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## Sub-Par Performance of Apps & Social Platforms Continued, Industry Ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of 15 Studied in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report*

*Apple Music Leads the Way Followed by Facebook and Spotify*

NEW YORK — April 25, 2018 — The sub-par performance of the [apps & social platforms industry](#) continued in 2018; the industry again ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of the 15 studied in MBLM's [Brand Intimacy 2018 Report](#), which is the largest study of brands based on emotions. Apple Music led the way followed by Facebook and Spotify. The remaining brands in the Top 10 app & social platforms industry were: Pinterest, Pandora, Snapchat, Google Maps, Twitter, Uber and Instagram.

Brand Intimacy is defined as a new paradigm that leverages and strengthens the emotional bonds between a person and a brand. For the third year, the study revealed that top intimate brands in the U.S. surpassed the top brands in the Fortune 500 and S&P indices in revenue and profit over the past 10 years.

"It is ironic that an industry that is built on connection and social interaction has such significant problems building bonds with its users," stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner, [MBLM](#). "Trust, privacy concerns and the nascence of these brands all impact their struggle to build Brand Intimacy; however, the industry has an opportunity to create stronger emotional bonds with their users by changing their current approach."

Other significant apps & social platforms findings in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report* include:

- The app & social platform industry had a Brand Intimacy Quotient of 18.0, well below the industry average of 27.1
- Ritual, which relates to a brand being ingrained into daily actions, was the industry's most prominent archetype and Apple Music was the top brand for ritual in this category
- Apple Music climbed up five spots, ranking #6 last year and #1 in the industry in 2018
- Apple Music also ranked #1 for millennials and men, while women preferred Facebook
- Facebook also ranked #1 with those 35 to 44 years old
- Those ages 18 to 24 preferred Spotify, as do people with incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000
- Google Maps, Pinterest and Instagram all had lower Brand Intimacy Quotients than they did last year

In a new article, "[Apps & Social Platforms Have an Intimacy Problem: Part I](#)," MBLM further analyzes the weak performance of the industry. Three key barriers were identified that inhibit apps & social platforms from building intimate brand relationships:

1. **Trust is a bust:** The U.S. saw a steep decline in trust for social media and search engines, dropping from 53 to 42 percent. The apps & social platforms industry had a below-average percentage in the bonding stage, the middle stage of Brand Intimacy that is defined by an establishment of trust
2. **Selling influence has a price:** Ad spend on channels is increasing sharply and consumers generally dislike ads. It seems likely that an unfavorable view has impacted users' feelings of intimacy towards these brands
3. **Getting the short end of the smartphone ecosystem:** Brands that thrive within the smartphone ecosystem have a great level of Brand Intimacy on average than those outside of it. The benefits of apps are attributed to the brands of their devices and because apps and social platforms are often free and used predominantly on smartphones, they can be seen as utilities or extensions of the smartphones' operating system that users feel entitled to

To coincide with the release of the industry and article findings, MBLM has a webinar entitled “Lessons from Top Performing Apps & Social Brands” that focuses on the industry findings as well as strategies on applying Brand Intimacy. To view a recording of the webinar, please visit: <http://mblm.com/lab/webinar-series/>.

To view the apps & social platforms industry findings, please visit: <http://mblm.com/lab/brandintimacy-study/apps-and-social-platforms>. To download the full *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report* or explore the Ranking Tool please visit: <http://mblm.com/lab/brandintimacy-study/>.

This year’s report contains the most comprehensive rankings of brands based on emotion, analyzing the responses of 6,000 consumers and 54,000 brand evaluations across 15 industries in the U.S., Mexico and UAE. MBLM’s reports and interactive Brand Ranking Tool showcase the performance of almost 400 brands, revealing the characteristics and intensity of the consumer bonds.

### **Methodology**

During 2017, MBLM conducted an online quantitative survey among 6,000 consumers in the United States (3,000), Mexico (2,000), and the United Arab Emirates (1,000). Participants were respondents who were screened for age (i.e. 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 study provides more than a mere ranking of brand performance and was specifically designed to provide prescriptive guidance to marketers. We modeled data from a total of 54,000 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 brands and consumers.

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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](http://mblm.com).