

BrandSpark Announces Canada’s Most Trusted Retailers as Voted by Canadians

Over 5000 shoppers named their most trusted retail and e-commerce brands across 19 key shopping categories in the second annual national study

TORONTO, ONTARIO (September 21, 2017) – Market research firm BrandSpark International today announced the 2017 BrandSpark Most Trusted Awards winners for brick and mortar and online retailers across Canada. The results were based on the annual BrandSpark Canadian Shopper Study.

“Whether shopping for food, health and beauty products, groceries, toys, car parts, clothing, home décor, hardware or household items, or other goods, shoppers look to retailers that they trust to deliver great value, strong selection, quality goods, and, when online, timely delivery. The BrandSpark Most Trusted Awards give shoppers a chance to see which retailers are trusted by other Canadians,” said Robert Levy, President of BrandSpark International. “These endorsements are especially useful for shoppers who are new to or don’t regularly shop in the category - particularly in e-commerce where many shoppers are still discovering the major retailer players.”

In the general retail study, participants named the retailers they trust most across 19 household and personal shopping categories. The winners are listed below.

Details can be found at www.BrandSparkMostTrusted.com

General Retail Winners (Bricks & Mortar)

General Retail Category	2017 WINNING Retailer	1 st Runner-up	2 nd Runner-up
Auto Parts & Accessories	Canadian Tire	Napa	Parts Source
Beauty & Personal Care	Shoppers Drug Mart / Pharmaprix	Walmart	Sephora
Clothing / Fashion	The Bay / Winners (tie)	--	Walmart
Department Store	Walmart	The Bay	Sears
Discount Store	Dollarama	Walmart	Giant Tiger
Electronics	Best Buy	The Source	Walmart

Furniture	The Brick / Leon's (tie)	--	Ikea
Gas Station	Petro-Canada	Shell	Esso
Hardware Store	Home Hardware	The Home Depot	Rona
Health / Pharmacy	Shoppers Drug Mart / Pharmaprix	Jean Coutu	Rexall
Home Décor	HomeSense	Winners	Ikea
Home Improvement / Hardware	The Home Depot	Home Hardware	Rona
Housewares / Kitchenware	Walmart	Canadian Tire	Kitchen Stuff Plus
Major Appliance Retailer	Sears	The Brick	The Home Depot
Mass Merchant	Walmart	Costco	Canadian Tire
Mattress Retailer	Sleep Country Canada / Dormez-Vous	Sears	The Brick
Sporting Goods	Sport Chek	Canadian Tire	Sports Experts
Supermarket / Grocery	Real Canadian Superstore	No Frills	Metro
Toys & Games	Toys "R" Us	Walmart	Mastermind Toys

Walmart takes top spot in three categories (department store, mass merchant, housewares / kitchenware). Despite recent financial struggles, Sears and Toys “R” Us are most trusted by more Canadians than any other retailer in key categories. “Sears remains most trusted for major appliances across Canada, with the exception of Quebec, and is a strong player for mattresses – two very important categories, says Levy. “Also, while Toys “R” Us has announced restructuring, the BrandSpark Most Trusted results show that they still have strengths that should help them through this process.”

The Canadian retail landscape is dotted with strong regional players

The Most Trusted retailers vary across Canada, with strong regional players in many categories. This is particularly true for Quebec, where home-grown retailers are often the most trusted by shoppers.

Three retailers lead their dominant categories from coast to coast, including Dollarama (discount stores) Toys “R” Us (toys and games), and Best Buy (electronics).

Several retailers with a regional focus are most trusted in Quebec, including Brault & Martineau for furniture and major appliances, Bouclair for home décor (in a tie), and Jean Coutu for beauty & personal care and health/pharmacy. While in the rest of Canada Home Depot is on top for Home Improvement (or tied as in the Atlantic region), Rona is most trusted in Quebec.

The Grocery landscape also changes by region. The Superstore brand (Real Canadian Superstore and Atlantic Superstore) comes out on top nationally, anchored by a leading position in the Western provinces. No Frills earns top spot in Ontario and IGA & Maxi tie in Quebec. Sobeys is most trusted in Atlantic Canada.

E-Commerce Winners

Canadian shopping habits are evolving. While most shopping continues to play out at brick & mortar retailers, e-commerce retailers are playing a larger role. Currently 7 in 10 Canadians shop online in a typical month and online shoppers expect to make a larger share of purchases online in the coming year.

“As the retailers that Canadians know and trust continue to build their presence on e-commerce, we expect to see trusted brick & mortar brands become more prominent online. To succeed in the transition to e-commerce, retailers must deliver *online* the value and experience that has made them trusted *offline*, while also meeting the high expectations on shipping and no hassle service and returns set by the ecommerce leader Amazon,” says Levy.

Details can be found at www.BrandSparkMostTrusted.com

In the first annual BrandSpark Most Trusted online retail study, shoppers specifically named the retailers *online* that they trust most across 23 household and personal product categories. Listed below are the national winners.

E-Commerce Category	2017 WINNING Retailer	1 st Runner-up	2 nd Runner-up
Auto Parts & Accessories	Amazon	Canadian Tire	eBay
Baby & Children's Clothing	The Children's Place	Old Navy	Carter's
Beauty Products / Cosmetics	Sephora	Amazon	Avon
Books	Amazon	Chapters/Indigo	Kobo
Electronic Gaming / Videogames	Amazon	Best Buy	EB Games
Electronics	Amazon	Best Buy	eBay

Flights	WestJet / Expedia	--	Air Canada
Food & Beverage (non-perishable)	Amazon	Walmart	Well.ca
Grocery / Fresh Food	Walmart	Real Canadian Superstore	Amazon
Health & Wellness	Amazon	Well.ca	Walmart
Home Appliances	Amazon	Best Buy	The Home Depot
Home Decor	Amazon	Wayfair	Ikea
Home Improvement / Renovation	The Home Depot	Amazon	Rona
Housewares / Kitchenwares	Amazon	Walmart	The Bay
Laptop/Desktop Computers	Best Buy	Dell	Amazon
Men's Clothing / Fashion	Amazon	Old Navy	The Bay
Personal Care	Amazon	Well.ca	Walmart
Pet Care	Amazon	PetSmart	Walmart
Shoes / Footwear	Amazon	The Bay	Sport Chek
Sporting Goods	Amazon	Sport Chek	MEC
Toys & Games	Amazon	Toys"R"Us	Walmart
Travel / Accommodation	Expedia	Trivago	Hotels.com
Women's Clothing / Fashion	Old Navy / Reitmans	--	The Bay

When Canadians shop online, Amazon is the most likely destination for a wide range of products. Walmart is close behind for food and beverage products. "With the recent acquisition of Whole Foods by Amazon the grocery category is expected to become very competitive in the next few years," says Levy.

Although Amazon is top-of-mind for e-commerce, several specialized retailers have been successful, including: Sephora (beauty products & cosmetics), Well.ca (health & wellness), PetSmart (pet care), and Home Depot (home improvement & renovations). These retailers lead their categories or are competing closely with Amazon.

“If other retailers want to catch up with Amazon in their category, they need to stay top-of-mind as their customers move online, and deliver the online browsing experience, selection, value, and service required to be shoppers’ go-to destination in the category,” says Levy. “Amazon’s leadership in voice-activated shopping will make it even harder for traditional retailers to catch up.”

How winners are determined

More than 5000 respondents surveyed from January to July 2017 determined the 2017 BrandSpark Most Trusted Awards retail winners through their “top of mind” responses for retail categories in which they shop. BrandSpark researchers analyzed the unaided responses and the reasons for trusting the retailer. Results were ranked based on the greatest volume of mentions, and if the difference between retailers nationally was less than three percent, ties were declared.

About BrandSpark International

BrandSpark International uniquely combines real world consumer insight with marketing credentials and services. BrandSpark Insight gets at the heart of WHAT consumers think, WHY they act the way they do, and HOW marketers need to respond to successfully grow their business. BrandSpark Marketing Services runs major CPG awards programs Best New Product Awards, BrandSpark Most Trusted Awards and consumer product trial and amplification platform, Shopper Army.

For more information, visit www.BrandSpark.com.

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For more information or interview requests, please contact:

BrandSpark International

Robert Levy, President
rlevy@brandspark.com

Philip Scrutton, VP Shopper Insights
pscrutton@brandspark.com