



MBLM  
7 WEST 22<sup>ND</sup> STREET, 10<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10010  
WWW.MBLM.COM

RUBENSTEIN PUBLIC RELATIONS  
CONTACT: KATI BERGOU, 212-805-3014  
KBERGOU@RUBENSTEINPR.COM

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## **MBLM Announces Hospitality & Theme Parks Industry Ranked In Bottom 20 Percent for Brand Intimacy in the UAE**

*Brand Intimacy 2017 Report Reveals Hotels Outperform Theme Parks with Hilton Coming in First*

DUBAI — August 1, 2017 — MBLM, the Brand Intimacy Agency focused on strategy, design, creative and technology, today revealed the hospitality & theme parks industry ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the UAE out of the 15 industries studied in its [Brand Intimacy 2017 Report](#). The report, which is the largest study of brands based on emotions, found that Hilton placed first in the industry followed by Sheraton and Ferrari World. Brand Intimacy is defined as a new paradigm that quantifies the emotional bonds people have for brands they use.

“Customers are more intimate with hotels because they connect emotionally with a physical space that provides more than just rooms to stay in for visitors and travelers,” stated Jae Hwang, partner at [MBLM](#). “Hotels in the UAE have expanded their roles to include nightlife, concert halls and weekend activities. However, as the country becomes more established as a regional theme park destination, the options for entertainment will increase, as will residents’ bonds with the new offerings.”

The remaining brands part of the top 10 hospitality & theme parks in the UAE are: Jumeirah, Wild Wadi Waterpark, Rotana, Marriott, Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi, Atlantis, The Palm and Holiday Inn.

The archetype most associated with the hospitality & theme parks sector in the UAE is fulfillment (exceeding expectations, delivering superior service, quality and efficacy), with indulgence (creating a close relationship centered around pampering and gratification that can be occasional or frequent) following closely behind. Hilton’s Brand Intimacy Quotient is 53.8 and Sheraton’s is 50.7; combined, they nearly double the scores of the other hotel brands in the category.

Dubai is known for its nightlife and every bar, club or lounge (with a few unique exceptions) must be on a hotel property to serve alcohol, play loud music or host concerts. As a result, UAE residents are more likely to associate hotels with positive memories. The industry remains less intimate overall with consumers because the experiences are more crucial to people than the brands themselves.

With Expo 2020 coming up, the UAE is rapidly preparing for a major influx of attendees and a global media spotlight on Dubai. Twenty million people are expected to visit Dubai. This strategic milestone has encouraged growth across the non-oil sectors in the UAE and a boost in the economy, despite the current climate. Hospitality is a significant part of success of meeting the 2020 milestone and optimizing Dubai’s status as a tourism destination. However, theme parks will be important as well. By 2020, the projected number of annual UAE visitors to theme parks is 19 million. The UAE is slowly moving away from its dependence on oil and into an era of sustainable growth in tourism.

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.

To download the full *Brand Intimacy 2017 Report* or explore the Ranking Tool please visit: <http://mblm.com/brandintimacy/>.

**Methodology**

During 2016, 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:** Founded in 2004, MBLM is the Brand Intimacy Agency, which is dedicated to creating greater emotional connections between people, brands and technology. With offices in nine countries, its multidisciplinary teams help clients deliver stronger marketing outcomes and returns for the long term. To learn more about creating and sustaining ultimate brand relationships, visit [mblm.com](http://mblm.com).