

2023 brand loyalty leaders: Which ones are best navigating the changing face of consumer expectations?

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Besides the redefined workplace, the most challenging thing brands and businesses are still facing today from the lingering impact of the pandemic has got to be the complexity of the challenging new brand/consumer relationship. Expectations are sky high, and not just for better products and pricing—the Purpose mandate has added elusive layers to that consumer connection, as companies are now expected to take sides in societal debates, heed DEI mandates, improve their sustainability footprint, and other facets of new-world life that consumers didn't seem to consider when purchasing in the past. And this has all resulted in a very fragile and complicated sense of brand loyalty.

New research from loyalty and engagement research firm [Brand Keys](#) examines that changing face of customer loyalty and expectations in its annual ranking of brand loyalty leaders. The firm's *2023 Loyalty Leaders* research identifies a new brand ranking that reflects those changes. The 15th annual survey of consumers assesses 1,650 brands in 145 categories to identify new pathways for creating and nurturing brand loyalty.

“Loyalty is a critical KPI, but it requires more than asking about the likelihood to recommend a brand,” said [Robert Passikoff](#), Brand Keys founder and president, in a news release. “Monitoring movement up and down the Loyalty Leaders List is an important first step, as a change in loyalty rank always predicts future consumer behavior and brands’ bottom lines. This year’s results reflect how brand marketing and management positively—or negatively—effect loyalty.”

The Top 20 consumer loyalty leaders in 2023

The brands consumers rated in their top 15 in the 2023 Loyalty Leaders List are (#s in parentheses indicate rankings YOY):

BRAND	CATEGORY	2022	2021
Apple	Smartphones	1	2
Amazon	Online Retail	2	1
Domino's	Pizza	3	4
Disney+	Streaming Video	4	6
TikTok	Social Networking	5	21
Pfizer	Pharmaceuticals	6	NA
WhatsApp	Instant Messaging	7	8
Netflix	Video Streaming	8	3
Google	Search Engines	9	7
Amazon	Video Streaming	10	5
Nike	Athletic Footwear	11	10
MSNBC	Cable News	12	31
Discover	Credit Cards	13	12
Apple TV	Streaming Video	14	26
Instagram	Social Networking	15	9
Home Depot	Retail Home Improvement	16	11
Samsung	Smartphones	17	14
Dunkin'	Coffee	18	22
Hyundai	Automotive	19	17
Apple	Tablets	20	15
YouTube	Social Networking	21	16
PayPal	Online Payments	22	13
Hulu	Video Streaming	23	18
UPS	Delivery Services	24	19

[See the full list of ranked brands here.](#)

12 new brands make the list

Consumer loyalty assessments, a leading-indicator of positive consumer brand behavior, welcomed 12 new brands to this year's Top 100. "That's the largest number of new brands to appear in the survey's 15-year history," noted Passikoff. "These assessments identify consumers' desires and how they see brands meeting, or failing to meet, their expectations; essentially, why they're loyal."

New top 100 brands include:

- ChatGPT (AI, #49)
- Delta (Airlines, #60)
- Colgate (Toothpaste, #64)
- Modelo Especial (Beer, #71)
- Kia (Automotive, #76)

- Chevrolet (Automotive, #88)
- Hogwarts Legacy (Video Games, #91)
- NFL (Major League Sports, #94)
- Macy's (Department Stores, #95)
- Chick-fil-A (Fast Casual Food, #96)
- Estée Lauder (Luxury Cosmetics, #97)
- Patagonia (Apparel Retailers, #100)

The “Barbie bounce” and the Twitter tragedy

“The success of the Barbie movie and its emotive influence on consumer-engagement and loyalty was readily apparent at the box office and for the brand. Mattel got a loyalty ‘bounce’ of 46 spots, moving from #88 last year to #42 this year,” said Passikoff.

“On the other hand, some marketing moves don’t work as well. The brand formerly known as Twitter was #47 last year, but lost loyalty with its X name-change, among other branding blunders. Consumers clipped X’s loyalty wings, dropping it 45 spots to #92 this year,” he said.

Brands with largest loyalty-list gains this year include:

- Tito's (+53)
- Mattel (+46)
- T.J. Maxx (+32)
- L'Oreal (+27)
- American Express and Ford (+19 each)

Brands with greatest losses in customer loyalty-rank include:

- X (-45)
- Spotify (-21)
- Old Navy (-16)
- Paramount+ (-15)
- Whole Foods (-13)

Why consumers are loyal

This year’s list demonstrates that brands who make loyalty, engagement, and expectations top priorities not only place high on the list, but more importantly, rank high on consumers’ shopping lists. “Brand loyalty is all about the emotional connection a brand can create with consumers and how well a brand is felt to meet consumers’ mostly-emotional expectations. Do that and your brand will always perform better in the marketplace.” said Passikoff.

Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders analysis was conducted during August 2023. It includes 74,121 assessments (M/F, 16 to 65 YOA). U.S. respondents self-select categories in which they are consumers and assessed 1,650 brands in 145 categories for which they're customers.

Unlike economic-use models, archival data, and profitability guesswork, Brand Keys' rankings are 100% consumer-driven, predictively measuring emotional and rational aspects of each consumer's decision-process, which is why loyalty correlates so very highly (0.80+) with customer behavior, sales, and profitability.