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MBLM Decodes the Success of Theme Park Brands
Brand Intimacy 2017 Report Reveals Disney Parks and Universal Theme Parks Lead in Building Stronger Brand Intimacy Over Other Hospitality Brands

NEW YORK — June 7, 2017 — MBLM, the Brand Intimacy Agency focused on strategy, design, creative and technology, today revealed the hospitality & theme parks industry was in actuality not led by hotel brands, but by two theme parks, in its *Brand Intimacy 2017 Report*. The report, which is the largest study of brands based on emotions, found that Disney Parks and Universal Theme Parks ranked first and second in the industry. Brand Intimacy is defined as a new paradigm that quantifies the emotional bonds people have for brands they use.

"Theme parks are interesting examples of manifesting brand intimacy. They master the customer journey, creating distinct and varied experiences and provide indulgence and entertainment, two things that strongly align to consumer needs now," stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner at MBLM. "Theme Parks have created well curated, one-of-a-kind, brands experiences that resonate with people."

Disney Parks and Universal Theme Parks also stand out from the rest in the industry in terms of percentage of consumers willing to pay 20 percent extra. This was roughly double the industry average.

One of the overarching findings of the *Brand Intimacy 2017 Report* was that consumers, particularly millennials, are seeking an escape from the real world in the form of media and entertainment, and theme parks are delivering on those requests. Theme parks utilize sophisticated technology and advancements in robotics and virtual reality make the parks exciting and realistic, while the Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled wristbands, like Disney's MagicBands, and smart applications will make the parks interactive, tailoring experiences to each consumer by storing and sharing relevant data.

Other U.S. hospitality & theme parks industry findings from MBLM's 2017 report include:
- The archetype most associated with hospitality and theme parks is fulfillment, which relates to exceeding expectations, and delivering superior service, quality and efficacy
- Women and millennials favor Disney Theme Parks
- The strength of nostalgia and indulgence delivered by theme parks is the key difference on how theme parks build intimacy. Theme park brands know that you don't make memorable experiences by delivering quality products and services, but by creating moments of gratification and feelings of nostalgia

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.