

Most Familiar Brands 2014

The most powerful brands benefit from being both well known and well liked. It follows that the first step toward becoming a powerful brand is to build a solid base of understanding with audiences. Earlier this year, CoreBrand published its 2014 edition of the Top 100 Most Powerful Brands report. The top brands were determined by an aggregate, quantitative metric that combines both Familiarity and Favorability for the 1,000 companies we track in the Corporate Branding Index®. In this report, we begin to isolate and examine the components that inform the rankings. Specifically, this report focuses on corporate brand Familiarity and the brands that are most successful at staying on audiences' radars – for better or worse.

Top 10 Most Familiar Brands

1. American Express

1. The Coca-Cola Company

3. Walgreens

4. MasterCard

4. McDonald's

4. Walt Disney

7. Visa

8. Campbell Soup

9. Hershey

10. J.C.Penney

This is an interesting list due to a number of things: most certainly who's on it, but also who isn't. The important thing to remember is that this list is not the most respected or most popular brands. Also, the audience of this study is not the consumer, but the Business Decision Maker – senior executives in the largest 20% of companies in the U.S. based on a revenue. While they are highly affluent consumers, they tend to place a greater emphasis on how the company performs financially and how the company's management team performs than the general consumer audience.

Three of the top 10 Most Familiar Brands are credit card companies, who are known for their ubiquitous marketing programs.

Defining Familiarity

CoreBrand's definition of corporate brand Familiarity means more than simple awareness. It reveals the depth of which a respondent knows the company. We ask respondents their knowledge of a corporate brand on a 5-point scale: 1 = Unfamiliar, 2 = Know the Name Only, 3 = Somewhat Familiar, 4 = Familiar and 5 = Very Well Known. Familiarity means that a respondent has some knowledge of the company beyond name recognition, so we focus on the respondents scoring the company in question at a 3 or higher. We use a weighted average percentage to represent Familiarity, meaning that a score of 5 would be worth more than a score of 3 or 4, and that a score of 1 or 2 has zero weight on the company's Familiarity score.

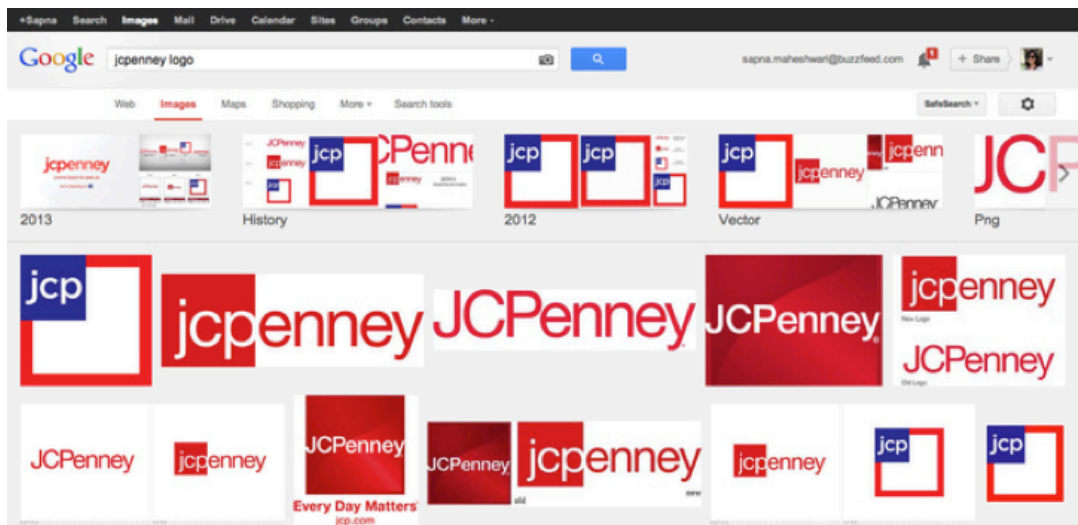
By the numbers

There isn't a wide chasm dividing these companies. The top company on the list has a Familiarity score of 96.9 while the 10th place company has a score of 94.5. The competition is extremely tight at the top, even getting down to the 20th ranked company we see a Familiarity score of 93.0 which remains quite close to near-universal recognition. The perception of these companies, however, is another story. We see a wide range of Favorability scores with a high of 83.7 and a low of 61.2, indicating that some of these companies are revered and some reviled.

Well-known brands

The companies sharing first place are The Coca-Cola Company and American Express. These companies both have well known and focused corporate brands. They are meticulously managed and very consistent in presentation, with a long heritage.

Overall, the list is a mix of well known, best practice brands and some brands that most likely have inflated Familiarity due to a high volume of negative publicity. J.C. Penney and Walgreens have by far the lowest Favorability of the Top 10 Most Familiar Brands. J.C. Penney has received considerable negative publicity from its management crisis and for the disorganized and inconsistent state of its brand identity. The J.C. Penney logo has undergone three major changes since 2011. Walgreens is also the recipient of a fairly high degree of negative publicity for not following CVS' lead and dropping the sale of tobacco products.



Via google.com

Conspicuous absence

So, when we think about who did not make the Top 10 and why, many names come to mind – Apple, Starbucks, Microsoft and Target are just a few. What would make these brands not rise to the top? One explanation is that to top the list means you have to have a high proportion of respondents' rate your brand as a 5, meaning they say they know the corporate brand *very well*. Sometimes turmoil or uncertainty can cause respondents to rate the company as a 4 instead of a 5. If there is some uncertainty in the respondents' mind, it can cause a slight decline in the score and it is enough to knock a company out of the Top 10. If you look to the list of the Top 50 Most Familiar Brands (page 4) it is likely you will find more of the "obvious" brands on there, and many will be less than a single point from being in the Top 10.

Lessons for all

For a company to make the Most Familiar Brands list its corporate brand needs to be consistent in how it is perceived. This provides not just awareness, but a depth of understanding that improves Familiarity scores. The more comfortable and certain audiences are with all aspects of your brand, the more likely they are to have a sense of confidence when faced with doing business with you. In that sense, making this list is a good thing for a company, if the company has done so for the right reason. Companies who find themselves well-known and well-perceived should stay on target.

Companies on this list that are elevated due to negative publicity could be facing brand crisis. These brands are well known, but for all the wrong reasons. Audiences have a high level of certainty in understanding the companies, but they do not trust them. The prescriptive guidance for these brands is vastly different. They need to take a hard, honest look at themselves and explore alternative strategies if they are going to thrive. The first step is to identify the problem and develop a sound strategy to change course. This can best be done through further research, both internally and with external audiences. Transparent communications around the new direction is the next step, but living up to the re-established expectations are where companies can make the biggest strides for their brands. In many cases, the heightened Familiarity can become a tool for these companies in crisis, as it provides a platform for communicating efficiently to an audience who is tuned in.

Whether high Familiarity is achieved through brand management or through crisis, being well known is the first and most important step in developing a powerful brand. It is what you do with your notoriety to build Favorability that will ultimately determine whether your brand has a positive or negative impact on corporate value.

Most Familiar Brands 2014

Company	Exchange	Symbol	Sector	Familiarity Rank
American Express	NYSE	AXP	Finance	1
The Coca-Cola Company	NYSE	KO	Consumer Staples	1
Walgreens	NYSE	WAG	Healthcare	3
The Walt Disney Company	NYSE	DIS	Consumer- Cyclical	4
MasterCard	NYSE	MA	Finance	4
McDonald's	NYSE	MCD	Consumer- Cyclical	4
Visa	NYSE	V	Finance	7
Campbell Soup	NYSE	CPB	Consumer Staples	8
Hershey	NYSE	HSY	Consumer Staples	9
J.C. Penney	NYSE	JCP	Consumer- Cyclical	10
Bayer	PINK SHEETS	BAYRY	Basic Materials	11
Kellogg	NYSE	K	Consumer Staples	11
Microsoft	NASDAQ	MSFT	Technology	13
Starbucks	NASDAQ	SBUX	Consumer- Cyclical	14
Target	NYSE	TGT	Consumer- Cyclical	15
Apple	NASDAQ	AAPL	Technology	16
Wendy's	NYSE	WEN	Consumer- Cyclical	17
Barnes & Noble	NYSE	BKS	Consumer- Cyclical	18
UPS	NYSE	UPS	Industrial	18
Colgate-Palmolive	NYSE	CL	Consumer Staples	20
Google	NASDAQ	GOOG	Technology	20
Harley-Davidson	NYSE	HOG	Consumer- Cyclical	22
Johnson & Johnson	NYSE	JNJ	Healthcare	23
General Mills	NYSE	GIS	Consumer Staples	23
Delta Air Lines	NYSE	DAL	Industrial	23
AT&T	NYSE	T	Telecommunications	26
BMW	GERMAN	BMW	Consumer- Cyclical	26
Home Depot	NYSE	HD	Consumer- Cyclical	28
Wal-Mart Stores	NYSE	WMT	Consumer- Cyclical	29
General Motors	NYSE	GM	Consumer- Cyclical	30
Sony	NYSE	SNE	Industrial	30
Yahoo	NASDAQ	YHOO	Technology	30

Most Familiar Brands 2014

Company	Exchange	Symbol	Sector	Familiarity Rank
Dell	NASDAQ	DELL	Technology	33
FedEx	NYSE	FDX	Industrial	34
Lowe's	NYSE	LOW	Consumer- Cyclical	34
Gap	NYSE	GPS	Consumer- Cyclical	36
Whirlpool	NYSE	WHR	Consumer- Cyclical	36
Toyota	NYSE	TM	Consumer- Cyclical	38
Volkswagen	GERMAN	VOW	Consumer- Cyclical	39
Kraft Foods	NYSE	KFT	Consumer Staples	39
General Electric	NYSE	GE	Industrial	41
Revlon	NYSE	REV	Consumer Staples	41
Blockbuster	NYSE	BBI	Consumer- Cyclical	43
Nestlé	PINK SHEETS	NSRGY	Consumer Staples	44
H&R Block	NYSE	HRB	Finance	45
Mattel	NYSE	MAT	Consumer- Cyclical	46
Motorola Solutions	NYSE	MSI	Telecommunications	46
Ford Motor	NYSE	F	Consumer- Cyclical	48
Estee Lauder	NYSE	EL	Consumer Staples	49
Kohl's	NYSE	KSS	Consumer- Cyclical	50

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July: Most Favored Brands

September: Best Reputation

October: Most Admired Leadership

November: Greatest Investment Potential

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<http://www.corebrand.com/brandpower/methodology>

Or contact Ellen Sluder at esluder@corebrand.com

CoreBrand
122 West 27th Street
9th Floor
New York, NY 10001
+1 212 329-3030
+1 212 329-3031 Fax

www.corebrand.com