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Final

Travel Industry Ranked Last for the Third Year in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report*

Southwest Airlines Topped Industry Followed by JetBlue and Air France

NEW YORK — May 16, 2018 — The [travel industry](#) ranked in last place out of 15 industries for the third year in MBLM's [Brand Intimacy 2018 Report](#), which is the largest study of brands based on emotions. Southwest Airlines again came in first in the industry, although 121st in the overall study, followed by JetBlue and newcomer to the top three, Air France. The remaining brands in the Top 10 for the travel industry were: Lufthansa, Delta Airlines, British Airways, American Airlines, United Airlines, Virgin Atlantic and Spirit Air.

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, the 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.

"In 2017 and even more recently, airlines continued to face significant controversies and PR crises. The industry is challenged in that it is negatively associated with service lapses as well as growing commoditization and hidden fees. Yet it also is impacted by circumstances outside of its control, such as inclement weather and security issues," stated Mario Natarelli, managing partner at [MBLM](#). "We strongly believe leveraging Brand Intimacy principles and focusing on enhancing the bonds with consumers along the entire customer journey will greatly improve brands' performance in this category."

Additional travel industry findings in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report* include:

- The category's Brand Intimacy Quotient was 10.5, well below the overall industry average of 27.1
- Fulfillment, which relates to performance, was the archetype most associated with category, and Southwest Airlines was the best performing brand for fulfillment
- Southwest Airlines also ranked #1 for both men and women
- Millennials had a preference for JetBlue and those ages 35 to 64 preferred Air France
- People with incomes between \$35,000 and \$75,000 selected Lufthansa
- Southwest Airlines – while still #1 in industry – declined in this year's overall ranking, while Air France and Lufthansa improved their intimacy scores

To view the travel 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.