

NEWS

Lego replaces British Airways as UK's top consumer brand as Amazon falls off Superbrands list

By Rebecca Stewart - 12 March 2018 00:00am

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The Danish toymaker has been slowly building its way to the top of the index / Lego

UK consumers have named **Lego** as their favourite brand for the first time, ending British Airways' four-year reign at the top of the annual Superbrands rankings.

The Danish toymaker has been slowly building its way to the top of the index, which invites 2500 British shoppers and industry experts to judge 1500 brands based on quality, reliability and distinction every year.

British Airways, which has claimed the top spot since 2014, has tumbled out of the top 20 for 2018 altogether, following on from a brand crisis last May which saw a computer glitch cause travel chaos for thousands of passengers.

Tech giant Google also fell off the list after a rocky twelve months in which headlines around brand safety and the behaviour of its creators hit the national press. E-commerce giant Amazon also failed to make the main rankings; however, for the first time the study also asked shoppers to categorise companies based on cultural relevance, with PayPal, Cancer Research UK, Amazon and Google featuring on that list.

Strongest brands

Lego's position in the top spot - for which it beat competition from Disney, Apple and Heinz - comes just one week after the brickmaker reported its first fall in sales and profits in more than a decade. The brand blamed the dip on growing competition from modern toys, and operational issues which had led it to produce too many bricks.

At the tail end of 2017, faced with 8% dip annual sales to £4.2bn and the loss 1400 staff members, Lego appointed a new global media agency in IPG Mediabrands. The hunt for a media shop took the better part of a year, with advertiser saying that IPG's brief will see a shift in focus towards "cultural branding" rather than "brand advertising".

Longstanding Superbrands winner British Airways fell off the list entirely after a thorny year which included a catastrophic computer meltdown that led to flight disruption for around 75,000 passengers over the 2017 May bank holiday weekend.

Stephen Cheliotis, chairman of Superbrands and chief executive of The Centre for Brand Analysis (TCBA), which helped curate the research said: "British Airways tumbling from top spot to outside of the top 20 should be a wake-up call for all brands.

"In a world where customer expectations have rightfully risen, brands cannot afford to disappoint and need to continually deliver to retain their valuable reputations. No brand, however strong, is immune to changing consumer sentiment."

P&G-owned Gillette rose three places to take the runner-up position, while Apple placed third having risen three places from 2018. Andrex and Coca-Cola took fourth and fifth place respectively.

Disney clocked in at number six, while Marks & Spencer, rose seven places to leapfrog rival John Lewis - which slipped nine places.

Superbrands: Top 10

1. Lego
2. Gillette
3. Apple
4. Andrex

Google and Amazon dropped out of the top 20 entirely. Despite some top marketers agreeing that the latter has made progress over the past 12 months in the way it works with advertisers, negative press around EU fines and creator content looks to have impacted on consumer perception.

Most relevant brands

Despite crashing out of the overall Superbrands list, Amazon and Google were ranked among the most relevant brands by consumers.

For the first time ever the index asked Brits to categorise the advertisers into those gaining or losing cultural relevance compared to the past.

PayPal topped this list, with Cancer Research UK coming in second. Amazon which piloted its Echo 2 in the UK and purchased grocer Whole Foods in 2017 clocked in at third place with German discount store Aldi following in fourth.

MacMillan Cancer support completed the top five, and although it was overall number one Lego placed at number six.

At the other end of the relevancy table, Little Chef was named as the company that had lost relevancy in the eyes of the public.

The food chain was closely followed by Old Spice, Blackberry, Angel Delight and Brut, with Tizer, the Daily Star, Ovaltine, Littlewoods and Brylcreem completing the bottom 10.

Superbrand's Cheliotis continues: "The rise of fresh, disruptive brands - particularly in terms of relevance to consumers' lives - should be an added warning to more established brands.

"The likes of Netflix, PurpleBricks and Zoopla may not be challenging for the top spot in the overall ranking yet, but they surely will be if they continue their current momentum and the established elite don't respond fast enough."

This article is about: World, Lego, Amazon, Netflix, Branding, Marketing, Brand

5. Coca-Cola
6. Disney
7. Marks & Spencer
8. Boots
9. Heinz
10. BMW

Superbrands: Most relevant

1. PayPal
2. Cancer Research UK
3. Amazon
4. Aldi
5. Macmillan Cancer Support
6. Lego
7. Lidl
8. Netflix
9. Google
10. Emirates