

2011 Harris Poll EquiTrend® Shows Sentiment Toward Consumer Brands Improving for Second Straight Year

Harris Poll EquiTrend® identifies 46 “Brand of the Year” categories; Value Merchandisers, Video Game Systems, and Sweet Treat brands maintain highest brand equity; Financial Services category shows wide gap among brand perception

New York, N.Y. – March 16, 2011 – Brands that give us comfort and provide value are driving an overall improvement in consumer sentiment according to the 2011 Harris Poll EquiTrend® study conducted by Harris Interactive. Target Stores, Nintendo and M&Ms Plain Chocolate Candy were each highest ranked in their respective category. The 2011 *Harris Poll EquiTrend® Brand of the Year* was awarded to the highest ranked brand in each of 46 categories.

Overall, consumer sentiment toward brands increased for the second straight year after falling in 2009. While the Sweet Treat category boasts several top brands, the Financial Services category shows a wide gap between brands that have maintained or improved their brand equity and those brands that consumers still hold responsible for the country’s financial collapse. Visa and USAA are two financial service brands which consumers still hold in high regard. The Harris Poll EquiTrend® study measures consumer brands within 46 different categories. Brand Equity ratings are driven by three factors: Familiarity, Quality and Purchase Consideration.

“As consumers continue to look for ways to reduce their budgets, having a brand that consumers trust and respect plays a large role in keeping consumers loyal,” said Jeni Lee Chapman, Executive Vice President for Brand Research at Harris Interactive. “Consumers continue to be more selective about what they purchase, but those companies with high brand equity are able to avoid switching behaviors of those brands that lack brand equity.”

Category Overview

- Automotive: Ford vehicles rank highest among full-line automotive brands, Toyota falls to 4th; Mercedes-Benz is the highest ranked luxury automotive brand;
- Airlines: Southwest ranks highest among airlines followed by Jet Blue. A newcomer to the study, Hawaiian Airlines rounds out the top three;
- Beer: Blue Moon is the highest ranked beer brand followed by Samuel Adams, with Guinness Stout at third;
- Retail Banks: New to EquiTrend® is BBVA which ranks highest among banks. Huntington Bank followed by TD Bank round out the top three;
- Hotels: The Hilton brand enjoys highest rankings in two categories ; full service hotels with Hilton Hotels and Resorts and extended stay hotel with Homewood Suites by Hilton;
- Financial Services: The Principal is the highest ranked investment services brand followed by TIAA-CREF and Fidelity; USAA is the highest ranked insurance brand followed by State Farm and Consecro. Visa is the highest ranked payment cards brand followed by MasterCard;

- Restaurants: Panera Bread ranks highest among casual restaurants, with Carrabba's in second after big brand equity gains; Olive Garden falls to third. Subway is the highest ranked quick service restaurant followed by Dairy Queen;
- Telecom: Verizon is the highest ranked mobile network followed by AT&T and Clearwire; Motorola was the highest ranked mobile phone brand; and
- Non-Profits: Best Friends Animal Society is highest ranked among the non-profits followed by Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Shriners Hospitals for Children and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Harris Poll EquiTrend® Brands of the Year

Category	Brand of the Year
Airlines	Southwest Airlines
Amusement Attractions	Disney World
Appliance - Major Appliance	KitchenAid Major Appliances
Appliance - Small Kitchen appliance	KitchenAid Small Appliances
Athletic Footwear	New Balance Athletic Footwear
Automotive Service Centers	Goodyear
Automotive Tires	Michelin Automobile Tires
Automotive, Full Line	Ford Vehicles
Automotive, Luxury	Mercedes-Benz Vehicles
Beer	Blue Moon
Car Rentals	Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Carbonated Beverage	Coca-Cola
Computer Brand	Hewlett-Packard (HP)
Consumer Electronics	Sony
Cosmetics	Bobbi Brown Cosmetics
Cruise Lines	Norwegian Cruise Line
Game System	Nintendo Video Game Systems (Wii, DS series)
Gasoline Retail	Speedway Gasoline
Greeting Cards	Hallmark Greeting Cards
Health Insurance	Blue Cross Blue Shield
Hotel-Economy	Red Roof Inns
Hotel-Extended Stay	Homewood Suites by Hilton
Hotel-Full Service	Hilton Hotels and Resorts
Hotel-Luxury	Omni Hotels & Resorts
Hotel-Mid Market	Holiday Inn Hotels & Resorts
Insurance	USAA Financial Services
Investment	Principal Financial
Laundry Detergent	Tide Liquid Laundry Detergent
Magazine	National Geographic Magazine

Category	Brand of the Year
Media Television-Kids TV	PBS KIDS Sprout
Media Television-Topical interest	Discovery Channel
Media Television-TV News	The Weather Channel
Media Television-Variety TV Programming	USA Network
Mobile Network	Verizon
Mobile Phone	Motorola
Motor Oil	Pennzoil Motor Oil
Motorcycles	Harley Davidson Motorcycles
Movie Studio	DreamWorks Movie Studio
News service	Associated Press (AP)
Non-profit	Best Friends Animal Society
Online University	Nova SouthEastern University
OTC antacids	Imodium Anti-Diarrhea Medication (J&J)
Paint	KILZ
Payment Cards	Visa
Pharmaceutical	Johnson & Johnson Healthcare
Power Tool	Craftsman Tools
Restaurants - Casual Dining	Panera Bread
Restaurants Quick Service (including Pizza)	Subway Restaurants
Retail Banks	BBVA Compass Bank
Sweet Treat	M&M Plain Chocolate Candy
Tobacco	NA
Toothpaste	Crest Toothpaste
Value Retailer	Target Stores
Water	Aquafina Water

Methodology

The EquiTrend® study evaluates measures including: Equity, Consumer Connection, Commitment, Brand Behavior, Brand Advocacy, and Trust. The keystone to the program is Equity, which provides an understanding of a brand's overall strength and is determined by a calculation of Familiarity, Quality, and Purchase Consideration.

This year's Harris Poll EquiTrend® study was conducted online among 25,099 U.S. consumers ages 15 and over between January 11 and 27, 2011. A total of brands 1,273 were rated in 53 separate categories. Each respondent was asked to rate a total of 60 randomly selected brands. Each brand received approximately 1,000 ratings. Data were weighted to be representative of the entire U.S. population of consumers ages 15 and over on the basis of age sex, education, race/ethnicity, region, and income, and data from respondents ages 18 and over were also weighted for their propensity to be online.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

The EquiTrend® study results disclosed in this release may not be used for advertising, marketing or promotional purposes without the prior written consent of Harris Interactive.

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For a complete listing of all the brands covered in the study, contact Dagny Cassella at 212-539-9600 or dcassella@harrisinteractive.com.

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