

Apple Australia takes top spot in annual corporate reputation index

EMBARGOED May 1, 2012: Apple Australia, one of the country's most highly recognisable brands has topped Australia's annual Corporate Reputation Index rankings knocking JB Hi-Fi from its two year run as number one. Apple reaches the first spot in its inaugural year of inclusion in the survey.

According to AMR's 2012 Corporate Reputation Index¹, Apple Australia is viewed by Australians as having an extremely strong reputation across the entire range of reputation dimensions and tops all but Citizenship (where it ranks 3rd) scoring most highly on Products & Services, Innovation and Financial Performance.

Produced each year by research consultancy AMR, the Reputation Index surveys nearly 6000² Australians aged 18-64 scoring our 60 top companies (based on revenue in BRW's top 1000 listing), and ranks them accordingly. It is part of a global study conducted in conjunction with the Reputation Institute³.

In addition to collating overall reputation, the Reputation Index also measures how Australians feel about each company on the seven key drivers of reputation; Products & Services, Innovation, Workplace, Citizenship, Governance, Leadership and Financial Performance.

Telco giant Telstra rated the largest improvement in 2012 rankings moving up 15 places to 45th. Most evident was improvement in Innovation now ranked 32nd (previously 56th) and Products & Services, ranked 36th (compared to 58th the previous year).

Not surprisingly Qantas dropped 18 places (from 7th in 2011 to 25th) for Reputation following the airline's controversial and highly publicised shutdown last year.

"Based on data we collected in November, Qantas' reputation has recovered substantially from the initial impact of the shutdown, but clearly there is substantial distance still to travel to return to the levels of February 2011," said Oliver Freedman, Reputation Practice Director and General Manager, AMR Sydney. "The brand has clearly regained some ground and the results indicate Australians still have a relatively strong emotional connection with the Qantas brand."

¹ The list of Top 60 Australian companies studied in the Reputation Index is compiled by AMR by using the BRW Top 1000 list. Companies are excluded if they are not national, or only have a regional presence.

² N=5924.

³ The Reputation Institute is the leading international organisation dedicated to advancing knowledge about corporate reputations. Founded in 1997, the Reputation Institute has been a pioneer and global leader in the development of measurement tools and counsel to leading corporations around the world.

Further commenting on the aviation industry's performance, Freedman said: "Virgin Australia showed positive climbs in the reputation stakes increasing its ranking from 13th to 6th. Furthermore, Virgin ranks in the top 3 for Governance."

Reputational recovery was also evident for David Jones, this year achieving a ranking of 14th compared to last year's ranking of 25th, indicating recovery after last year's drop, although still below its 8th place in 2010.

"One of the big challenges facing David Jones going forward are perceptions around its ability to innovate – ranking 31st of the 60 companies," commented Freedman.

Murdoch's News of the World debacle clearly did nothing to enhance News Limited's reputation in its home country, ranking 59th overall and not surprisingly 60th on Governance.

"Mishandling of crises has an immediate flow on effect in any reputation ranking," said Freedman. "News Limited's inability to quash the media discussion and ongoing public debate is evident in the results."

However, its competitor, Fairfax Media, also recorded a drop in Reputation (from 48th to 56th) and decreases across most other dimensions including Leadership, Financial Performance, Workplace and Governance.

"We would speculate the results are a true indication of how the entire media industry is now viewed following the News of the World fallout. The industry's reputation has taken a hit with the two major players both dropping significantly in rankings," said Freedman.

AMR is part of the STW Group, Australia's leading marketing content and communications group.

For further information, please contact:

Sandra Renowden, STW PR on mble: 0403 823 218

Oliver Freedman, AMR on mble: 0434 562 623

Please note – a full list of rankings for 2012 follows

Notes to editors:

About the Reputation Index:

Other major reputation or Corporate Responsibility studies conducted in Australia use a self rating system; the companies being analysed voluntarily provide the data, which can then be audited. However, the Reputation Index is different because it collates insight direct from consumers, and does not rely on any information provided by the companies being studied.

In addition to collating overall reputation, the Reputation Index also measures how Australians

feel about each of the 60 companies according to seven parameters; Products & Services, Innovation, Workplace, Citizenship, Governance, Leadership and Performance.

Adults aged 18-64 are surveyed as part of the Reputation Index in Australia, with results weighted to ensure they represent appropriate gender and age groups.

About AMR

AMR is a research consultancy that brings innovation, integration and insight to drive business success. AMR has operated in Australia for more than twenty years, offering a full range of research services to business and government. From advertising effectiveness and brand equity studies through to corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, concept testing and pricing AMR offers a complete research consultancy service. Our mission is to drive our clients' success with the best people, products and processes.