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**PRESS RELEASE
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Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders 2020

*Medical and Economic Pandemics Significantly Alter Brand Allegiances:
Loyalty Is Shown to Brands That “Showed Up” and “Delivered”*

20% of Brands Are New to Top 100:

Disney, Clorox, Campbell’s, Zoom, Mattel, State Farm, Charmin, T-Mobile, and CVS

COVID-19 Kills Traditional Category Contenders:

Chick-fil-A, Expedia, McDonald’s, Under Armour, Hertz, LinkedIn, and Delta Vanish

NEW YORK, NY, September 15, 2020 – The 24th annual Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders List includes the most, new entries in the Top 100 since the survey’s introduction. Brands joining the 2020 Loyalty Leaders List include: Disney (#7), UPS (#21), FedEx (#25), Clorox (#30), Purell (#39), CVS (#41), Zoom (#48), Ben & Jerry’s (#61), Square (#67), Progressive (#69), Budweiser (#72), T-Mobile (#73), Coors Light (#75), Charmin (#76), State Farm (#78), Campbell’s (#88), Grand Theft Auto V (#92), Mattel (#94), Crossfire (#99), and Farmers Insurance (#100).

The study is a cross-category examination of brands in the time of COVID-19 and massive economic disruption. The annual survey, conducted by Brand Keys (brandkeys.com), the New York-based brand loyalty and customer engagement research consultancy, examined 1,121 brands in 109 categories this year.

Who Showed Up? Who Delivered? Who Did What Was Expected?

“For consumers, the critical questions were, ‘who showed up’ and who delivered when needed most?” said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president. “Even during these difficult times, consumers won’t settle for a hearty, ‘We’re in this together’ message. They won’t settle for easy. They won’t settle for average. They won’t settle for ordinary. Consumers demand their expectations be met. Some brands delivered, others didn’t. Consumers acknowledged brands that showed up and snubbed the no-shows!”

2020 Top 20 Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders

(#s in parentheses indicate 2019 loyalty rankings)

1. Amazon: online retail (#1)
2. Netflix: video streaming (#6)
3. Amazon: video streaming (#7)
4. Apple: smartphones (#8)
5. Domino's: pizza (#15)
6. Google: search engines (#2)
7. Disney: video streaming (new)
8. Home Depot: Home improvement retail (#37)
9. WhatsApp: instant messaging (#12)
10. Samsung: smartphones (#3)
11. Instagram: social networking (#22)
12. Nike: athletic footwear (#17)
13. PayPal: online payments (#21)
14. Amazon: tablets (#4)
15. Apple: tablets (#5)
16. Discover: credit cards (#18)
17. YouTube: social networking (#35)
18. Hyundai: automotive (#10)
19. Hulu: video streaming (#32)
20. Trader Joe's: natural food retail (#9)

10X Supercharged Newcomers

"Consumers rated new brands at 10 times the usual rate," noted Passikoff. "Twenty brands debuted in the Top 100, with brands' movements up the Loyalty Leaders List supercharged largely by being there for consumers when needed. Those brands didn't disappoint, they met incredibly high expectations, and consumers recognized them for that."

2020's Biggest Winners

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

Brands that showed the largest loyalty surges this year included: Smirnoff (+26), Dollar Tree (+20), GEICO (+19), YouTube (+18), Jack Daniels (+16), Whole Foods (+16), Ketel One (+16), and Chobani (+15).

Categories & Brands Were Vaporized

"The combination of the economic crisis and COVID-19 obliterated certain categories," said Passikoff. "Eighteen brands – including McDonald's, Expedia, Under Armour, LinkedIn, and Delta – that we might have normally expected to appear in the Top 100 were *excluded* this year, seen by consumers as dispensable or AWOL."

Categories that fell into that rubric included: apparel retailers, automotive, fast-casual restaurants, all travel related categories (car rentals, airlines, automotive, online travel sites) and B2B products and services.

Loyalty Deflation & The New Abnormal

"The COVID-19 and economic crises hit certain categories harder than others," noted Passikoff. "The loyalty assessments reflect true brand allegiance, but it's only fair to note that consumers either did not have access to or the immediate need, had the pandemic not been raging, stores weren't forced to close, unemployment wasn't so high, and the 'new normal' wasn't so abnormal."

Those realities affected loyalty levels of these brands and their ranking in the Loyalty Leaders Top 100: Avis (-58), Ford (-58), T.J. Maxx (-46), Old Navy (-35), Twitter (-26), Lancôme (-25), Ralph Lauren (-23), Uber (-23), and Estee Lauder (-19).

Loyalty Is Emotional. So Are Consumers

Brands that connect emotionally with consumers, and brands that meet consumer expectations, always do better during crises – usually six times better. "The 2020 Loyalty Leaders List *proves* brands can emerge from watershed moments stronger than before. Brands that do it right, brands that show up, can be surrogates for comfort, support, and added-value. Those brands *always* do better than the competition. Brands that make loyalty and emotional engagement a priority," noted Passikoff, "appear high on our Loyalty Leaders List. More importantly, they show up on consumers' shopping lists too."

Methodology

Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders analysis was conducted during August and September 2020. It includes 52,515 assessments (M/F, 16 to 65 YOA, recruited from 9 US Census Regions). Respondents self-selected categories in which they are consumers and brands for which they are customers. For the 2020 consumers assessed 109 categories and 1,121 brands.

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 brand loyalty 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 metrics correlate very highly with customer behavior and sales."

For the complete 2020 Top 100 Loyalty Leaders List, click here <https://brandkeys.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-Loyalty-Leaders-Top-100-List-sept.pdf>

For more information regarding the Brand Keys 2020 Loyalty Leaders List, your brand's position on the list, or information about integrating predictive loyalty and emotional engagement metrics into your marketing efforts, please contact: Leigh Benatar at leighb@brandkeys.com.

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