

Trump Brand Triumphs: The President-Elect Effect

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In the wake of changing demographics, shifting party coalitions and voter attitudes, Donald J. Trump has defied all political polls to become the United States'™ next President-elect. Not only did he win the electoral vote, the win also came with an enormously needed re-boost to the Trump brand.

A post-Election Day, overnight national survey conducted by Brand Keys, the New York-based brand engagement and customer loyalty research consultancy (brandkeys.com), revealed that in each of the seven (7) categories Brand Keys has tracked the Trump brand " a brand whose added-value had been badly battered by campaign rhetoric and the release of a video tape that captured Mr. Trump making lewd comments about women " rebounded to levels close to or exceeding added-value measures seen just prior to his announced presidential candidacy in April of 2015.

"Mr. Trump has been one of the most powerful brands we've ever tracked," said Robert Passikoff, Brand Keys founder and president. "You could add his name to anything from ties to buildings and the increased perceived value of the products fell into the 20% to 37% range. Which was very high, enviable by any category or brand standards, and what a brand is supposed to do. Now, I suppose, he literally qualifies as "the most powerful brand in the world"™." "

When Mr. Trump threw his hat into the presidential ring in June of 2015, some of the product and service categories Brand Keys tracked were positively affected; some were negatively affected. "But that didn't totally surprise or alarm us," noted Passikoff.

"In becoming a candidate Mr. Trump changed both the brand paradigm regarding consumer expectations and values surrounding the Trump brand and also blurred the traditional lines regarding where the "Trump brand"™ was expected to compete. These shifts changed how the Trump brand was perceived by consumers. And an oft-contentious campaign didn't help foster consumer emotional engagement and brand loyalty levels." But the disclosure of a videotape capturing Mr. Trump making lewd comments about women seemed to have placed the Trump brand in real peril.

"Brands " particularly Human Brands, people who are seen to be the living, breathing embodiments of those set of values they alone are able to so successfully, seamlessly, and profitably transfer to products and services " that are then so negatively and publically exposed the way the video did to Mr. Trump, don't usually come back as strong as they used to be. Think about what happened to Martha Stewart or Tiger Woods. Their brands survived but they never came back as strong as they were before the brand imploded " after they went to jail or were forced to do a PGA Adultery walk-of-shame, for example," noted Passikoff.

"Human Brands don't generally get a second chance to breath real life back into their brands or rekindle the desire in the hearts and souls of consumers. Not at their former brand strength, added-value levels, at least. These shifts are incredibly strong." But apparently winning a presidential election is the exception that tests the rule.

According to 1,203 registered voters in the 9 US Census regions, 100% of the categories where Brand Keys has tracked the Trump brand that had been negatively affected a month ago with the Access Hollywood tape disclosure, all rebounded to Post-Candidacy+ added-value brand levels.

Added-value related to the Trump brand " that is, how much more a product or service is seen to better meet consumer expectations and be seen to be worth more monetarily with the Trump brand " is back up significantly from a month ago in each of the seven categories where Brand Keys has historically tracked the Trump brand. In some categories the added-value brand numbers are the highest Brand Keys has ever tracked for the brand.

"Added-value was especially high in Country/Golf Clubs, Real Estate, and Suits," noted Passikoff. "And of the other four categories those numbers are all up too."

From a political perspective, with the White House won, the Senate race no longer a toss-up, and the House firmly within GOP hands, "a brand that was once deemed toxic by many consumers is now seen as not only a safe option, but an emotionally desirable option," noted Passikoff. "Especially given the new set of values that the brand has created around itself: victory, self-confidence and determination, a sense of the visionary, and ultimately greatness. We'll have to factor those into our next Presidential Model."

"The election occurred in contrast to predictions by the political polls and pundits, and we'll leave it to them to predict the future when it comes to presidential politics. What we know for sure is that these brand engagement, added-value numbers correlate very highly with consumer behavior and consumer perceptions of added-value for consumers'™ own sense of self and actual product/service price value," said Passikoff.

“They certainly did in voting booths across America. One should remember that these are leading-indicators, which means that we’ll be seeing their effects six to nine months down the road, although we’d have to do some additional drill down research to predict the product and political effects of those consumers/voters who feel disenfranchised.”

“That said, as currently calculated, this version of the Trump Presidential-Elect Brand’s added-value also adds a lot new meaning if you’re reserving the Presidential Suite at a Trump Hotel or scheduling a tee-time at a Trump Golf Course. I think it’s fair to call it “The Brand Commander-In-Chief”!