

MARKETING

## Trump brand has become more toxic following vulgar remarks: Brand Keys

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*Trump International Golf Club Palm Beach, FL*

By STAFF REPORTS

The release of a videotape featuring Donald Trump making lewd statements about women has negatively impacted the public perception of products bearing his name.

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A Brand Keys survey conducted following the footage's appearance found that in 100 percent of the categories studied, including hospitality and apparel, Mr. Trump's comments hurt the perceived value of products or services. Coming as reports surface of lowered bookings at his hotels, this brand erosion is expected to cause consumers to avoid Trump products.

### Brand erosion

The tape of Mr. Trump speaking off-air to "Access Hollywood" host Billy Bush about his aggressive and seemingly non-consensual sexual advances on women caused many in the Republican Party to create space between themselves and the candidate. Many voiced their disapproval of his comments, or renounced their support of his campaign for president.

Consumers also appear to disapprove.

A previous report from Brand Keys dating before the tape's publication compared two surveys from before and after the businessman launched his bid for office, which asked consumers about whether the Trump name positively or negatively affected their opinion of an unbranded product or service. While Trump branded hospitality and entertainment improved, other categories such as apparel and watches declined ([see story](#)).

A third poll of 1,536 voting-aged adults conducted after the tape was brought to light found that all categories have seen a decline in perceived value of anywhere from 1 to 6 percent.

"What we know for sure is that these brand engagement numbers correlate very highly with consumer behavior in the marketplace," said Robert Passikoff, founder and president of Brand Keys. "And, as the Trump brand becomes more toxic, it's pretty sure consumers will be distancing themselves from Trump-branded products as well."

**NBC News** noted that occupancy rates at Trump Hotels have been hurt by the candidate's controversial campaign.

The newest Trump opening, its five-star Washington hotel that had its ribbon cutting on Oct. 26, has been showing discounted room rates during what is the capital city's busy month.



*Trump International Hotel Washington*

Perhaps a sign of the decline in sentiment toward the Trump brand, the hotel group has chosen to launch a new millennial-targeted chain with the name Scion rather than the typical Trump branding.

While the Trump brand appears to be damaged, daughter Ivanka Trump's clothing label seems to be faring better. In a survey of 950 millennial-aged women, 83 percent said they were positively disposed toward her apparel line, and 51 percent said they were at least somewhat likely to buy from her brand.

Brand Keys attributes the difference in feeling to the fact that Ms. Trump has been vocal about supporting her father on key issues but did not rush to defend his statements in the tape.

In contrast to Brand Keys' survey, there is a growing social media movement to boycott Ms. Trump's line. Using the hashtag #GrabYourWallet, the boycotters call for avoiding not only the Ivanka Trump label, but any retailer that sells the label, which include Macy's, Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus and Bloomingdale's.



*Look from Ivanka Trump's clothing line*

Brand Keys has been studying Mr. Trump as a brand for more than two decades.

"At one point Mr. Trump was the most powerful human brands' we had ever encountered," Mr. Passikoff said. "That included people like Martha Stewart and Tiger Woods.

"But recent revelations, and his ongoing political rhetoric, have badly damaged his brand, and history proves that when a brand has been damaged this badly, it generally doesn't come back," he said.

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