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Financial Services Continued to Fall in Rankings in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2019 Study*

American Express Topped Industry Followed by Visa and PayPal

NEW YORK — April 16, 2019 — The [financial services](#) industry ranked 11th out of the 15 studied in MBLM's [Brand Intimacy 2019 Study](#), which is the largest study of brands based on emotions, dropping one spot since 2018 and five since 2017. American Express dominated the industry, followed by Visa and PayPal. The remaining brands in the Top 10 for the financial services industry were: Capital One, Chase, MasterCard, Citibank, Bank of America, Wells Fargo and US Bank.

Brand Intimacy is defined as the emotional science that measures the bonds we form with the brands we use and love. 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 *Brand Intimacy 2019 Study*.

"While very important in our daily lives, the financial services industry again dropped in our annual study. Continued issues with trust, service and technology innovations are hindering consumers connecting with brands in this category," stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner, MBLM. "This suggests financial services brands need to change what they are doing and focus more on emotion and building bonds to help nurture stronger connections and improve perceptions."

Other noteworthy financial services industry findings include:

- American Express was the #1 brand for women, users over 35, and users with incomes of \$100,000 or more
- PayPal topped the category for men
- Visa ranked first for millennials
- Capital One was #1 for users with incomes under \$100,000
- Credit card brands American Express, Visa and MasterCard all showed improvement from 2018

In conjunction with the findings, MBLM released an article analyzing American Express' success, "[American Express Does It Best](#)." The piece explores American Express' rise in the industry, showcased by its quotient climbing from 32.7 in last year's study to 38.6 this year. MBLM looks into how American Express leverages emotion to connect with consumers, by conveying characteristics that are generally less associated with the category. The brand also utilizes differentiation, membership incentives and powerful connections with key demographics.

The *Brand Intimacy 2019 Study* 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 interactive Data Dashboard, which features a brand ranking tool, showcase the performance of almost 400 brands, revealing the characteristics and intensity of the consumer bonds.

To view financial services industry findings, please click [here](#). MBLM also hosted a webinar on the industry, a recording of it can be found [here](#). To download the full *Brand Intimacy 2019 Study* or explore the Data Dashboard click [here](#).

Methodology

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.