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APPLEBEE'S IS TOP BRAND, ACCORDING TO GENERAL SENTIMENT'S INAUGURAL CASUAL DINING INDUSTRY REPORT

Menu Overhauls, Restaurant Renovations Make an Impression on the Casual Dining Industry

CHARLOTTE, NC, February 23, 2011 – Media measurement technology firm General Sentiment released its inaugural Casual Dining Industry Report today. The report highlights the brands that made the most significant media impact online between November 2010 and January 2011.

The Applebee's brand generated more than \$9M in Impact Media Value, a result of the successful launch of its new line of low-calorie Weight Watchers entrées, which were well received by diners and critics alike. In fact, menu overhauls and restaurant renovations were a consistent theme for the top 10 brands, as Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Chili's and Applebee's all made significant overhauls to their menus or restaurants, generating significant news media coverage and social media buzz in the process.

"The brands that continue to innovate are dominating the conversation online right now," said General Sentiment CEO Greg Artzt. "In terms of brand exposure, the changes to the menu at Applebee's, the revamping of the interior spaces at Red Lobster, and the experimentation with more green-friendly lighting at Denny's all paid serious returns as those brands were the most-discussed over the past three months."

Applebee's, Denny's and Chili's were the top three brands as ranked by Impact Value, which assigns positive value to all online mentions on a scale determined by Sentiment. Applebee's introduced three new Weight Watchers-endorsed entrées to the two already on the menu, helping it outpace the Denny's brand by more than \$3.2M over the period.

Corporate crises also dominated industry headlines within this time period. A wild brawl broke out in an IHOP in Orangeburg, South Carolina and resulted in a viral YouTube video capturing more than 100,000 views. This controversy propelled the brand to fourth place in the overall rankings. A racist email from a Ruth's Chris Steakhouse general manager was widely circulated online, specifically, via Facebook and Twitter. As a result, the brand came in as a top underperformer by Perception Value, which measures the brand with a focus on quality of the exposure created by assigning positive value to positive mentions and negative value to negative mentions, this season.

"These negative events certainly drove an increased level of discussion for IHOP and Ruth's Chris; however, online perception towards both was significantly more negative as a result," said Artzt. "Not all coverage and buzz is created equal, and Perception Value serves to identify which brands significantly underperformed during this time period."

To download a free copy of the Casual Dining report, go to: <http://generalsentiment.com/mvreport/inaugural-casual-dining-report.html>

About General Sentiment

General Sentiment is a technology company that produces comprehensive research products to help marketing, sales and communications executives evaluate their brand perception and performance in the media. The underlying technology platform is built on natural language processing and Sentiment analysis software developed over the course of six years of research at Stony Brook University. On a quarterly basis, General Sentiment offers industry-wide reports, which break down the brand winners and losers for that quarter. The company offers clients custom reporting services as well as an online Media Measurement Dashboard, allowing corporate executives the ability to comprehensively understand brand perception and measure the effectiveness of marketing efforts. For more information visit, www.generalsentiment.com.

Methodology and Rankings

IMPACT VALUE:

Impact Value assigns positive value to all mentions on a scale determined by Sentiment, adhering to the adage that “all news is good news.” Impact Value measures the brand reach and places a value on the overall level of discussion and exposure for the brand.

Top 10 Casual Dining Restaurants by Impact Value

Company*	News Media	Social Media	Twitter	Total	MV Trend	Notable Source
1. Applebee's	\$4,386,618	\$3,356,193	\$1,781,060	\$9,523,871	↑	Dayton Daily News
2. Denny's	\$2,121,347	\$2,259,913	\$1,848,510	\$6,229,770	↑	Denver Post
3. Chili's	\$2,113,162	\$2,236,781	\$1,678,780	\$6,028,723	↑	Los Angeles Times
4. IHOP	\$1,901,940	\$1,445,706	\$2,550,250	\$5,897,896	↑	The Washington Post
5. Olive Garden	\$1,996,377	\$2,152,660	\$1,452,340	\$5,601,377	↑	Chicago Tribune
6. Red Robin	\$3,041,499	\$1,674,548	\$529,770	\$5,245,817	↑	Arizona Republic
7. Red Lobster	\$1,602,832	\$816,250	\$2,023,770	\$4,442,852	↑	Miami Herald
8. Hard Rock Cafe	\$2,458,222	\$484,407	\$405,920	\$3,348,549	↑	Boston Globe
9. Buffalo Wild Wings	\$924,722	\$845,891	\$1,304,260	\$3,074,873	↑	The New York Times
10. Waffle House	\$509,733	\$1,185,426	\$1,219,830	\$2,914,989	↑	Los Angeles Times

*Used a combined list of restaurants from WorldLingo and Nation's Restaurant News

PERCEPTION VALUE:

Perception Value isolates the effects of Sentiment on brand value by assigning positive value to positive mentions and negative value to negative mentions. Neutral mentions are not given value. Perception Value measures the brand with a focus on the quality of the exposure created.

Top 5 Casual Dining Restaurant Duds by Perception Value

Company	News Media	Social Media	Twitter	Total	\$ Change*	Δ PV/IV
1. Ruth's Chris Steak House	-\$13,616	\$63,788	\$9,060	\$59,232	-\$647,118	-122.6%
2. Bennigan's	\$6,009	\$835	\$260	\$7,104	-\$183,048	-64.5%
3. Landry's Restaurants	\$1,381	\$182	\$120	\$1,683	-\$4,254	-43.8%
4. Bahama Breeze	-\$60,123	\$24,724	\$5,600	-\$29,799	-\$63,245	-40.2%
5. Macaroni Grill	-\$408,430	\$16,964	\$15,680	-\$375,786	-\$509,250	-37.9%