

Final

## Obama Defeats Trump in the Power of Personal Brands, According to MBLM's *BFF* Report

*Barack Obama, Michelle Obama, Tom Hanks, Donald Trump and Dwayne Johnson are the Top Five Most Intimate Brands in the U.S. Today*

NEW YORK — November 16, 2018 — Barack Obama defeated Donald Trump in MBLM's inaugural [Brand-Intimate Famous Figures \(BFF\) Study](#). Entertainers, athletes, politicians and spiritual leaders drive much of the trends, beliefs and culture we consume today. To better understand this impact, marketing firm, MBLM, has added to its annual [Brand Intimacy Report](#), the largest study of brands based on emotions. The agency created its *BFF Study* to detail which current icons are the most intimate brands in the U.S. The results demonstrate the strong emotional connections both Barack and Michelle Obama – who ranked first and second – have with younger Americans and women. The strong showing by Michelle Obama is particularly noteworthy, as she was the highest-ranking woman and also popular among diverse ages and with both women and men.

Tom Hanks and Donald Trump, dominant among older Americans and men, were the third and fourth top intimate brands in the U.S., according to MBLM's report. The Top 10 was rounded out by: Dwayne Johnson, Paul McCartney, Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey, Pope Francis and Rihanna.

“What does it mean to make it on this Top 10? It means that Americans over the age of 18 felt the strongest emotional connection to these people, describing their relationships in terms of forming attachments and identifying with them. This is not a list of people that are admired, it is people we feel involved with and bonded to. These celebrities, by design or by default, have created brands with powerful emotional connections,” stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner, [MBLM](#). “Personal brands are going to continue to play a tremendous role in impacting our politics, beliefs and behaviors.”

Other notable findings include:

- Barack Obama ranked #1 overall with a Brand Intimacy Quotient of 77.5
- He was also #1 for bonding, which is a deeper connection where you actively follow, watch and listen to the icon
- Donald Trump dominated with men and older Americans. He had the strongest “can't live without” measure and ranked highest on fulfillment, exceeding expectations
- Tom Hanks ranked #3 among both men and women
- The *BFF* Top 10 only had three women
- Among female respondents, Michelle Obama ranked #1 and Donald Trump ranked #7
- Colin Kaepernick ranked #1 for identity, having values people strongly identify with
- Mark Zuckerberg, who ranked 17<sup>th</sup>, is closely aligned to his Facebook brand and ranked highest for enhancement, making people more capable and connected
- Sean Hannity, who ranked 14<sup>th</sup>, was #1 in fusing, the strongest stage of intimacy, reflecting who people aspire to, and was an extension of their own personality
- Millennial men 18-24 ranked LeBron James, Stephen Curry and Barack Obama as their top three brands, while women the same age selected Michelle Obama, Rihanna and Barack Obama

In addition to the report, MBLM also released an article analyzing the findings entitled: “[Decoding the Connections We Build with Our Favorite Celebrities](#).” To view the *BFF Study's* Top 20, click [here](#). The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

**Methodology**

This year's *BFF Study* is based on an online survey among 1,003 adults, 18 and older, with quotas established by age, gender and region in order to insure national representation. The survey took place from 10/23/18 through 10/26/18, and the margin of error at the 95% level of confidence is +/- 3.09%.

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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).