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GENERAL MILLS UNSEATS AMAZON AS MOST REPUTABLE COMPANY AMONG U.S. CONSUMERS – DELIVERING ON CORPORATE VALUE ALONGSIDE PRODUCT VALUE
6TH Annual Reputation Institute Study Shows Who Is Thriving Versus Merely Surviving In The Reputation Economy

New York, New York, April 3, 2012 – After a year where two 1990s Internet darlings took home the top places in Reputation Institute studies—Amazon in the U.S. and Google, globally—food & beverage and consumer product companies roared back to the top of the reputation heap. [Reputation Institute](http://www.reputationinstitute.com), the world’s only pure-play reputation management consultancy, in partnership with *Forbes Media*, released findings from their 2012 U.S. RepTrak™ Pulse; a study that measures the 150 largest U.S. public companies. General Mills ranked number one in the study with a Pulse score of 83 after just missing the top 10 in 2010 and 2011. The company scored strongest in three key drivers of reputation, namely Products & Services, Governance and Leadership—and was also #1 in Citizenship.

“We value our corporate reputation tremendously and work hard every day to foster and honor the trust of our stakeholders. For us, building this trust includes delivering nutrition and value to consumers through innovation, strong community engagement, a commitment to protecting the environment, as well as developing strong leaders to grow our business around the world. We believe consumers reward companies that operate with integrity and stay focused on doing what is right over the long-term,” said Ken Powell, Chairman and CEO of General Mills.

The U.S. Top 10 was filled with competitors from the grocery aisles (with #1 General Mills, #2 Kraft and #4 Kellogg’s all in the top five), cola wars (Coca-Cola #7 and Pepsi #9 respectively) and tablets/e-readers (#5 Amazon and #8 Apple) as well as perennial top 10 companies like #3 Johnson & Johnson and #6 UPS. Perhaps the most interesting new entrant was legendary consumer product brand portfolio manager Procter & Gamble—from #21 last year to #10 this year—which only began publicly using its corporate brand in the U.S. for the first time around the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Navigating Today’s Reputation Economy

Since 2009, U.S. companies have been competing in a new Reputation Economy, where WHO THEY ARE matters even more than WHAT THEY PRODUCE, according to general public sentiment. Framing this in the context of critical consumer behaviors, including purchase consideration, loyalty and recommendation—company or “enterprise” perceptions explain 60% of these behaviors, with product perceptions only accounting for 40%.

To support C-suite executives and boards in search of how to make more confident and effective business decisions in this new paradigm, Reputation Institute also asked “Chief Reputation Officers” (either the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Marketing Officer or Chief Communications Officer) from these 150 companies about their preparation and strategies to drive growth in today’s topsy-turvy marketplace:

- Those 24% of companies furthest along the five-phase reputation management journey now invest over 40% of their annual budgets on corporate reputation—a 200% difference versus all other companies
- Of these same leading companies, a sizable proportion (51%) report the CEO’s Office as the primary functional leader responsible for setting the reputation strategy
- Reflecting the same trend, nearly all (96%) of advanced companies build reputation priorities into annual business planning

- Additionally, 41% percent of these progressive companies use reputation as a Key Performance Indicator, which is a higher percentage than customer retention/loyalty, brand health, or Net Promoter scores.

“The best corporate reputations of the next decade will not be built by accident or through products alone,” says Anthony Johndrow, Managing Partner of Reputation Institute. “Companies who both have and are able to tell a differentiated, enterprise-wide story that translates into employee ambassadorship and earns marketplace support from external audiences are the emerging leaders of the Reputation Economy,” he added.

2012 U.S. RepTrak™ Pulse Study Highlights

- Consumer products remains the highest ranked industry (72.24), while Tobacco is still the weakest industry (44.6)
- The top three drivers of corporate reputation with the U.S. general public remain Products & Services (17.5%), Governance (15.6%), and Citizenship (14.2%). These drivers have stayed consistent for the last 5 years.
- The top individual companies by reputation dimension include Amazon.com, Apple, and General Mills. Amazon.com wins in both Products & Services and Governance (for the 2nd year in a row). Apple places first in Innovation (now three years running), Leadership, Performance, and Workplace, while overall #1 General Mills places first in Citizenship and placed in the top 10 across all 7 dimensions.
- While nine in ten companies (91%) saw their scores stay the same or drop, a handful of companies did show significant improvements in their Pulse scores. These companies were largely viewed by the public as turning in strong financial performances while doubling down on successful citizenship efforts. The biggest movers included AIG (+16), General Mills (+6), ExxonMobil (+7) and Abbott Labs (+6).
- The biggest drops in reputation in 2012 include Time Warner (-10 points), Bank of America (-10 points), and AMR (-9 points), Altria (-9 points), and UAL (-9 points).

About Reputation Institute

Reputation Institute is the world’s leading reputation management consultancy, enabling leaders to make more confident business decisions that build and protect reputation capital and drive competitive advantage. Founded in 1997, and with a presence in 30 countries, we provide best-in-class thinking in reputation consulting and deliver fact-based insights to empower more confident decision-making, enabling our clients to achieve their corporate objectives. We also disseminate our knowledge, bringing together a global network to leverage extensive research, sophisticated analysis and rigorous methodologies that strengthen relationships and add tangible value through management, growth and protection of corporate reputations. For more information, visit: www.reputationinstitute.com.

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US RepTrak™ Pulse		
Ranking	Company	2012 Pulse Score
1	General Mills	83.0
2	Kraft Foods Inc.	80.0
3	Johnson & Johnson	79.9
4	Kellogg's	79.0
5	Amazon.com	78.6
6	UPS	78.4
7	The Coca-Cola Company	78.1
8	Apple	77.7
9	PepsiCo	77.6
10	Procter & Gamble	77.3
11	Sara Lee	76.7
12	Lowe's Home Improvement	76.3
13	Google	76.2
14	Colgate-Palmolive	76.1
15	Deere & Co.	76.0
16	Berkshire Hathaway	75.8
17	The Walt Disney Company	75.7
18	Texas Instruments	75.5
19	IBM	74.6
20	HJ Heinz	74.6
21	General Electric	74.5
22	Target	74.2
23	FedEx	74.2
24	Dean Foods	74.2
25	CVS Caremark	74.2
26	Goodyear	74.0
27	3M	73.9
28	Medtronic	73.8
29	JC Penney	73.6
30	Intel	73.2
31	Costco Wholesale	73.2
32	Avon Products	73.1
33	Caterpillar	73.1
34	Kimberly-Clark Corporation	73.1
35	Boeing	73.1
36	Hewlett-Packard	73.0
37	Whirlpool	73.0
38	Home Depot	72.7
39	Microsoft	72.6

40	Walgreens	72.5
41	Abbott Laboratories	72.3
42	Cisco Systems	72.1
43	Honeywell International	72.1
44	Ford	71.8
45	Xerox	71.6
46	Nike, Inc.	71.5
47	Oracle	71.3
48	Kohl's	71.0
49	Eastman Kodak	70.7
50	Staples	70.2
51	Southwest Airlines	70.2
52	BJ's Wholesale Club, Inc.	69.9
53	State Farm Insurance	69.4
54	CBS Broadcasting Inc.	69.4
55	Marriott International	69.3
56	Office Depot	69.2
57	Rite Aid	69.0
58	Best Buy	68.8
59	Kroger	68.8
60	Alcoa	68.7
61	Dell	68.7
62	The Hartford Financial Services Group	68.6
63	eBay	68.5
64	Macy's, Inc.	68.4
65	MetLife	68.3
66	Baxter International	68.2
67	TJX Companies	68.2
68	WellPoint	67.7
69	Motorola	67.6
70	ConAgra Foods	67.5
71	Nordstrom	67.4
72	Bristol-Myers Squibb	67.4
73	Amgen	67.2
74	Chubb	67.1
75	Southern Company	67.0
76	Eli Lilly	66.7
77	New York Life Insurance Company	66.6
78	Starbucks Coffee Company	66.5
79	DuPont	66.4
80	Aflac	66.3

81	Safeway	65.8
82	Supervalu	65.7
83	Sears Holdings	65.7
84	McDonald's	65.5
85	Gap	65.3
86	Allstate	65.3
87	UnitedHealth Group	65.2
88	Union Pacific Railroad	65.2
89	Tyson Foods	65.0
90	Liberty Mutual Insurance	65.0
91	Pfizer	64.9
92	American Express	64.8
93	Travelers	64.5
94	General Motors	64.5
95	Prudential	64.2
96	CenturyLink	63.98
97	Constellation Energy	64.0
98	AutoNation	63.9
99	Unum Group	63.8
100	The Bank of New York Mellon Corporation	63.7
101	Assurant	63.6
102	Merck	63.3
103	Wal-Mart	63.0
104	Hess	62.8
105	Duke Energy	62.7
106	Verizon Communications	62.6
107	Morgan Stanley	62.2
108	SunTrust Banks	61.9
109	Continental Airlines	61.8
110	Archer Daniels Midland	61.5
111	FPL GROUP (Florida Power & Light)	61.5
112	US Bancorp	60.7
113	Humana	60.7
114	CIGNA	60.7
115	Sunoco	60.5
116	Progressive	60.2
117	Delta Air Lines	60.2
118	Marathon Oil	60.1
119	Exelon	60.0
120	BB&T	59.8
121	Dow Chemical	59.8

122	Xcel Energy	59.7
123	Nationwide	59.6
124	Time Warner	59.5
125	Valero Energy	59.2
126	Viacom Inc.	59.1
127	AT&T	58.7
128	Aetna	58.7
129	Capital One Financial	58.3
130	Sprint Nextel	57.6
131	DirecTV Group	56.9
132	Chevron	56.8
133	UAL - United Airlines	56.0
134	JPMorgan Chase	55.4
135	US Airways Group	55.3
136	ConocoPhillips	54.8
137	Comcast	54.0
138	DISH Network	53.8
139	Wells Fargo	53.6
140	AMR - American Airlines	53.6
141	Altria Group	52.9
142	ExxonMobil	51.7
143	News Corporation	51.1
144	AIG - American International Group	49.9
145	Citigroup	46.5
146	Bank of America	43.9
147	Halliburton	37.6
148	Goldman Sachs	37.0
149	Fannie Mae (Federal National Mortgage Association)	29.5
150	Freddie Mac	26.0