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Beverages Ranked Ninth out of 15 Industries Studied in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2020 Study*

Branding Agency Analyzes Industry's Shifting Performance and Initiatives During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Coca Cola Again Placed First in Industry, Followed by Mountain Dew and Pepsi

NEW YORK — June 10, 2020 — The [beverages](#) industry ranked ninth out of 15 industries studied in MBLM's [Brand Intimacy 2020 Study](#), which is the largest study of brands based on emotions. MBLM (pronounced Emblem), the agency using emotional science to build more intimate brands during these unprecedented times, is also examining how the industry is shifting due to COVID-19 and how the pandemic may be changing consumers' emotional relationships with the brands. Brand Intimacy is defined as the emotional science that measures the bonds we form with the brands we use and love, and is more important than ever today as brands need to modify their roles.

MBLM's study, now in its 10th year, revealed that Coca Cola ranked #1 in the beverages industry for the third year in a row followed by Mountain Dew and Pepsi. The remaining brands in the top 10 for the industry were Budweiser, Tropicana, Jack Daniel's, Heineken, Snapple, Coors and Miller. Top intimate brands in the U.S. continued to significantly outperform the top brands in the Fortune 500 and S&P indices in both revenue and profit over the past 10 years, according to the study.

The beverages industry is being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in a variety of ways. For example, Coca Cola has seen negative volumes in May globally, although they have improved slightly after a 25% decline in April.¹ With the change in purchasing beer from tap rooms to grocery stores, consumers are drinking more Bud Light, Miller Light and Coors Light, as opposed to craft beers.² Some beverage companies are also stepping up to recognize those fighting COVID-19 and also trying to help during the pandemic. For example, Budweiser is honoring frontline workers in a new ad.³ Heineken partnered with Major League Soccer and David Guetta for a May 30th livestreamed performance to raise money for those impacted by the pandemic.⁴

"Beverage brands are connected to indulgence, providing us moments of gratification and escape during the stress of living through a pandemic," stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner, MBLM. "With limits in entertainment and dining out, how people are consuming beverages has evolved. Furthermore, alcohol brands in particular have been disintermediated by online beverage delivery services, who often provide curated offerings. Beverage brands will need to respond to these consumer shifts with new communications and we believe that leading with emotion and focusing on building deeper bonds with customers is essential."

Additional noteworthy beverages industry findings in the U.S. include:

- The U.S. beverages industry had an average Brand Intimacy Quotient of 29.4

¹ [Coca-Cola CEO says economic impact of coronavirus lockdowns is 'just starting to begin'](#)

² [Coronavirus Brings Beer Drinkers Back to Bud Light](#)

³ [Budweiser honors healthcare workers and military heroes in new campaign](#)

⁴ [MLS AND HEINEKEN® TO PRESENT DAVID GUETTA'S SECOND "UNITED AT HOME" CHARITY LIVESTREAM EVENT](#)

- Coca-Cola ranked #1 in the category and had broad appeal. Both men and women ranked Coca-Cola as their favorite intimate brand
- Coca-Cola also ranked #1 in the industry among consumers with incomes both over and under \$100,000
- Coca-Cola also led among those over 35 years old, whereas millennials ranked Mountain Dew as their top beverage brand
- Indulgence, which is associated with moments of pampering and gratification, was the archetype most associated with the category, and Jack Daniels was the top beverages brand for indulgence

MBLM also analyzed the industry in an article entitled, "[Beverages Brands Today, The Changing Landscape of Beverages during COVID-19](#)." The piece examines how the beverages industry performed in the study, which was conducted prior to the pandemic, and also how the pandemic has changed consumers' relationship with the industry. Sales of some beverages such as Coca Cola have seen a decline, but sales of alcoholic beverages seem to have increased. The ordering of these brands online also creates new channels of use and new ways for them to connect with users. Generally, the brands have kept pace during the pandemic and remained in stock, helping to maintain strong emotional bonds with their users.

The *Brand Intimacy 2020 Report* contains the most comprehensive rankings of brands based on emotion, analyzing the responses of 6,200 consumers and 56,000 brand evaluations across 15 industries in the U.S., Mexico and UAE. MBLM's reports and rankings tool showcase the performance of almost 400 brands, revealing the characteristics and intensity of the consumer bonds.

To view the beverages industry findings, please click [here](#). Additionally, MBLM offers [Custom Dashboards](#) providing extensive data for brands included in its annual *Brand Intimacy* Study. To download the full *Brand Intimacy 2020 Study* or explore the Rankings click [here](#).

Methodology

During 2019, 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](#).