

Brand Keys: Jeep, Levi Strauss and Disney are most patriotic brands

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Dive Brief:

- The 15th annual Brand Keys, Inc. survey of iconic American brands includes six newcomers to the top 50: Twitter, MSNBC, Airbnb, Fox News, Tesla and Instagram, per a press release made available to Marketing Dive.
- Even though new names were sprinkled throughout the top 50 list, comparing the 2002 list — Brand Keys' first gauging brands' patriotism — to this year shows some continuity. This year's top five includes Jeep, Levi Strauss, Disney, Coca-Cola and Ford — Jeep, Coca-Cola and Levi Strauss all having been in the top five 15 years ago.
- The survey found more contentious issues and division between consumers and their brands after last year's presidential election, including what was described as a dramatic shift in the four key drivers of the perception of patriotism. "Pride" has moved toward "self-importance"; "inclusion" to "marginalization"; "courage" to "convenience" and "freedom" to "extremism," Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys' founder and president, explained in the press release.

Dive Insight:

A number of notable American brands including Uber, Under Armour and New Balance [experienced harsh consumer backlash](#) in the lead-up and aftermath of the election of President Donald Trump, both for outward and perceived endorsements of his policies and persona. Brand Keys' latest report underscores how those points of political tension have echoed broadly throughout the marketing space in 2017, and are embodied in the form of anti-Trump groups pushing for consumer boycotts and also through Trump supporters who sometimes keep lists of preferred and objectional brands and executives to either support or disavow.

Jeep, Levi Strauss and Coke reappearing at the top of the list 15 years later points to how thoroughly ingrained their branding is in American culture, even as Coke, in particular, has weathered some conservative criticism for campaigns promoting inclusion, including with a Super Bowl TV spot focused on diversity.

Brands will find pushing for a more patriotic image challenging given the shift in drivers of perception toward more divisive and negative language such as "extremism" instead of "freedom," as outlined in the release. While some brands will likely try to avoid getting embroiled in politics at all, Passikoff said politics has made itself more emotionally felt this year, and that brands able to make meaningful emotional connections will have a strategic advantage over competitors in terms of winning consumers' hearts, minds and loyalty.

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