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Intimate Brands Continued to Surpass the Fortune 500 and S&P Indices, Revealing Emotion is a Driving Force in Success of Top Companies, According to MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report*

Media & Entertainment Brands Made Gains, While Apple Still Reigned Supreme,
Followed by Amazon and BMW

NEW YORK — March 14, 2018 — Top intimate brands in the U.S. continued to surpass the top brands in the Fortune 500 and S&P indices in revenue and profit over the past 10 years, according to MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report*, which is the largest study of brands based on emotions. Apple again dominated and was the top company in the study. Additionally, MBLM revealed that the media & entertainment industry ranked first overall for the first time, triumphing over automotive. Brand Intimacy is defined as a new paradigm that leverages and strengthens the emotional bonds between a person and a brand.

The average revenue growth from 2007-2016 was 9.5 percent for the top 10 most intimate brands, compared to 4.37 percent for Fortune 500 top brands and 4.59 percent for top S&P companies. The average profit growth during this same time period was 19.14 percent for brand intimate companies, compared to 15.46 percent for Fortune 500 companies and 4.59 percent for S&P companies.

Amazon and BMW were the second and third most intimate brands in the U.S., according to MBLM's report. The Top 10 was rounded out by: Jeep, Disney, YouTube, Target, Netflix, Whole Foods and Google.

"Our collective need to escape, cocoon and be entertained is growing, particularly with those 35 and under," stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner, MBLM. "Brands that are optimizing content for our preferences dominated in 2017 by creating strong bonds and powerful connections. We expect this trend to continue in 2018."

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.

Other notable findings in the U.S. include:
- Retail was the number one industry for women, media & entertainment was the number one industry for men
- Apple and Amazon built bonds across all age groups, and each ranked within the top five for each group
- YouTube emerged from 25th place in 2017 to sixth in 2018, highlighting its growth ability to compete with other entertainment players
- Technology & telecommunications brands were linked to enhancement, making users more connected and smarter
- Top media & entertainment and apps & social platform brands were linked to ritual, habit-forming behaviors
- Brands within the smartphone ecosystem outperformed all others that were ranked

- As consumers moved from non-intimate to highly intimate, they were willing to pay more for a brand's products and services

Apple was the number one brand in both Mexico and the UAE as well.

Natarelli discussed the study findings during his session, "Fostering Brand Intimacy in a Digital World," at the HT-NEXT conference in San Diego on March 13, 2018. HT-NEXT is a leading conference for hospitality technology professionals and solution providers.

To download the full *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report* or explore the Ranking Tool please visit: http://mblm.com/lab/brandintimacy-study/.

Methodology
During 2017, MBLM with Praxis Research Partners 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 is the Brand Intimacy Agency, 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.