

Toyota, J&J Are Top Green Brands

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Toyota, Johnson & Johnson and Honda are the most "green" brands around the world, but display a mixed performance to communicating this with consumers, a study has revealed.

Interbrand, the branding consultancy, drew on its own survey research and data from Deloitte, the advisory group, to identify the most improved players in this area over the last year, and measured the "gap" between each firm's actual and their perceived performance.

Toyota, the Japanese automaker, headed the charts overall. The difference between its ratings from the public and the results of formal analysis, however, was -2.6 points, meaning consumer ratings were significantly stronger than those provided by the official assessment.

Johnson & Johnson, the healthcare group, was second, and logged +3.9 points in terms of a performance "gap", meaning shoppers awarded it lower scores than the expert analysis suggested.

Honda, another Japanese carmaker, claimed third, and posted -0.4 points. Volkswagen, its German rival, took fourth, yielding +4.2 points. Hewlett-Packard, the IT titan, made up the top five, and hit +11.7 points.

"It is crucial that consumers' impressions of a brand are in close alignment with that brand's actual environmental performance. Otherwise, a brand's efforts in this area could serve as an under-utilised asset, or, conversely, suffer due to accusations of 'greenwashing,'" said Jez Frampton, Interbrand's CEO.

As evidence, Nokia, the telecoms group, took the last spot in the top 20, but also posted the biggest "gap", of +18.5 points, suggesting the firm has not effectively communicated its green credentials to customers.

By contrast, McDonald's, the fast food chain, was in 45th place, and received -16.5 points, suggesting that consumer perceptions are considerably ahead of its real-life performance.

"Closing the gap between sustainability performance and market perception is an incredibly important part of taking and continuing the sustainability journey," said David Pearson, Deloitte's global sustainability leader.

Among the new entrants to the charts were Nissan, the auto manufacturer, falling just outside the top 20. H&M, the fast-fashion chain, and UBS, the financial services group, also both made their debut.

"When you talk about corporate social responsibility ... the product are the best way to prove it," said DeLu Jackson, Nissan's global head, digital marketing and social media. "That's really a brand committing to having an impact, and, more importantly allowing the consumer to have an impact, because you can actually participate."

More broadly, 22 of the leading brands featured in the analysis were manufactured and managed in the US. The country was followed by Germany and Japan on this metric, with each nation hosting seven firms.

Data sourced from Interbrand; additional content by Warc staff

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