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Chick-fil-A Holds onto Top Fast Food Spot in MBLM's *Brand Intimacy COVID Study*

Fast Food Ranks Sixth Out of 10 Industries Analyzed

NEW YORK — February 2, 2022 — The fast food industry maintained its sixth place ranking in the second year of the pandemic according to MBLM's *Brand Intimacy COVID Study*, which analyzes brands based on emotional connections during the pandemic. Brand Intimacy performance has increased by 8 percent since the beginning of the pandemic, daily usage has also risen by 8 percent, and willingness to pay 20 percent more for fast food products and services has increased by 43 percent compared to last year's COVID study.

For the second year in a row, Chick-fil-A held the top spot as the fast food company with the strongest levels of Brand Intimacy, which is defined as the emotional science behind the bonds we form with the brands we use and love. Starbucks and Dunkin' ranked second and third, respectively. The remaining fast food brands in the top 10 are McDonald's, Taco Bell, KFC, Pizza Hut, Dominos, Wendy's, and Subway.

"Despite having to shut down at some points and weather significant supply chain challenges recently, the fast food industry has drawn consumers closer and created stronger emotional bonds over the last year." said Mario Natarelli, managing partner, MBLM. "Brands in this industry have been able to capitalize on mobile ordering and digital drive-through lanes during the pandemic. This has created a new reality within which fast food brands provide even more comfort and convenience to stressed consumers – a position they can effectively continue to reference as we increasingly return to 'normal life' in the year ahead."

The highest-performing fast food chains in terms of Brand Intimacy also enjoyed strong sales. According to [Restaurant Business](#), McDonald's \$40 billion in sales now account for 13 percent of fast-food chain sales across the U.S., while Starbucks held the number two spot in terms of popularity – in spite of losses of more than 13 percent in systemwide earnings last year. Atlanta-based Chick-fil-A, meanwhile, saw sales rise 13 percent in 2020 to \$13.7 billion.

Additional significant fast food industry findings include:

- Fast food continues to perform better with men than with women, and with younger versus older consumers.
- More than 32 percent of consumers have an increased positive emotional connection with fast food brands since MBLM's 2020 COVID study.
- Starbucks is the top brand with men, while Chick-fil-A is the top brand with women.

MBLM also analyzed the industry in an article entitled "[The Booming Business of Fast Food](#)". The piece looks at the industry's successful efforts to draw consumers closer during the pandemic, with mental health, safety, and hunger prevention among the top themes in their communication.

To view the fast food industry findings, please click [here](#). Additionally, MBLM offers [Custom Dashboards](#) providing extensive data for brands included in its *Brand Intimacy COVID Study*. To download the main *Brand Intimacy COVID Study* report or explore the Rankings, click [here](#).

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About MBLM: MBLM invented Brand Intimacy, the emotional science behind the brands we use and love. For our clients, we deliver expertise and value through our agency insights, services and software offerings.

With offices in five countries, our multidisciplinary teams invent, transform and enhance brands for businesses of every kind. We deliver marketing that creates stronger emotional connections with stakeholders. These bonds create better performance and long-term returns. To learn more about how we can help you create and sustain ultimate brand relationships, visit mblm.com.

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