



# The Brand Personality of 45 Major U.S. Brands (Part III)

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# BACKGROUND

This article is the third in our new series on 45 major brands in 15 industries (see tables 1 and 2). In this series, we analyze how top brands are perceived across three key brand personality scales: Aaker's (1997) classic five dimensions of brand personality, Freling, Crosno, and Henard's (2011) brand personality appeal dimensions, and Haji's (2014) negative brand personality dimensions. In the first two articles of our series ([see here](#)), we investigated how the brands score on each of the three scales. In this article, we explore how the brand personalities form groups, or clusters, of brands. In future articles, we will highlight the impact various brand personality dimensions have on brand performance, perform deep-dives into the 15 industries and more.

A grid of 20 brand logos from the 2020 100 list. The logos are arranged in four rows: Row 1: Nike, Netflix, Allstate, Lyft, American Express. Row 2: Adidas, Disney+, Pepsi, Geico, Wells Fargo. Row 3: UPS, Prime Video, Microsoft, Mastercard, Hilton. Row 4: Liberty Mutual Insurance, AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, FedEx, Coca-Cola, Marriott.

A horizontal row of brand logos. From left to right: Airbnb (two interlocking circles), Progressive (the word 'PROGRESSIVE' in a bold, sans-serif font), Walmart (the word 'Walmart' with a yellow starburst logo), Target (the word 'target' with a red bullseye logo), Chase (the word 'CHASE' with a blue circle logo), United Airlines (the word 'UNITED AIRLINES' with a globe icon), Amazon (the word 'amazon' with a blue arrow icon), Apple (the Apple logo), Facebook (the Facebook logo with a grey 'f'), and Walgreens (the word 'Walgreens' in a script font).

perform k-Means cluster analysis on all 45 brands in the sample based on their average personality scores and how brands group naturally within and across industries. The results of this study show that the leading brands. One of these clusters scored high on all five classic brand personality dimensions, high on clarity and credibility traits. Seven of the 11 brands in this cluster hail from the technology industry. Two brands form their own cluster: Wells Fargo and Facebook, both beset by recent scandals tarnishing their brands.

## ATIVE SUMMARY

research team sought to gain a deep understanding of the brand personalities of 45 top brands in the U.S. We used brand value and industry leadership rankings. We surveyed 9,309 adults, 18 years of age and up. Each respondent rated their familiarity with each of the 45 brands. Respondents in our survey were also asked to rate their familiarity with each brand on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being “very familiar.” Only respondents who answered with at least somewhat familiar (5 or higher) were included in the final set of 6,444 responses.

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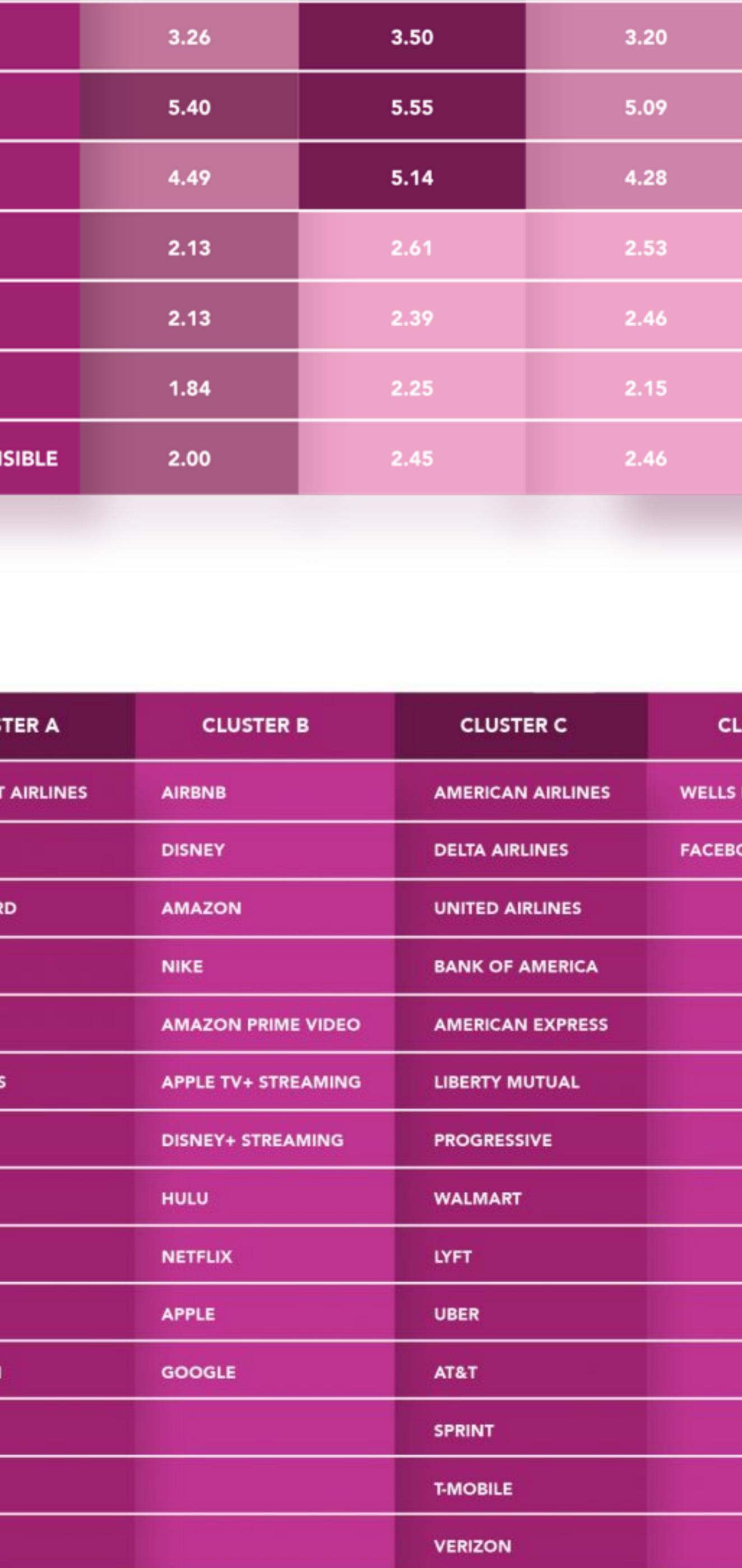
A 3D scatter plot with three axes: Competence (vertical), Motivation (depth), and Satisfaction (horizontal). The plot shows a positive correlation between Competence and Satisfaction, with data points clustered along a diagonal line. The Motivation axis is labeled 'MOTIVATION' at the top, and the Competence axis is labeled 'COMPETENCE' on the right.

A 3D scatter plot showing the relationship between Sincerity, Excitement, and Likeability. The X-axis is Sincerity, the Y-axis is Excitement, and the Z-axis is Likeability. A single data point is plotted at approximately (Sincerity: 0.2, Excitement: 0.8, Likeability: 0.5). The plot includes a legend for four clusters: Cluster A (light blue), Cluster B (light pink), Cluster C (dark pink), and Cluster D (dark blue).

Throughout this research,

res in each cluster and table 5 for the distribution of brands to the clusters). Graph visual separation of the brands into distinct groups and areas. This visual separation groups of brands.

#### SOPHISTICATION



MICROSOFT

Brand Personality dimensions. These brands are seen in a positive light, but they are simultaneously seen as 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of the classic brand personality dimensions and also 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of clarity and originality. Group A contains brands like Southwest Airlines, Hilton, and Geico. Group B meanwhile has the highest scores on the classic brand personality dimensions and on clarity and originality, but they come in tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> when it comes to not being seen as having negative traits. Group B includes brands such as Disney, Nike, and all Streaming Services. Group C ties Group B for 2<sup>nd</sup> on negative traits but is only in 3<sup>rd</sup> place for the classic dimensions and clarity and originality. Group C contains brands such as American Airlines, Walmart and Verizon.

# INTERPRETING THE DATA

in relation to the brand's positioning and target segment. It would be misleading to see this as a competition where a brand is strong only if it scores high on all appeal facets and low on all negative facets. However, in contrast to the Aaker classic brand personality scale, it is generally true that brands would prefer to be seen as clear and original and would not like to be associated with negative traits. Brands can perform well if they have middling scores on all of these dimensions, so this is not a hard and fast judgement, but brands would generally not like to be seen as scoring both, low on appeal, and high on negative facets. The caveat is that being perceived negatively by some consumers may be acceptable if the brand's target segment sees the brand in a positive light.

This article is the third article in our multi-part series where we will look at look at how each brand's profile matches up with its competitors, what factors series of industry-specific questions.

The Zion & Zion research team encourages marketers to look at how they want their brands to be viewed by consumers and look for ways to distinguish themselves from the pack. In our series we will show that by picking and choosing specific areas to improve, brands can forge a distinct and notable identity. Our series can thereby show how such differentiation can help brands to gain a competitive advantage.