Microsoft Jumps to No. 1 in National Corporate Reputation Survey

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Johnson & Johnson is No. 2 and 3M ranks No.3, according to the Annual RQ 2006 by Harris Interactive

ROCHESTER, N.Y. â€" February 1, 2007 â€" The Annual RQ 2006 study conducted by Harris InteractiveÂ® measures the corporate reputations of the most visible companies in the United States. According to this yearâ€™s Annual RQSM survey, Microsoft jumps seven places over last year to rank No. 1 with a Reputation QuotientÂ® (RQSM) score of 80.74. Johnson & Johnson ranks second with an RQ score of 80.44, and 3M ranks third, with an RQ score of 80.09.

The Wall Street Journal published these results in its feature article "How Bossâ€™s Deeds Buff Firmâ€™s Reputation" on January 31, 2007 and included the list of the "60 Most Visible Companies" in the United States. The study, conducted by the Harris Interactive Brand and Strategy Consulting Group, evaluates companies along six key dimensions that comprise a companyâ€™s corporate reputation: vision and leadership, social responsibility, emotional appeal, products and services, workplace environment and financial performance.

This year, the Annual RQ further examined some subgroups of the general public â€" in particular influentials* and general investors*â€" to determine their views of corporate reputation. The research demonstrates that influentialsâ€™ view of corporation reputation and which companies are excelling and which are not differs from the overall results. The company rankings, based only on influentialsâ€™ scores would have shifted the rankings to Microsoft remaining at number one, but followed by the 3M Company, General Mills, Johnson & Johnson, Google, UPS, Amazon.com, Whole Foods, Coca-Cola and Toyota in the top ten. Influentials tend to be more pessimistic about the state of corporate reputation today with 53 percent saying it has declined versus 44 percent of the non-influentials saying the same.

The rankings by general investors alone would have been very different as well. General Mills would be number one, followed by Google, 3M, Toyota, Microsoft, J&J, P&G, Coca-Cola, Intel and UPS.

According to Robert Fronk, Senior Vice President for the Brand and Strategy Consulting Group at Harris Interactive, "Sixty-nine percent of respondents rated the reputation of corporate America as â€˜not goodâ€™ or â€˜terribleâ€™. This context the significant RQ score increases among companies like Merck, Royal Dutch Shell, AT&T, Apple, Microsoft, 3M and others that much more impressive. Corporations today need to measure, understand and holistically manage their corporate reputation and leverage it as an asset. Those who do, find that ratings and rankings take care of themselves."

"In the case of Microsoft, we find a company that, while always scoring well in our annual study, there were certainly perceptual challenges regarding elements of its reputation," Fronk continued. "By focusing on the root causes of these perceptions and not just imagery or messaging, they were able to achieve higher levels of credibility with the general public. These types of perception shifts are not accidental and the value is nearly immeasurable."

About Harris Interactive

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