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Obama vs. McCain (or James Bond vs. Jack Bauer) New study demonstrates how voters align candidates with familiar brands

NEW YORK (October 21, 2008) – If Barack Obama and John McCain were well-known fictional spies, James Bond and Jack Bauer would be heading into the final stretch of the U.S. presidential campaigns this month. This is according to the *2008 Presidential ImagePower® Survey* released today by branding firm Landor Associates and research firm Penn, Schoen & Berland, in which likely voters were asked to associate the presidential and vice presidential candidates with well-known brands – from fictional spies to cars and snack foods.

As many Americans grapple with the feeling that they don't really know the candidates, especially newcomers Sarah Palin and Barack Obama, the poll of likely voters sheds light on various aspects of the nominees' identities by associating them with familiar brands across categories. For example, in the eyes of the public, Obama is associated with BMW, Target, and Google, while McCain is aligned with Ford, Walmart, and AOL.

To understand how the candidates match up with ideal leadership qualities, the survey also looked at voters' perceptions of candidate attributes. Obama is seen as charming, approachable, compassionate, intelligent and unifying, while McCain is seen as strong, reliable and respected. On the vice presidential side, Biden was identified as respected, strong, and reliable, while Palin's attributes include trustworthy, "shares my values," and approachable, as well as unifying and credible – two qualities she shares with Obama.

"The study suggests that both campaigns have effectively co-branded to broaden and balance their appeal," said Mary Ellen Dugan, executive director at Landor Associates. "Likely voters associated Obama and Palin with similar positive key attributes, despite the strong surface distinctions between the two candidates. Likewise, Biden and McCain are both aligned with similar brands despite their deep policy disagreements. Brands that wish to strike a balance between competing values – such as "experience" and "change" – can learn valuable competitive lessons about how messaging and issue-framing impacts branding from these presidential campaigns."

"The big news here is that for all their policy differences, these two candidates have a lot of similarities from a branding perspective," said Scott Siff, executive vice president at Penn, Schoen & Berland. "Three of the key brands that McCain and Obama are both associated with – Starbucks, iPod, and MySpace – won their reputation as game-changers in their respective categories by allowing people to achieve individuality in a comfortable format. This similarity in the candidates' brand strategies also indicates that whichever candidate best achieves the positioning they are both trying to claim may well be the winner on November 4."

Where running mates are concerned, Obama and McCain may have achieved the perfect balancing act. According to the survey, Obama and Palin have a lot in common, as do McCain and Biden, demonstrating that the VP candidates compensate for Obama and McCain's perceived weaknesses, at least brand-wise.

Obama and Palin are perceived similarly in seven out of 15 categories including Internet brand (Google), magazine (*People*), and mobile phone carrier (Verizon) – all very personable, popular and youthful brands. The same is true for McCain and Biden in 12 out of 15 categories, including associations with AOL, *BusinessWeek*, and AT&T, all respected brands with a long heritage.

The survey was conducted by Penn, Schoen & Berland between October 1 and October 6, 2008 with a representative sample of registered voters who plan to vote in the upcoming presidential election. One thousand and two respondents participated and the results were grouped by party affiliation: Democratic, Republican, and Independent.

About Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates

Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates (PSB) is a global research-based consultancy that specializes in messaging and communications strategy for blue-chip political, corporate, and entertainment clients. They have over 30 years of experience leveraging unique insights about consumer opinion to provide clients with a competitive advantage – what they call Winning Knowledge™. PSB executes polling and message testing services for corporations, including Microsoft, BP, McDonald's, Vodafone, Coca-Cola, AT&T, Procter & Gamble, and Merrill Lynch, and have helped elect more than 26 presidents and prime ministers. PSB is a trusted advisor to corporate CEOs and national leaders around the world. For more information, please visit psbresearch.com.

About Landor Associates

Landor Associates is one of the world's leading strategic brand and design consultancies. Founded by Walter Landor in 1941, Landor pioneered many of the research, design, and consulting methods that are now standard in the branding industry. Partnering with clients, Landor drives business transformation and performance by creating brands that are more innovative, progressive, and dynamic than their competitors.

Landor's holistic approach to branding is a balance of rigorous, business-driven thinking and exceptional creativity. Its work spans the full breadth of branding services, including brand research and valuation, brand positioning and architecture, naming and writing, corporate identity and consumer packaging design, branded experience, brand equity management, internal brand engagement, and digital branding.

With 24 offices in 18 countries, Landor's current and past clients include some of the world's most powerful brands, including BP, Cathay Pacific, Citi, Danone, Delta, Diageo, Emaar Properties, FedEx, Frito-Lay, the City of Hong Kong, HSBC, LG Group, Marriott Hotels & Resorts, Microsoft, Procter & Gamble, and PepsiCo.

Landor is part of WPP, one of the world's largest global communication services companies. For more information, please visit landor.com.

2008 Presidential ImagePower Brands List

Landor Associates and Penn, Schoen & Berland conducted 1,002 online interviews with likely voters nationwide, between October 1 and October 6, 2008. The margin of error is $\pm 3.1\%$.

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	Barack Obama	Joe Biden	John McCain	Sarah Palin
 Coffee	Starbucks	Starbucks	Starbucks	Starbucks
 Car	BMW	Ford	Ford	Ford
 Computer Platform	Mac PC	PC	PC	PC
 Retailer	Target	Target	Wal-mart	Wal-mart
 Internet Search Engine	Google	AOL	AOL	Google
 Fast Food	McDonalds	McDonalds	McDonalds	Wendy's
 Magazine	People	BusinessWeek	BusinessWeek	People
 Beer	Samuel Adams	Samuel Adams	Budweiser	Budweiser
 Snack Food	Pringles Terra Chips	Pringles Cheetos	Cheetos	Pringles Cheetos
 Hotel Chain	Marriott	Marriott	Marriott	Marriott
 Smartphone	iPhone	Blackberry	Blackberry	Blackberry
 Portable Music Device	iPod	iPod	iPod	iPod
 Social Networking Site	Myspace	Myspace	Myspace	Myspace
 Fictional Character	James Bond	Bond Bauer	Jack Bauer	James Bond
 Mobile Phone Carrier	Verizon	AT&T	AT&T	Verizon