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

Fast Food Ranks Sixth Out of 10 Industries Analyzed

NEW YORK — January 12, 2021 — Since the start of COVID-19, daily fast food consumption has increased by 37 percent, according to MBLM's [Brand Intimacy COVID Study](#), which analyzes brands based on emotional connections during the pandemic. Although the [fast food industry](#) placed sixth out of 10 industries, overall performance has improved six percent since the previous study. The industry also ranks #1 for the archetype of indulgence, indicating that during challenging times, consumers turn to brands long associated with comfort, pleasure and pampering.

Chick-fil-A regained its 2019 ranking as the fast food company with the strongest Brand Intimacy, which is the emotional science behind the bonds we form with the brands we use and love. McDonald's moved up one spot to second place in the BIS COVID Study, while 2020's top brand, Starbucks, moved to third. The remaining brands in the top 10 for the industry are KFC, Dunkin', Dominos, Pizza Hut, Subway, Taco Bell and Wendy's.

"Despite daily consumption increases, the fast food industry has been severely affected by stay-at-home orders and initial closings. However, consumers have been more emotionally connected to fast food brands during the pandemic," said Mario Natarelli, managing partner, MBLM. "As we return to 'normal' life, fast food brands should find a way to reference what we have all been through together and how they have reliably comforted us through this crisis."

Despite restaurant closures during COVID, top intimate fast food brands continue to significantly outperform the leading brands in the Fortune 500 and S&P 500 indices across revenue growth, profit growth and stock price.

Technology will likely continue to play a larger role in how we interact with fast food brands, as many consumers prefer to order ahead, flag their arrival via their mobile phone and track deliveries. Brands that can lead with their digital experience and touchless delivery will also advance consumer relationships.

Additional significant fast food industry findings include:

- The fast food industry ranks sixth in this study, maintaining its position from the 2020 and 2019 rankings.
- Fast Food performs better with men than women and with younger consumers versus older ones.
- McDonald's is the top brand for men, replacing Starbucks, while women prefer Chick-fil-A.
- Chick-fil-A exhibits significantly stronger associations in the fulfillment and indulgence archetypes and leads across all three stages of sharing, bonding and fusing.

MBLM also analyzed the industry in an article entitled, "[Our Connection to Fast Food During the Pandemic](#)." The piece looks at how the industry provided comfort during these trying times, as well as how brands spoke to consumers, with safety, affordability and business objectives being among the top themes.

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 has invented a new marketing paradigm, Brand Intimacy, delivering expertise and offerings across three areas of focus: Agency, Lab and Platform. With offices in four countries, our multidisciplinary teams help clients build stronger bonds and deliver optimized marketing outcomes and returns for the long term. To learn more about how we can help you create and sustain ultimate brand relationships, visit mblm.com.