



Brand Keys

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **What Keeps CMOs And Brand Managers Up At Night?**

### **Annual *Marketing On My Mind* Survey IDs This Year's Market Terrors A "Perfect Storm" of R-O-I, Inflation, and Profit Demands Lead 2023 List**

**NEW YORK, NY May 9, 2023** – The unrelenting demands for Return-On-Investment and profits, combined with capricious consumer values and an erratic economy, have created the “perfect storm” to keep marketers and brand managers up at nights, according to the fifth annual *Marketing On My Mind* survey, conducted by Brand Keys, the New York-based brand engagement and loyalty research firm ([brandkeys.com](https://brandkeys.com)).

“CMOs and brand managers have plenty of pressure-treated terrors to keep them up,” said Robert Passikoff, founder and president of Brand Keys, “Given the new-ish normal of a post-COVID marketplace, supplemented with a rollercoaster economy, we thought we’d again take a look at which issues are most responsible for their sleepless nights.”

#### **Today's Terrifying Terrors**

This year Brand Keys asked 522 CMOs and brand managers, “What keeps you up at night?” Percentages indicate frequency of mention among the professionals interviewed. “Problem” areas that received mentions by 75%+ of participants this year are listed below (Numbers following percentages indicate changes from last year).

1. ROI / ROMI (99%, --)
2. Inflation/Recession (98%, +1)
3. Pressure for increased profits/shareholder value (97%, +1)
4. Budget cuts (96%, **new**)
5. Competition from new brands (95%, --)
6. Identifying Brand Purpose / ESG Issues (95%, +7)
7. Optimizing CX (94%, +8)
8. Integrating/managing AI (94%, **new**)
9. Aligning brand with consumer expectations (93%, +8%)
10. Keeping consumers engaged with my brand (92%, +7)
11. Deployment of predictive analytics (91%, +5%)
12. How loyalty affects spending behavior (90%, **new**)
13. Increase brand Trust (90%, +5)
14. Balancing consumer advocacy and the brand (90%, +3%)

15. Consumer attention levels (89%, **new**)
16. Managing consumer expectations (89%, **new**)
17. Addressing technological innovation (89%, +5%)
18. Dealing with political dogma (88%, -11%)
19. Protecting my brand's equity (86%, +6%)
20. Developing long-term strategies that align with corporate goals (85%, +3)
21. Lack of brand focus (84%, --)
22. Proliferation of digital clutter (83%, --)
23. Generating new business/new customers (82%, +5)
24. Keeping my brand relevant (81%, --)
25. Managing agency relationships (80%, -2)
26. Creating relevant and engaging marketing and advertising (80%, --)
27. Data security issues (79%, --1)
28. Better cross-platform integration/synergy (78%, -2%)
29. Replacing legacy measures (77%, --)
30. Not evolving with audience (76%, **new**)
31. The Metaverse (75%, -13)
32. Work-From-Home/Remote Working/Return-to-Office Issues (75%, -14)
33. COVID and covid-related management issues (75%, -15)

### **New Bad Dreams, Increasing Terrors, and Fading Frights**

This year 18% of the issues keeping CMOs and brand managers up at night are and include:

1. Budget cuts (96%)
2. Integrating/managing AI (94%)
3. How loyalty affects spending behavior (90%)
4. Consumer attention levels (89%)
5. Managing consumer expectations (89%)
6. Not evolving with audience (76%)

"Fifteen percent (15%) of nightmare scenarios saw increases this year," said Passikoff. Those included:

- Optimizing CX (+8%)
- Aligning brand and consumer expectations (+8%)
- Identifying Brand Purpose (+7%)
- Keeping customers engaged (+7)
- Protecting brand equity (+6%)

"With the COVID curve flattened and a return to normalcy," noted Passikoff, "Pandemic-related issues were down significantly this year. 'Work-From-Home/Remote Working,' and 'COVID management issues' were down -14% and -15%, respectively." Dealing with political dogma, is down to 2021 levels, being cited only 88% (-11% YOY).

Two items that appeared on last year's list *didn't* show up in 2023. "Remote working upsetting creativity" that received 75% mentions last year was down to 59%. "Burnout," also 75% last year, received mentions by only 45% of respondents this year.

“It's been said of all the things CMOs and Brand Managers choose in life, they don't get to choose their nightmares. But the scope and effectiveness of research methodologies available today should provide CMOs and brand managers with some comfort and confidence. And a few more evenings of nightmare-free sleep,” noted Passikoff.

### **Methodology**

Brand Keys uses an independently-validated research methodology that fuses emotional and rational aspects of brand categories, identifies four category-specific path-to-purchase behavioral drivers, and identifies what consumers really expect versus how brands are seen to deliver against those expectations. These assessments are leading-indicators of future consumer behavior, identifying activities 12 to 18 months before they appear in traditional brand tracking surveys or focus groups.

Brand Keys' research technique, a combination of psychological inquiry and higher-order statistical analyses, has a test/re-test reliability of 0.93, and produces results generalizable at the 95% confidence level. It has been successfully used in B2B and B2C categories in 35 countries.

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