

Brand Keys Annual Survey Reveals the Most Patriotic Brands in America

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Jeep Rated #1 Again. Coca-Cola, Disney, and Ralph Lauren Nos. 2, 3, 4. Coach, Goodyear, MLB Move Into Top 50.

A new Brand Keys survey of iconic American brands has revealed which brands consumers consider the most 'patriotic,' with Jeep, Coca-Cola, Disney, and Ralph Lauren leading the pack.

"Independence Day gives marketers an opportunity to help citizens celebrate. And, typically, brand advertising and social outreach will feature patriotic flag-waving and red-white-and-blue themes," said Robert Passikoff, founder and president of Brand Keys, Inc. (www.brandkeys.com), the New York-based brand loyalty and customer engagement research consultancy. "Marketers cue marching bands and majorettes, Uncle Sam and Statue of Liberty look-alikes to leverage patriotic emotions and increase sales."

"When it comes to engaging consumers, waving the American flag and having an authentic foundation for being able to wave the flag are two entirely different things, and the consumer knows it," added Passikoff. "More importantly, believability is key to the engagement paradigm. The more engaged a consumer with a particular emotional value and the associated brand, the more likely they'll trust that emotion and act positively on that belief. Generally speaking, where a brand can establish a real emotional connection, consumers are six times more likely to believe and behave positively toward the brand."

To determine which brands will lead the parade when it came to patriotism, Brand Keys did a statistical "drill-down" to identify which of 230 brands are more associated with the value of "patriotism." "We know that effectual brand engagement is more emotional than rational," said Passikoff. "And while many emotional and category-specific values drive brand engagement, we had 5,427 consumers ages 16 to 65, drawn from the nine U.S. Census Regions, evaluate a collection of 35 cross-category values, including "patriotism."

The following are the Brand Keys 2015 top 50 most patriotic brands. Percentages indicate emotional engagement strength for the individual value "patriotism."

- 1 Jeep (98%)
- 2 Coca-Cola (97%)
- 3 Disney (96%)
- 4 Ralph Lauren (95%)
- 5 Levi Strauss (94%)
- 6 Ford/Jack Daniels (93%)
- 7 Harley Davidson/Gillette (92%)
- 8 Apple/Coors (91%)
- 9 American Express/Wrigley's (90%)
- 10 Gatorade/Zippo (89%)
- 11 Amazon (88%)
- 12 Hershey's/Walmart (87%)
- 13 Colgate (86%)
- 14 Coach/New Balance (85%)
- 15 AT&T/Google (84%)
- 16 Marlboro/Sam Adams (83%)
- 17 John Deere/Louisville Slugger/Smith & Wesson (82%)
- 18 L.L. Bean/Facebook (81%)
- 19 Craftsman Tools/GE/Wells Fargo (80%)
- 20 49ers/Cowboys/NFL/Patriots/ (79%)
- 21 MLB/NY Yankees/Wrangler (78%)
- 22 Campbell's/Gibson/KFC (77%)
- 23 Goodyear/Wilson Sporting Goods (76%)
- 24 J&J/Kellogg's/Tide (75%)
- 25 Converse/Heinz (74%)
- 26 McDonald's (72%)

Armed Services at 100% Rating

Although this was a survey of for-profit brands, Brand Keys "as they do every year" also included assessments for the United States armed services. The Coast Guard, Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy in the study and consumers gave all branches of the armed services an engagement strength of 100% when it came to patriotism. We recognize that and thank them for their service.

“It’s not surprising that many brands in the top 50 are American Icons,” said Passikoff, “which is confirmed by the number of brands that moved up the list into the top 50 of: Coach, Converse, Goodyear, Johnson & Johnson, Major League Baseball, and Wells Fargo. It’s important for brands to accurately measure these values,” noted Passikoff. “Values are a way consumers define the brand they expect from a brand. Meet or exceed those expectations and you have a differentiated brand, engaged customers, and increased sales.”

Brands Growing Patriotic Appeal

Even an increase, or decrease, of five percentage points is significant at the 95% confidence level. Eleven (11) brands in this year’s survey showed significant engagement growth for the value of “patriotism” including:

Jack Daniels (+18%)
 Coach (+15%)
 Major League Baseball (+11%)
 Coors, Wells Fargo (+10%)
 American Express, Wrigley (+9%)
 Goodyear, KFC (+6%)
 Craftsman, Johnson & Johnson (+5%)

“It is important to note that the assessments in this survey do not mean that other brands are not patriotic, or that they don’t possess patriotic resonance. Rational aspects, like being an American company, or being “Made in the USA” or having nationally directed CSR activities and sponsorships, all play a part in the make-up of any brand. But if you want to differentiate via brand values, especially one this emotional, if there is believability, good marketing just gets better,” said Passikoff. “In some cases six times better.”

“Last year we received comments about how some of the top 50 most patriotic brands didn’t belong because their products aren’t actually manufactured in the United States,” said Passikoff. “That reflects a reality of the global economy and only the rational side of the decision-making process. One thing marketers should have learned about 21st century brands is those that make an emotional connection with the consumer always have a strategic advantage over competitors when it comes to the marketplace battle for the hearts, minds, and loyalty of consumers.

Make that connection and consumers will not only stand up and salute, but more importantly they’ll buy,” observed Passikoff.