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## Hospitality & Theme Parks Industry Continues to Underperform in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report*

*Universal Theme Parks Ranked First in Industry, Followed by Disney Parks and Marriott*

NEW YORK — June 13, 2018 — The [hospitality & theme parks industry](#) ranked #10 out of 15 industries studied in MBLM's [Brand Intimacy 2018 Report](#), which is the largest study of brands based on emotions. Universal Theme Parks came in first in the industry, followed by Disney Parks and Marriott. The remaining brands in the Top 10 for the hospitality & theme parks industry were: Hilton, Holiday Inn, Ritz Carlton, Four Seasons, Days Inn, Sheraton and Hyatt.

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, MBLM's 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.

"Brands in the hospitality & theme parks industry are being commoditized and disintermediated. They continue to struggle in effectively building intimate bonds with consumers," stated Mario Ntarelli, managing partner at [MBLM](#). "Yet, there is enormous opportunity for this industry and it involves focusing on experiences that create and foster emotional connections. Companies need to provide customers a reason to commit to their brand that goes beyond price point, amenities or a membership program."

Other notable hospitality & theme parks findings in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report* include:

- The category's Brand Intimacy Quotient was 20.3, well below the industry average of 27.1.
- Fulfillment, which relates to performance, was the archetype most associated with the category, and Marriott was the best performing brand for fulfillment
- Women and those 35-64 years old preferred Universal Theme Parks
- Millennials chose Disney Parks, which also ranked highest for fusing
- Universal Theme Parks, which ranked #1, had considerably improved its intimacy score, 41.1 this year, compared to 29.4 last year, while Four Seasons' score declined this year

MBLM also released a comprehensive article entitled, "[Can Hospitality Brands Find a More Intimate Future: Uncovering opportunities for brands to building stronger connections with consumers.](#)" The article includes an analysis of two major players in the industry – Marriot and Airbnb. It also provides a number of considerations impacting the way consumers bond with hospitality and theme parks, including:

- **More than technology for technology's sake:** Hotels are scrambling to invest and leverage technology to enhance the consumer's experience
- **The experiential factor:** Hotels are focusing on unique experiences since millennial and Generation Z audiences tend to value experiences overall material goods
- **Brands that endure:** The age of a brand impacts its ability to build intimate bonds with consumers. Younger brands need more time to build nuanced relationships with consumers
- **Loyalty is dead** – Loyalty programs are not impactful anymore and brands looking for success would be better off investing in efforts to funnel more customers into the fusing stage, when a person and a brand are inexorably linked, than expecting repeat business from loyalty programs

In addition to the release of the findings and article, MBLM also hosted a webinar entitled “Explore Rankings of the Most Intimate Hospitality & Theme Park Brands.” A recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).

To view the hospitality & theme parks industry findings, please click [here](#). The full *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report* and the Ranking Tool can be found [here](#).

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).