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Brand Keys Loyalty Leaders 2024

Apple, Amazon, Domino's, TikTok, and Netflix Take This Year's Top Loyalty Spots

Consumer Expectations Drive Significant Loyalty Swings – Up and Down The List!

Only Four "New" Brands Join Top 100

NEW YORK, NY, September 9, 2024 – Results of the 16th annual *Loyalty Leaders List* – a top 100 brands ranking according to their ability to engender customer loyalty – identified *expectations* as the key driver of positive consumer behavior and brand loyalty.

“This year consumers assessed 1,465 brands in 142 categories. The brands are then ranked according to their loyalty strength,” said Robert Passikoff, founder and president of Brand Keys, Inc. (brandkeys.com), the New York-based loyalty and engagement research firm that conducts the annual survey. “The analysis found consumer allegiance is driven by those expectations, which act as a true yardstick for loyalty success.”

Expectations Drive Loyalty

“The better a brand meets expectations determines how loyal customers will be short term and how profitable a brand will be on a long-term basis,” said Passikoff. But he also warned that expectations are not static. They increase every year – on average by 30% – while brands only keep up by 8-12%, demonstrating the gap between what consumers truly desire and feel a brand delivers. “It explains why some brands do better – or worse – than others. On our annual list *and* in the day-to-day marketplace,” noted Passikoff.

The 2024 Loyalty Leaders Top 10

The top 10 brands customers rated highest for loyalty this year included the following (#s in parentheses indicate rankings YOY):

1. Apple (Smartphones, #1)
2. Amazon (Online Retail, #2)
3. TikTok (Social Networking, #5)
4. Domino's (Pizza, #3)
5. Netflix (Video Streaming, #4)
6. YouTube (Social Networking, #11)
7. Samsung (Smartphones, #8)
8. Levi Strauss (Apparel Retailers, #37)

- 9. Dunkin' (Coffee, #14)
- 10. Mattel (Toys, #42)

2024 Loyalty Leaders Sectors & Shifts In Rank

For this year's top 100 *Loyalty Leaders*, 21% were Retail brands, 18% were Entertainment brands, with CPG brands accounting for 14% of the list. Automotive/Travel-related brands and the Tech sector brands each represented 13% of this year's list. Financial Services (10%), Personal Services (6%), and Restaurants (5%) made up the remaining *Loyalty Leaders List* sectors.

Because a brand's ability to meet expectations determines how consumers will ultimately rank them, it explains why loyalty expands or contracts, and diagnostics can tell you why. The biggest increases and decreases among this year's top 100 brands were:

Increases In Loyalty Ranking

- Mattel (+32)
- Levi Strauss (+29)
- Ford (+23)
- American Express & Ralph Lauren (+16 each)
- Chipotle (+13)

Decreases In Loyalty Ranking

- Chobani (-18)
- UPS & Sam's Club (-16 each)
- Lululemon (-15)
- Facebook, FedEx, and Hulu (-14 each)
- Dollar Tree (-13)

"The shifts in loyalty rankings are proof of concept," noted Passikoff. "Expectation shifts and a brand's ability to meet them explain the changes in loyalty ranks." Last year's "Barbi Bounce" continues to boost Mattel's loyalty momentum. Levi Strauss' is directly related to better meeting direct-to-consumer (D2C) consumer expectations. Ford's post-purchase remote service options fueled loyalty for their brand. Amex ramped up CX programs to better meet customer expectations.

On the other hand, both FedEx and UPS saw loyalty rankings drop amid post-pandemic consumers' engagement with alternative delivery options. Chobani is seeing the effects of lifestyle expectations shifts and an expanded competitive set including entries from Iceland and Australia. Sam's Club was hurt by revoking free shipping for online orders under \$50. Dollar Tree added more expensive items, antithetical to customer expectations. "That's what happens when consumers expectations aren't met. Delight turns to disappointment. And loyalty is always the first victim," advised Passikoff.

Consumers Add Only 4 New Brands To Top 100

Increased expectations have made loyalty more challenging today because they relate to emotional values and behaviors. But those values are leading indicators of consumer behavior and predictive of what consumers truly desire. So, by tracking expectations, a brand can put an early warning system into place. "Changes in expectations provide brands with category and brand value alerts up to 18 months in advance of the marketplace, two years ahead of brand trackers, and 5 years ahead of focus groups," noted Passikoff.

Only 4 brands moved into the top 100 this year, the fewest number of new brands since the survey was initiated. Those included:

- Visa (#92)
- Expedia (#96)
- Taco Bell (#98)
- Wrangler (#100)

Loyalty ends up being all about creating emotional connections, which drives how well consumers *feel* a brand meets their expectations. A brand that does that, *always* performs better in the marketplace.

“Alexander Pope wrote, ‘Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.’ But to be fair, he didn’t have 21st century consumers to deal with. To successfully do that today, the very first thing marketers need are accurate measures of what those expectations really are,” advised Passikoff. “Meet those and loyalty and profitability follow.”

Methodology

The Brand Keys *Loyalty Leaders List* analysis was conducted August 2024 and included 73,420 assessments (M/F, 16 to 65 YOA). U.S. respondents self-selected categories in which they are consumers and assessed 1,465 brands in 142 categories for which they’re customers.

The Brand Keys’ rankings are 100% consumer-driven, and predictively measure 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.

For the complete *Loyalty Leaders List* for 2024, click here: <https://brandkeys.com/loyalty-leaders-list/>

Insights About Your Brand

For more information regarding the Brand Keys 2024 *Loyalty Leaders List*, your brand’s ranking, or information about integrating predictive loyalty and emotional engagement expectation metrics into your marketing and branding activities, contact Leigh Benatar at leighb@brandkeys.com.

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