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consecutive year, according to The Harris Poll. In-N-Out Burger, Pizza Hut, IHOP, Chick-fil-A, Dunkin' Donuts, Pizza Hut, Moe's Southwest Grill, and Olive Garden...

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Subway is the 2016 Sandwich Shop Brand of the Year, securing the title for the sixth consecutive year, according to [The Harris Poll](#) 2016 EquiTrend Study.

The 28th annual survey showed the strongest brands in nearly 100 categories across

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year, more than 97,000 U.S. consumers assessed more than 3,800 brands (including more than 60 restaurant brands), across nearly 500 categories. The complete list of Harris Poll EquiTrend Brands of the Year can be found at: <http://www.theharrispoll.com/equitrend-rankings/2016>. Additional information can be found at: [www.theharrispoll.com/equitrend-information](http://www.theharrispoll.com/equitrend-information).

“The importance of a strong brand can’t be overstated; it can be one of your company’s most valuable assets,” said Lisa Recoussine, vice president, Client Solutions at Nielsen, which owns The Harris Poll. “When consumers recognize and make a positive connection with your brand they are more likely to make a purchase – and come back again and again. At a time when dining out is more popular than ever, with more options than ever before2, strong brand equity is critical to restaurants’ success.”

The 2016 Harris Poll EquiTrend Restaurant Brands of the Year

The 2016 Harris Poll EquiTrend Restaurant Brands of the Year

Award Category	Brand
Burger Restaurant	In-N-Out Burger
Casual Dining Restaurant	IHOP (International House of Pancakes)
Chicken Restaurant	Chick-fil-A
Coffee & Quick Service Restaurant	Dunkin’ Donuts

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This year's Harris Poll study marks the sixth consecutive year Subway has secured the Brand of the Year title in the Sandwich Shop category<sup>3/4</sup>a feat achieved only by nine other brands in the EquiTrend study.

Moe's Southwest Grill shows the largest equity increase (13%) among all restaurants measured, and demonstrates one of the largest equity increases across all brands assessed, which is significant given the tendency for equity to resist rapid movement.

"Year after year, Subway has proven that it has equity staying power," said Recoussine. "Getting ahead of the fitness curve and being one of the first chains to use a celebrity fitness tie in with 'The Biggest Loser' are some factors contributing to Subway's equity dominance. In Moe's case, the restaurant's aggressive expansion and growth, combined with their focus on fresh, likely factored into their equity rise."

### **Responding to Consumers' Needs Matters**

Harris Poll's assessment of the restaurant Brands of the Year show that responding to consumers' needs for fresher, healthier offerings, and catering to their "brand fans" are ways to build strong equity.

"When we look at the quick service restaurant category as a whole, healthy and fresh food is a clear trend," said Recoussine. "Moe's Southwest Grill and Subway are examples of restaurants that have listened to their customers and responded to their needs. While not fast food, Olive Garden is another good example of making healthy and fresh options a priority.

"Building a base of 'brand fans' is another huge contributor to brand equity; when we consider Chick-fil-A, Dunkin' Donuts and In-N-Out Burger, these restaurants have die-hard, extremely loyal customers or fans who are in some cases, nearly obsessed with these brands. Brands who recognize and acknowledge these fans will

remain relevant and stay top of mind with consumers' active brand consideration

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