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Retail Brands, Led by Amazon, Dominate MBLM's *Brand Intimacy COVID Study* *Industry Ranks Third Out of 10 Analyzed*

NEW YORK — November 17, 2021 — The [retail](#) industry ranks third out of the 10 industries featured in MBLM's [Brand Intimacy COVID Study](#), a study of brands based on emotional connections during the pandemic. MBLM (pronounced Emblem) uses emotional science to build and manage more intimate brands. Amazon remains as the #1 category brand, followed by Target and Walmart, respectively. Brand Intimacy is the emotional science behind the bonds we form with the brands we use and love.

"In the second year of the pandemic, we see an increasing reliance on, and appreciation for, retail brands," said Mario Natarelli, managing partner, MBLM. "The continued flexibility of curbside pickups, contactless deliveries and focus on ensuring supplies in stock have continued to draw consumers closer to brands and create stronger emotional connections."

According to the [National Retail Federation](#), retail sales in 2020 grew 6.7 percent to \$4.1 trillion. In addition, online sales – which continue to grow by double digits – accounted for \$969.4 billion in retail sales, and are expected to reach 23.6 percent of total retail sales by 2025 (versus 11 percent in 2019), according to [emarketer's US Ecommerce Forecast](#).

MBLM's study reveals that the remaining brands in the top 10 for the industry are Costco, Whole Foods Market, Sephora, ebay, The Home Depot, IKEA, and Instacart. This year there has been considerable movement among these top 10 brands, with Target rising to second place, Whole Foods dropping from third to fifth, and Instacart tumbling three places. These rankings – as well as the emergence of four retail brands in the Top 10 Intimate Brands rankings overall (Amazon, Target, Walmart, and Costco) – demonstrate the industry's increasing relevance to consumers.

Brand intimacy performance for the industry has increased by an average of 8 percent on average since before the pandemic.

Additional significant retail industry findings include:

- An increase in the percentage of users in some form of intimacy by 21 percent.
- An increase of 55 percent in the can't live without measure,
- Retail brands perform better with men than with women and with consumers over 35 versus those 35 and under.
- Amazon remains the top brand with women, users over 35, and those with incomes under \$100,000. Walmart leads among men, Target among consumers under 35, and Costco among those with high incomes.

MBLM also analyzed the industry in an article entitled ["The Growing Dominance of Retail"](#). The piece looks at Amazon's enduring appeal, the impact of fluctuating demand, and the resilience of consumer relationships with retail brands amid a turbulent year.

To view the retail 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.