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**Jacquelyn Smith**, Forbes Staff

If it has to do with leadership, jobs or careers, I'm on it.

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## The World's Most Reputable Companies

We live in a world where word of mouth is the No. 1 driver of sales and competitive advantage—and because there's a strong correlation between a company's reputation and consumers' willingness to recommend it, businesses need to focus on building those strong bonds with stakeholders. Companies should of course strive to earn the trust and esteem of consumers in its native land, but given that a multinational gets a majority of its revenue from international markets, it really needs to be liked everywhere else, too.

Building a top-notch reputation that spans the world isn't easy. However, at least 100 well-regarded companies have successfully expanded their brands into the international marketplace by integrating reputation management into the way they do business.

[Reputation Institute](#), a global private consulting firm based in New York, recently ranked 100 businesses that have successfully established strong international names for themselves. The firm invited about 47,000 consumers across 15 markets to participate in a study of those 100 most reputable companies, all multinational businesses with a global presence.

### [In Pictures: The World's 25 Most Reputable Companies](#)

Each company earned a “[Global RepTrak Pulse](#)” score of zero to 100, representing an average measure of people's feelings for it. The scores were statistically derived from calculations of four emotional indicators: trust, esteem, admiration and good feeling.

Reputation Institute also analyzed what it calls the seven dimensions of corporate reputation. That's where it found that perceptions of the enterprise (workplace, governance, citizenship, financial performance and leadership) trumped product perceptions (products and services plus innovation) in driving behaviors.

“In today's reputation economy, what you stand for matters more than what you produce and sell,” says Kasper Ulf Nielsen, Reputation Institute's executive partner. “People's willingness to buy, recommend, work for, and



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invest in a company is driven 60% by their perceptions of the company and only 40% by their perceptions of their products.”

The study shows that in order to win support and recommendations, a company needs to tell its story in a way that connects with stakeholders on a global level. “This is a challenge that even the best companies struggle with,” Nielsen says.

Building a strong reputation takes time. “You need to live up to your promises and be relevant in the local and global context,” he adds. “You need to be seen as a company who genuinely cares about stakeholders. The best companies are the ones who invest in local and global activities; the ones who are doing more than just selling their products. The companies who are seen as the reputation champions produce locally, employ local people, and engage in solving local issues in all markets.”

One company that has been able to do this exceptionally well: BMW. The German automaker is now in the top 10 for all seven dimensions on a global level, and in the top 10 in 10 of the 15 markets, earning the title of world's most reputable company for 2012.

It earned a global RepTrak score of 80.08 out of a possible 100, and in its home country BMW did even better (85.79), which isn't uncommon. Nielsen says companies tend to have a stronger reputation at home. On average, the home country reputation is 4 points higher than the global reputation across all 15 markets.



“BMW has earned the trust and respect of consumers all around the world through its consistent focus on delivering high quality in all of its actions,” says Nielsen. “For a company to earn a reputation above 80 on a global level is remarkable because we know how difficult it is to build a strong emotional connection outside of your home country.”

Because reputation is often tied to the history of the company, the level of trust and admiration you need to break a score of 80 relies on many years of positive action and relevant communication, Nielsen says.

The weaker spots for BMW include the U.S., Japan, Canada, and China where it scored in the 70s—however, a score between 70 and 79 still indicates a strong reputation and “considering that these are the home markets of the largest competitors, this speaks to the strength of BMW,” he says.

In total, three automakers landed in the top 10 this year; Daimler and Volkswagen hold the No. 4 and No. 8 spots, respectively. Both German car companies outperformed the auto industry by more than 10 points. “This tells us that even if you are in a troubled industry, you can still deliver on your promises through a focus on quality,” Nielsen explains.

No. 2 Sony earned a 79.31 global score. It earned a 76.15 in Japan—which shows that it was able to overcome the challenges that all companies face when trying to build trust and support among consumers in foreign markets.

“Sony has been able to regain its stellar reputation after its crisis last year with the security breach,” Nielsen says.

The Japan-based multinational electronics company has the broadest reputation profile of all 100 companies, with a top 10 rank in 13 of the 15 markets. The only two countries where Sony didn't land in the top 10 are Japan, its home country, where it ranks 16th, and South Korea (No. 50).



Sony has its strongest reputation for its high quality products, but also ranks in the top 10 on all the other measured dimensions. The weakest spot for Sony is the perception on citizenship, where its score fell below 70 on the global level.



Rounding out the top three is The Walt Disney Company with a 78.92 global score. It ranks highest (No. 1) in the citizenship category—but lands in the top 10 in all seven dimensions.

“The Walt Disney Company has a more mixed reputation than the other top companies,” Nielsen says. “In Japan, Australia, Russia, the UK, and Italy, Disney has an excellent reputation with scores above 84. But in India, China, France, and Brazil its reputation is at or below 70.” In total, Disney ranked among the top 10 in nine of the 15 markets.

Google fell to No. 6 after holding the top spot for two years. However, the company still has a strong reputation. “Could this drop could be a sign that Google has lost its youth image and is becoming more like an established company?” Nielsen asks. It earned a 78.05 global score and has the best reputation in the workplace category.

Others that land toward the top of the heap include tech giants Apple (No. 5) and Microsoft (No. 7).

With a global score of 78.49, Apple ranked in the top 10 in eight countries and all seven dimensions of reputation. In was the winner in three of those categories; performance, leadership and innovation.



“Apple has seen its strong corporate brand transform into a strong corporate reputation,” Nielsen says. The company’s popularity did not translate into a strong reputation until recently, when it started to build a profile outside of its products, he adds. “Today Apple is seen as a company that is delivering on all 7 dimensions of reputation, and this broader reputation platform proved its value for Apple when it was able to maintain its high ranking despite

the loss of its iconic leader Steve Jobs.”

Microsoft, a newcomer to the top 10, earned a 77.98 pulse score. “The company has been on a remarkable reputation journey. What was once known as an evil monopoly is now the company with the best governance reputation in the world,” Nielsen says.

The Brazilian energy company Petrobras, U.K. telecommunications firm Vodafone and U.S.-based Lockheed Martin landed toward the bottom of the list, with scores under 65—but they aren’t losers by many means.

To qualify for the ranking at all, each company had to have an above-average reputation score (defined as over 70) in its home market, based on Reputation Institute’s global database of RepTrak scores spanning 2006 to 2011. The criteria for qualification also included company size, based on annual revenue, multinational presence and high familiarity among consumers in the measured 15 markets (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Spain, South Korea, the U.K. and the U.S.).

Something all the winners across the globe have in common: They have recognized that the days where a strong product alone would win the love and support of consumers are over.

Earlier this year Reputation Institute ranked the most and least reputable big companies in the U.S. Forbes reported on that [here](#).

See the full list of the world's 100 most reputable companies on [page 3](#). **Here are all 100 of the world's most reputable companies:**

Rank	Company	Home Country	2012 RepTrak™ Pulse Score	Difference 2012-2011
1	BMW	Germany	80.08	.65
2	Sony	Japan	79.31	.25
3	The Walt Disney Company	United States of America	78.92	-.58
4	Daimler (Mercedes-Benz)	Germany	78.54	-.49
5	Apple	United States of America	78.49	-1.29
6	Google	United States of America	78.05	-1.94
7	Microsoft	United States of America	77.98	.68
8	Volkswagen	Germany	77.04	-.30
9	Canon	Japan	76.98	-1.08
10	LEGO Group	Denmark	76.35	-2.91
11	Adidas Group	Germany	76.00	n/a
12	Nestlé	Switzerland	75.88	-.13
13	Colgate-Palmolive	United States of America	75.75	1.13
14	Panasonic	Japan	75.71	-1.13
15	Nike	United States of America	75.43	-1.49
16	Intel	United States of America	75.42	-2.14
17	Michelin	France	75.32	-.42
18	Johnson & Johnson	United States of America	75.17	-1.58
19	IBM	United States of America	75.08	.68
20	Ferrero	Italy	74.90	-.12
21	Samsung Electronics	South Korea	74.81	2.05
22	Honda Motor	Japan	74.80	.81
23	L'Oréal	France	74.35	-1.36
24	Nokia	Finland	74.33	-1.84
25	Philips Electronics	the Netherlands	74.33	-.51
26	Kellogg	United States of America	74.32	-.88
27	Goodyear	United States of America	74.28	-.80
28	Amazon.com	United States of America	74.07	.45
29	Danone	France	74.05	.13
30	3M	United States of America	74.02	-.66
31	Hewlett-Packard	United States of America	73.67	-2.23
32	Nintendo	Japan	73.56	-1.09
33	LVMH Group (Louis Vuitton – Moët Hennessy)	France	73.46	1.31
34	Bridgestone	Japan	73.35	.14
35	IKEA	Sweden	73.22	-.61
36	Giorgio Armani Group	Italy	73.22	n/a
37	Toyota	Japan	72.77	1.50
38	The Coca-Cola Company	United States of America	72.66	-1.61
39	FedEx	United States of America	72.56	-.12

Rank	Company	Home Country	2012 RepTrak™ Pulse Score	Difference 2012-2011
40	Marriott International	United States of America	72.53	-.54
41	Pirelli	Italy	72.30	-1.58
42	Barilla	Italy	72.12	.09
43	Fujifilm	Japan	72.07	-.60
44	Deutsche Lufthansa	Germany	72.06	-.79
45	Siemens	Germany	71.76	-.58
46	Bayer	Germany	71.31	n/a
47	UPS	United States of America	71.29	-.91
48	Boeing	United States of America	71.09	-.48
49	Procter & Gamble	United States of America	71.08	-1.67
50	Dell	United States of America	71.02	-2.58
51	Singapore Airlines	Singapore	70.89	-.87
52	Toshiba	Japan	70.87	-1.83
53	Xerox	United States of America	70.77	-2.32
54	Unilever	the Netherlands/the United Kingdom	70.63	-.74
55	Cisco Systems	United States of America	70.62	-2.37
56	LG Corporation	South Korea	70.62	-.35
57	HJ Heinz	United States of America	70.61	-.92
58	Kraft Foods	United States of America	70.57	.42
59	Swatch Group	Switzerland	70.50	-2.64
60	Hilton Worldwide	United States of America	70.47	-1.70
61	Heineken	the Netherlands	70.41	-.24
62	Nissan Motor	Japan	70.18	-.94
63	Qantas Airways	Australia	70.05	.40
64	Electrolux	Sweden	69.91	-1.60
65	Abbott Laboratories	United States of America	69.89	n/a
66	General Electric	United States of America	69.86	-1.13
67	DuPont	United States of America	69.77	-2.23
68	Sharp	Japan	69.75	-2.02
69	Eastman Kodak	United States of America	69.64	-3.35
70	Airbus	France	69.60	.09
71	Oracle	United States of America	69.54	-.98
72	Roche	Switzerland	69.53	-1.58
73	ACER	Taiwan	69.38	-.93
74	Sara Lee	United States of America	69.35	2.16
75	Yahoo!	United States of America	68.94	n/a
76	H&M	Sweden	68.77	n/a
77	SAS (Scandinavian Airlines)	Sweden	68.74	-.55
78	Marks & Spencer Group	the United Kingdom	68.73	-1.66
79	Hitachi	Japan	68.64	-2.02
80	eBay	United States of America	68.50	n/a
81	Avon Products	United States of America	68.40	.07
82	Zara	Spain	68.26	.00
83	Starbucks Coffee Company	United States of America	68.16	-.50

Rank	Company	Home Country	2012 RepTrak™ Pulse Score	Difference 2012-2011
84	PepsiCo	United States of America	68.11	-1.25
85	Fujitsu	Japan	67.93	-1.36
86	GlaxoSmithKline	the United Kingdom	67.79	-1.66
87	Pfizer	United States of America	67.44	n/a
88	Suzuki Motor	Japan	67.34	-3.70
89	Carlsberg Group	Denmark	67.21	-.81
90	Eli Lilly	United States of America	67.21	n/a
91	General Mills	United States of America	67.19	-1.17
92	Air France-KLM	France	67.13	-.78
93	Carrefour	France	66.54	2.53
94	Virgin Group	the United Kingdom	66.41	-3.38
95	Lenovo Group	China	66.27	-1.67
96	Hyundai	South Korea	65.69	-2.50
97	Diageo	the United Kingdom	65.05	-.19
98	Petrobras	Brazil	64.21	-.71
99	Vodafone	the United Kingdom	64.02	-.94
100	Lockheed Martin	United States of America	63.93	.42

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