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## **Apparel Remained in Top Half of All Industries Studied in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2019 Study***

*Nike Ranked #1 in Industry Followed by Victoria's Secret and Levi's*

NEW YORK — October 15, 2019 —The [apparel](#) industry again ranked seventh out of the 15 industries studied in MBLM's [Brand Intimacy 2019 Study](#), which is the largest study of brands based on emotion. Brand Intimacy is defined as the emotional science that measures the bonds we form with the brands we use and love. Nike dominated the industry for the third year in a row. This year, it was followed by Victoria's Secret and Levi's. The remaining brands in the top 10 for the industry were: Ralph Lauren, Adidas, American Eagle Outfitters, lululemon athletica, The North Face, Puma and Gap.

Nike's second quarter fiscal 2019 revenue (for the quarter ending on November 30, 2018) was \$9.4 billion, a growth of 14 percent.<sup>1</sup> This correlates to MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2019 Study* findings, which showed that top intimate brands in the U.S. significantly outperformed the top brands in the Fortune 500 and S&P indices in both revenue and profit over the past 10 years.

"Apparel again was a mid-ranking industry in our annual study," stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner, MBLM. "Given the personal nature of apparel, we believe this industry could greatly improve its performance by fostering stronger emotional connections."

Additional notable apparel findings in MBLM's study include:

- Apparel had an average Brand Intimacy Quotient of 30.9, which was almost as high as the cross-industry average of 31.0
- Fulfillment, which is related to performance, was the archetype (a pattern that is consistently present among intimate brands) most associated with the category (last year it was indulgence), and Nike was the top apparel brand for fulfillment
- Nike ranked #1 in the industry and led with men, women and millennials; whereas, consumers over 35 preferred Levi's
- Nike also led among users with incomes under \$100,000, but users with higher incomes preferred Adidas
- Levi's, lululemon athletica and Under Armour have all fallen in rankings since last year
- 23 percent of the industry's customers were in one of the three stage of intimacy: sharing, bonding and fusing

In conjunction with the industry findings, MBLM also released an article analyzing Nike, entitled, "[Nike: Just Doing It.](#)" Nike's Brand Intimacy Quotient has consistently risen, indicating that the brand is continuously improving its effort to build strong emotional bonds with customers. Looking at Nike's archetypes is more of a mixed bag. This year, the brand showed decline in its associations with fulfillment, ritual, nostalgia and indulgence, and improvement related to identity and enhancement. Nike improved in sharing and bonding, the first two stages of intimacy, and declined in fusing, the ultimate stage. In addition to its innovative products, Nike's mobile focus, brand campaigns and continued support of social causes (issues of race, gender and sexual orientation) are likely contributing to its strong appeal with millennials. Further, among intimate users, the brand has significantly improved its price resilience

<sup>1</sup> [Nike News](#)

metrics. Sixteen percent of Nike's users said they would be willing to pay 20 percent more for the brand's products, up from nine percent in 2018 and higher than the industry average at 11 percent.

To view apparel industry findings, please click [here](#). MBLM also hosted a webinar on the industry, and a recording of it can be seen [here](#). Additionally, MBLM offers [Custom Dashboards](#) providing extensive data for brands included in its annual *Brand Intimacy* Study. To download the full *Brand Intimacy 2019 Study* or explore the Data Dashboard, click [here](#).

### **Methodology & Sources**

During 2018, MBLM with Praxis Research Partners conducted an online quantitative survey among 6,200 consumers in the U.S. (3,000), Mexico (2,000), and the United Arab Emirates (1,200). Participants were respondents who were screened for age (18 to 64 years of age) and annual household income (\$35,000 or more) in the U.S. and socioeconomic levels in Mexico and the UAE (A, B and C socioeconomic levels). Quotas were established to ensure that the sample mirrored census data for age, gender, income/socioeconomic level, and region. The survey was designed primarily to understand the extent to which consumers have relationships with brands and the strength of those relationships from fairly detached to highly intimate. It is important to note that this research provides more than a mere ranking of brand performance and was specifically designed to provide prescriptive guidance to marketers. We modeled data from over 6,200 interviews and approximately 56,000 brand evaluations to quantify the mechanisms that drive intimacy. Through factor analysis, structural equation modeling, and other sophisticated analytic techniques, the research allows marketers to better understand which levers need to be pulled to build intimacy between their brand and consumers. Thus, marketers will understand not only where their brand falls in the hierarchy of performance but also how to strengthen performance in the future.

To read a more detailed description of MBLM's approach, visit its [Methodology page](#).

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**About MBLM:** MBLM has invented a new marketing paradigm, Brand Intimacy, delivering expertise and offerings across three areas of focus: Agency, Lab and Platform. With offices in seven countries, our multidisciplinary teams help clients build stronger bonds and deliver optimized marketing outcomes and returns for the long term. To learn more about how we can help you create and sustain ultimate brand relationships, visit [mblm.com](#).