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Beverages Industry Continued Struggling to Build Bonds with Customers, According to MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2019 Study*

Mountain Dew Climbed 10 Spots, Gaining on Top-Ranked Brand Coca-Cola, Particularly with Millennials

NEW YORK — July 2, 2019 —The [beverages](#) industry continued to struggle building bonds with customers and ranked ninth 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. Coca-Cola maintained its top spot in the industry this year. However, reflective of the beverages industry's below average performance and the brand's overall ranking of 31, Coca-Cola also saw a net revenue loss of 10% in 2018.¹

Mountain Dew climbed from #12 in the 2018 study to #2 this year, performing particularly well with millennials. Coming in third was Pepsi and the top 10 was rounded out by: Jack Daniel's, Tropicana, Budweiser, Miller, Heineken, Coors and 7Up.

"The beverages industry is not effectively seizing the opportunity to create stronger emotional connections with its customers," stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner, MBLM. "Brands in the industry have the advantage of being inherently personal. We believe this can be leveraged to develop stronger bonds and increase both their Brand Intimacy performance as well as their overall financial performance."

MBLM's study also revealed other significant beverages industry findings including:

- The industry had an average Brand Intimacy Quotient of 28.5, which is below the cross-industry average of 31.0
- Indulgence, which is related to moments of pampering and gratification, was the most prominent archetype in the category
- Jack Daniel's was the top-performing beverage brand for indulgence
- Coca-Cola led across a range of incomes and among women, men, and users over 35, whereas millennials preferred Mountain Dew
- Pepsi improved its position in the industry since last year, while Coors and Budweiser declined in the rankings

In addition to the study findings, MBLM examined Coca-Cola in an article entitled, "[Bubbling at the Top](#)." The brand ranked first in the industry for the past three years; however, its performance has slightly declined each year, meaning it may need to revamp its strategy. Coca-Cola continues to enjoy success as an intimate brand due to a number of factors including its linkage to many archetypes and its broad appeal to both women and men, multiple age groups and different income levels. Coca-Cola improved its performance in fulfillment, enhancement and identity but declined in ritual and nostalgia. The brand has success in diversifying its product and also in improving in fusing, the most important and advance stage of Brand Intimacy. However, challengers such as Mountain Dew are emerging, which is a popular brand with millennials. In an attempt to connect with younger customers, Coca-Cola is bringing back one of its biggest marketing mishaps, New Coke, tied to Netflix's *Stranger Things*, in order to attract millennials who watch the show. The brand is trying new strategies in attempting to maintain its dominance.

¹ [The Coca-Cola Company](#)

To view beverages industry findings, please click [here](#). MBLM also hosted a webinar on the industry, a recording of it can be found [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](#).