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Customer loyalty index announces the "decade of delight"

Robert Passikoff, President, Brand Keys, Inc



The "Decade of Delight" describes the key expectation of today's consumers and the critical finding of our 15th annual Brand Keys Customer Loyalty Engagement Index[®] (CLEI).

Across the 528 brands in 79 categories tracked in this year's CLEI, values relating to "experience" and "authentic innovation" were found to exert the strongest impact on customer decision-making, category-expectations, and brand engagement. And while expectation levels for delight will naturally vary by category, brands that were among the top-10 best at creating customer delight were:

1. Netflix
2. Apple
3. Walgreens
4. Discover
5. Hyundai
6. Mary Kay
7. McDonald's
8. J. Crew
9. Samsung
10. Nikon

This evolution from satisfaction to delight has been accelerating for some time. Brand value has increasingly been defined not through the narrow lens of price, but in terms of the total experience of consumer-brand interaction. This year's results demonstrate that concept has truly taken hold, with virtually every category showing its greatest increase in expectations in the purchase drivers centered on attributes that most strongly impact the customers' overall experience.

The CLEI data is predictive of shifts in the consumer marketplace – 12 to 18 months before it shows up in traditional research. And given the levels of commoditization in product and service delivery and pricing and promotional strategies, it's no surprise consumers are looking for brands to make a real difference in their lives. Consumers know the brands, know what they do, and know what they're willing to pay for them. Now they're looking for delight.

Satisfaction has never been more cost-of-entry; delight is the new differentiator.

A complete listing of the 79 category rankings can be found at www.brandkeys.com/awards

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