

next tuesday afternoon

September 30, 2008

Coca-Cola is once again the world's most valuable brand, according to the recent annual list of the Best 100 Global Brands.

While Coke held onto its top position from last year, IBM, expanding its services and transitioning out of production, moved up to No. 2, knocking Vista-burdened Microsoft to third. GE was fourth, boosted by its "Ecomagination" communications program, and Nokia fifth.

The brands with the biggest growth in the past 12 months were: Google, up 43%; Apple, up 24%; Amazon, up 19%; retailer Zara, up 15%; and Nintendo, up 13%. Only one brand in the top 20, Citi, saw its brand value fall.

Although the retail sector has generally suffered this year, Zara leveraged technology by quickly relaying scanning data from purchases to production in order to keep hot inventory in stock. Apple's iPhone was a massive success as they added up \$4,000 of revenue per square foot of retail space vs. \$700 generated by Saks.

Joining the list for the first time are: retailer H&M, taking the No. 22 slot; Thomson Reuters, ranking No. 44; BlackBerry at 73; Ferrari at 93; Marriott at 96; FedEx at 99; and Visa at 100.

Among the five brands with the biggest year-over-year drops in brand value were three financial players: Merrill Lynch, which fell 21%; Morgan Stanley, sliding 16%; and Citi, falling 14%. Gap was down 20%, and Ford dropped 12%. Of course, these slots were determined before the Wall Street meltdown.

The losers in all categories generally didn't keep up with consumer trends.

Strong and weaker brands all use research to try to stay in touch with their customers. Winning brands can innovate quickly and bring fresh ideas to market, which mirrors a statement by hockey great Wayne Gretsky that could serve as advice to fallen brands: "Skate to where the puck is going, not to where it was."

I'm Lisa Davis. Let me know if I can help you in any way, please feel free to visit at OneAlliance.com and I'll be back next Tuesday afternoon.

Lisa Davis
859.225.2684
Lisa@OneAlliance.com

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