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Hospitality Brands show a low Brand Intimacy score in a keystone industry for the UAE

The hospitality and theme parks category trends downwards despite individual brands' improvements in MBLM's Brand Intimacy 2018 Report

The hospitality and theme parks industry ranked last out of 15 industries surveyed in MBLM's 2018 Brand Intimacy Report. The category's average Brand Intimacy Quotient was 22.8, well below the cross-industry average of 30.5. Within the category, Hilton, Jumeirah, Ferrari World, Rotana, Dubai Parks and Resorts, Marriott, Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi, IMG Worlds of Adventure, Address and Aquaventure comprised the Top 10 brands.

Despite the category's poor performance, Dubai-based Jumeirah outpaced competitors as it moved up 29 positions, ranking #66 overall. Within the hospitality and theme parks industry, the brand ranked #1 in the UAE among male consumers aged 18-44.

Brand Intimacy is defined as a new paradigm in marketing, leveraging and strengthening the emotional bonds between people and the brands they use and love. The study reveals that top intimate brands deliver superior results related to revenue and profit growth by creating deeper relationships with their consumers.

Established brands Aquaventure and Wild Wadi were among the ten least intimate brands across the entire study, showing that low intimacy with theme parks brands is contributing to an overall modest industry average.

"The UAE is one of the world's fastest growing tourism markets. This year continues to demonstrate interest and investment in hospitality projects and theme park destinations, making the UAE an attractive destination for a wide range of customer segments." stated William Shintani, Managing Partner at MBLM. "The category is underperforming and there are clear opportunities for brands in this space to create stronger bonds with customers and leverage emotion more effectively."

Other notable findings in the hospitality & theme parks industry report include:

- Ferrari World is the UAE's leading theme park, holding its third place in the industry since 2017 with a slight increase in its intimacy quotient. It also ranks highest in the industry among high-income consumers.
- Hilton ranked first in the industry for the archetype of indulgence, which focuses on moments of pampering and gratification, and second after Rotana for the archetype of fulfillment, which centers on exceeding expectations.
- Within the industry, Holiday Inn ranks highest in the archetype of nostalgia (a focus on memories of the past and the warm feelings associated with them).
- Address performed strongly in the archetype of Fulfillment (a focus on exceeding expectations and delivering superior service in quality and efficacy) though it ranked #9 in the category and #148 overall.
- Theme parks such as Dubai Parks and Resorts, Yas Waterworld, IMG Worlds of Adventure and Ferrari World performed stronger than the hospitality brands in sharing, the first stage of brand intimacy. But the hospitality brands, such as Hilton, far outpaced the theme parks in the more advanced stages of intimacy: bonding and fusing.

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.

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.

To view the hospitality and theme parks industry rankings, visit:
<https://mblm.com/lab/ranking-tool/?region=3&yr=2018&industry=11>

To download the full *Brand Intimacy 2018 Report*, visit:
<http://mblm.com/lab/brandintimacy-study/uae/>

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