includes assessments from 49,168 consumers, 16 to 65 years of age, recruited from the nine US Census Regions. Respondents self-selected categories in which they are consumers, and the brands for

which they are customers. The 2017 Loyalty Leader assessments examined 83 categories and evaluated 740 brands.

Unlike economic use models, which rely heavily on historical data and profitability conjecture, the Brand Keys Loyalty and Engagement Model and rankings are 100% consumer-driven, and are proven predictive, leading-indicators of brand and corporate profitability. “The good news is that brand loyalty is understandable. The better news is, it can be quantified and predicted,” said Passikoff. “And, today, knowing what’s coming down the road from a category and competitive perspective is an extraordinarily powerful tool for developing brand strategy.”

For the complete 2017 Top 100 Loyalty Leaders List, click here:

<http://brandkeys.com/2017-loyalty-leaders-top-100-list>

For more information regarding the Brand Keys 2107 Loyalty Leaders List, your brand’s position on the list, or general information about integrating predictive loyalty and emotional engagement metrics into your marketing and research efforts, contact: Leigh Benatar at 212-532-6028 or [leighb@brandkeys.com](mailto:leighb@brandkeys.com).