

Apple Dominates Social Brand Ranking

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The key to brands coming out on top on the social Web is to have great products people want to talk about. It should come as no surprise then that Apple dominates a new list of the world's most social brands.

The iPhone retained the top slot for the second year in social media management company Vitruve's annual ranking of the most social brands.

Its companion service, iTunes, ranked No. 6 and Apple itself was No. 8. Sony (overall brand, PlayStation) and Microsoft (overall brand, Xbox) were the only other companies to have multiple brands in the top 20.

Vitruve measures conversations about brands, both positive and negative, on platforms like Facebook, Twitter and blogs. It made the comparisons based on data collected throughout December.

Most major product categories are represented, although the top of the rankings are dominated by entertainment and technology brands.

The iPhone taking the top slot, said Reggie Bradford, Vitruve's CEO, was an exception in that it illustrates the power of a breakthrough product to generate chatter without maintaining a presence on Facebook or Twitter.

Measuring the buzz around products people want to talk about and the outlets on which this is done leads to different results compared to other brand rankings, such as Interbrand's, which calculates brand value based on the financial contribution it makes by increasing product demand.

Interbrand pegs Coca-Cola as the top brand in the world in 2009. Vitruve says as a social brand Coke measures just 31st after losing nine spots since last year.

IBM, Interbrand's No. 2, comes in at No. 90 in Vitruve's evaluation. Interbrand's third best brand, Microsoft, is in 18th position.

All was not rosy for Steve Jobs' empire, however. Apple's legacy brands Mac and iPod both dropped considerably in the rankings, with the iPod falling 27 spots to No. 34 and Mac dropping 19 to No. 35.

iTunes was a big gainer; while it didn't rank on the list last year, it rocketed in 2009 to No. 6, a move Bradford attributes, in part, to its strong Facebook presence.

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