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Headlines

MLB and NHL Brands Strike Out in Fashion Index

APRIL 07, 2005 -- NEW YORK — The power of fashion brands continues to decline, especially for major league sports, according to Brand Keys (www.brandkeys.com), a New York City-based brand loyalty research consultancy.

For the first time since 2002, "Favorite Sports Team," the perennial leader among men and women in all age segments, showed an over-all decrease of 13% in importance to consumers. Major League Baseball and the National Hockey League, brands that had always appeared on the Brand Keys Fashion Index Top 10 list, did not make the cut this year.

The Importance Of Apparel Logos, Labels, Trademarks

When asked how important apparel brand logos and labels are to consumers now versus "a few years ago," the majority of respondents (66%) reported that they are now less important. Of the 7,500 survey respondents, almost 9.5 times as many said logos and labels were now either "much less" or "less" important to them than said they were now "much more" or "more" important.

"Increasingly apparel brands do not generally resonate with the values of

Breaking Headlines

■ MLB and NHL Brands Strike Out in Fashion Index

APRIL 07, 2005 -- The power of fashion brands continues to decline, especially for major league sports, according to Brand Keys.

■ Metro Commercial Negotiates Leases for Fortunoff's

APRIL 07, 2005 -- Metro Commercial Real Estate has negotiated two new leases for Fortunoff's, an outdoor furniture retailer.

■ Nintendo World Store to Open in NYC

APRIL 07, 2005 -- The Nintendo World Store is planned for a spring opening in New York City's Rockefeller Center.

■ Stores Report Sales, Part 2

APRIL 07, 2005 -- With reports from Dollar General, Family Dollar, Payless, Gap, TJX, Big Lots, Fred's

■ Stores Report Sales

APRIL 07, 2005 -- With reports from Wal-Mart, Kohl's Target, JCPenney, Rite Aid, CVS, Costco, BJ's, ShopKo

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consumers and as marketers do not support their brands in appropriate ways, you can't really expect to find that the brands are more important to consumers." said Robert Passikoff, president, Brand Keys. "If you disappoint your consumers, you're bound to see disappointing returns. Look at the disappearance of the MLB and NHL brands from this year's list. The MLB steroid scandal did a lot of damage to that brand, and the NHL didn't even show up. You can't disappoint your fans much more than that!"

Key Findings

More than two-thirds of the 7,500 men and women surveyed reported that clothing logos and labels are now less important to them. Specifically, as of Spring 2005, women were 8.25 times more likely to say that logos/labels were now less important to them, while men were 11.3 times more likely to say that.

Examining the results by age, the oldest group (ages 45-59) was the most likely to say that the importance of logos and labels had declined (76%). Only 6% of this group said they had become more important.

Even among the youngest age group (21 to 34), over twice as many respondents said logos and labels are now less important. "It appears that even among traditionally fashion-conscious younger adults, a rejection of the use of one's clothes as a statement about oneself continues to spread," said Passikoff.

Brand Rankings

Of those brands that have traditionally made the Brand Keys Fashion Index Top 10 list, Ralph Lauren moved up in important among all age groups. Tommy Hilfiger, who had fallen from the list in 2003, returned to this year. The GAP disappeared from the Top



10 list among both men and women in all age segments.

"The Gap is a brand that has had significant difficulty identifying a meaningful positioning. Over the past few years they have wanted to stand for something more than consumers are willing to believe," said Passikoff. Just last week the GAP brand announced it was ending its Sarah Jessica Parker campaign and announced singer Joss Stone will become the new face of the brand. "The age of the spokesperson isn't the issue. It's finding someone who can better communicate the basic GAP values. They may now have it right for once."

First-time brands to make the list included: Isaac Mizrahi, Kate Spade, and Dockers. "There seems to be a return to some brands that reflect 'basic' consumer values," noted Passikoff. "These include the J. Crew and L. L. Bean as well."

"The economy has a bit to do about some of the brands that are showing up on the list," said Passikoff, "but not entirely. That's a small part of the reason the J. Crew and Mizrahi brands appear where they do. It's all about values that matter and Lauren has been wonderful at identifying those."

Methodology

Since 1998, Brand Keys has conducted national bi-annual Customer Loyalty Index surveys of the leading brands, currently assessing 28 product and service categories. This is a telephone survey conducted among a sample of 16,000 men and women throughout the United States. All respondents are between 21 and 59 years of age.

Beginning in Spring 2002, a series of questions on the value or importance that consumers place on the brand

name logos, labels, and trademarks of the clothes they wear was added.

First, the respondents were asked to indicate the importance to them personally of the brand name logos, labels, and trademarks of the clothes that they wear, compared to how important they were to them "a few years ago." The respondent choices were as follows: Much more important, More important, About the same, Less important, or Much less important.

Second, the respondents were read a list of 50 brands (including the NFL, NBA, MLB, and NHL, and "their favorite sports team), and for each, were asked the importance to them now, compared a few years ago, of wearing clothing that carries that particular brand's label or logo.

Almost half of the Customer Loyalty Index respondents (7,500) were asked this series of questions. As a result of this very large sample size, the findings are highly statistically reliable.



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