

STUDY

Digital Company Brands 2019



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The value of digital company brands

For centuries, company brands have stood for the identities of companies. They represent a company in its entirety and uniqueness at first glance, embody associated values, and provide identification for all stakeholders – both internally and externally. In their hierarchy, company brands stand above the associated umbrella and individual brands (for example Volkswagen -> Audi -> Q8), but they can also cover all levels (such as EDEKA).

In the 1990s, with the emergence of Internet business models, purely digital company brands developed for the first time. Some of these were based solely on a generic Internet address – for example www.hotel.de or www.amazon.com.

The liberalization of top-level domains by the Internet administration organization ICANN in 2012 opened up the possibility of using brand names as domain name extensions. Audi, for example, applied for its own top-level domain .audi and HSBC applied for .hsbc.

With the help of a top-level domain that bears the name of a company or product, it is possible to anchor the company or product worldwide as a digital brand. The top-level domain helps the brand to achieve an outstanding global visibility, supports the brand image and value, and thus represents a real competitive advantage. As a consequence, digital brands strengthen the brand identity and customer's trust in the company and its products.

In order to make .brand top-level domains more transparent for companies, agencies and consumers, DOTZON published the study "Digital Company Brands" for the second time. While in last year's study only European company brands were analysed, "Digital Company Brands 2019" analysed all companies worldwide that currently have their own top-level domain. The study complements another study, "Digital City Brands", which was published earlier this year. While Digital Company Brands deals with digital product and company brands, Digital City Brands examines how cities successfully use their digital identities.

527
.brand

18.925
Domains



The Digital Company Brands 2019

The study Digital Company Brands is based on an analysis of the currently worldwide 527 .brands with their almost 19,000 domains. The number of registered domains worldwide has increased by approx. 23 percent compared to the previous year, in Europe even by approx. 37 percent.

Comparison Ranking 2018/2019

	2018	2019	
1 .audi	4	1	▲
2 .bnpparibas	5	2	▲
3 .abbott	-	3	▲
4 .weber	3	4	▼
5 .seat	2	5	▼
6 .bradesco	-	6	▲
7 .leclerc	1	7	▼
8 .lamborghini	-	8	▲
9 .neustar	-	9	▲
10 .dvag	8	10	▼

For the study, DOTZON used data from two different areas: In addition to purely quantitative data such as the number of registered domains, use for e-mail communication and relation between resolving and non-resolving domains, qualitative data such as search engine performance, visibility and links were analysed.

The study shows that .audi is the most successful digital company brand worldwide, followed by .bnpparibas in second place and .abbott in third place. With .abbott, .neustar and .bradesco, there are for the first time two US and one South American domain name extensions among the top 10. All in all, it has been shown that particularly companies from the automotive and financial industries know how to successfully run their .brands. All of them operate more than 150 domains that are visible in digital space and real life. The domains are increasingly used in traditional communication channels such as print, TV and outdoor advertising.

Top 10 Ranking Digital Company Brands 2019

In order to identify the top 10 Digital Company Brands, every .brand was evaluated on the basis of seven individual parameters. The overall ranking of the Digital Company Brands 2019 is based on the average of the seven individual rankings.

	Registered domains	Resolving domains	Mailserver	New use	Alexa Backlinks	Alexa Rank	Visibility
1 .audi	3	3	3	1	7	1	1
2 .bnpparibas	12	12	19	7	8	7	7
3 .abbott	15	15	11	12	5	3	12
4 .weber	21	14	17	5	13	4	5
5 .seat	5	5	52	2	11	5	2
6 .bradesco	18	11	15	11	6	11	11
7 .leclerc	17	12	20	13	9	6	13
8 .lamborghini	13	10	8	4	51	2	4
9 .neustar	7	6	5	28	26	15	27
10 .dvag	1	1	1	19	61	16	19

Place per parameter, the total placement results from the average of the individual placements.



1st Place: .audi

.audi was delegated on 17 November 2015. The German carmaker is with .dvag the only in the top 10 to achieve top scores three times: it ranks first in terms of visibility, as well as in terms of the number of domains with Alexa rank and newly used domains. With the third place each in the categories of the number of registered domains and the number of dissolving domains, .audi is clearly ahead of all .brands. The Audi claim "Vorsprung durch Technik" is perfectly implemented with .audi.



BNP PARIBAS

2nd place: .bnpparibas

.bnpparibas was delegated on 11 August 2014. The French banking group has been offering its customers online banking at www.mabanque.bnpparibas since 2016. .bnpparibas performs particularly well in terms of communication: its high visibility, the number of domains with Alexa rank and many Alexa backlinks reward the bank's early digital commitment. If BNP Paribas would use more of its registered domains for e-mail services, nothing would stand in the way of scoring the top rank in 2020.



3rd place: .abbott

.abbott was approved on 24 July 2014. Since then, the US pharmaceutical company has been using almost 200 domains under its extension. Many of these addresses are also used for e-mail services, which contributes to the good result. Abbott achieved third place mostly because of its good rankings in the Alexa scores. For example, if you enter "Abbott" in your search bar in Germany, the appropriate address www.de.abbott is ranked first.



4th place: .weber

.weber was delegated on 18 December 2015. Saint-Gobain Weber is a French manufacturer of construction materials.

Weber is in fourth place due to its very good usage rate: 83 of the 148 domains are actively used instead of being forwarded. The fact that Weber also reached top places in terms of Alexa ranking and visibility, contributes to the good result.



5th place: .seat

.seat was delegated on 16 April 2015. The Spanish car manufacturer is characterized by the second-best place in terms of the use of domains: 543 of the 678 domains are actively used and not only forwarded to existing websites.

The excellent second position in the visibility and the very good placement in the number of Alexa rankings show the communication strength of .seat.



6th place: .bradesco

.bradesco was approved on 18 December 2014. The Brazilian financial group operates around 150 domains under its own domain name extension. They are primarily focused on the national market.

The sixth place of .bradesco is due to the very good visibility of its Internet addresses in Alexa and SISTRIX. 154 of the 167 registered addresses are resolving, which also contributes to the good ranking. Almost half of all addresses are used for newly created websites.



7th place: .leclerc

.leclerc was delegated on 27 February 2015. E.Leclerc is a French cooperative and supermarket chain and occupies a solid seventh place among all .brand extensions in the study. Many of the 168 registered domains resolve as websites, and for most of the domains there is an MX record, that means, those domains can be used for e-mail communication. Good placings at SISTRIX and Alexa complete the result.



8th place: .lamborghini

.lamborghini was delegated on 4 June 2015. Since then, the Italian sports car manufacturer has been on the Internet with many distinctive websites and likes to use them for the presentation of new models.

Lamborghini deserves the eighth place because of the very good ranking in the number of new addresses in use, the number of listings at Alexa, and the visibility.



9th place: .neustar

On 5 December 2013 .neustar was delegated. The US-based Internet company with roots in telephony has since been operating numerous websites for its services. Very good rankings for the number of registered domains as well as the number of resolving domains ensure that .neustar is among the top 10 this year. The fact that many domains can also be used for e-mail completes the picture.



10th place: .dvag

.dvag was delegated on 25th September 2014. Deutsche Vermögensberatung AG (DVAG) is a financial distribution company operating in Germany, Austria and Switzerland and has been actively using its domain name extension for several years. The top position in terms of the number of registered domains – namely 3,220 – supports a solid tenth place. .dvag also stands out with good placings in resolving domains and the possibility of using them for e-mails. Nevertheless, the fact that .dvag still only lands in tenth place is due to the limited number of newly used domains and the low number of Alexa backlinks.

The winners in the individual categories

The individual rankings in each category constitute the overall ranking. The individual winners of each category are:

Parameter	Winner TLD	Figure
Number of domains	.dvag	3,220
Number of resolving domains	.dvag	3,198
Number of domains with mailserver	.dvag	3,166
Newly used domains	.audi	1,098
Number of Alexa backlinks	.cern	958
Number of Alexa ranks	.audi	46
SISTRIX ranking	.audi	1,099



Summary

Usage trumps pure registrations

Brands that invest in the visibility of their .brand – for example in advertising, flyers or Google Adwords – usually rank better than brands that register many domains under their .brand, but do not use them actively. In contrast to the previous year, .brand domains are much more visible and also widely used in advertising.

Visibility not yet there

The visibility of .brand domains in search engines cannot yet compete with the visibility of popular websites such as www.google.com, www.amazon.com or www.facebook.com. However, Audi has 46 entries under the 1 million domains listed at Alexa with its .audi extension, which is a silver lining on the horizon.

Different scope of .brands

Also, it should be borne in mind that due to the different target groups of brands, their size, communication behaviour and Internet affinity, not all parameters are equally important. For example, it can be assumed that Lamborghini has less interaction with a broad audience than BNP Paribas, whose websites are used by millions of private and business customers every day.

Outlook

Numerous companies have successfully started to use their .brand and thus offer good examples of how a domain name extension can be used. Since the slow start in 2014, we have observed a significant increase in the use of .brand domains by companies in the past year. They were mainly used in advertising and public spaces, and in the form of image or launch campaigns. In addition to online channels, companies are increasingly using offline media such as print ads, flyers, brochures or bumper stickers.

Although we noticed that some companies decided to stop using their .brand for unknown reasons, many other companies appreciate the flexibility a .brand delivers. As best practices get more and more visible, we expect a lively usage of .brand domains in the coming months and years.



digital identities for tomorrow

About DOTZON

DOTZON is an international management consulting dedicated to digital identities. Since 2005, companies, cities and organizations trust DOTZON as a reliable partner for the concept, the application and the operation of their own top-level domain. The DOTZON team is well connected and has a wealth of experience working with ICANN for fifteen years. DOTZON's specialists apply their knowledge to help their clients protect, establish and strengthen the digital identities of brands and companies. Since 2017, DOTZON annually publishes the Digital City Brands study and since 2018 the Digital Company Brands study.