

Lists & More Lists: Making Sense of Corporate Reputations

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Abstract

What would you like to know about a company? What value has the company created in the past, is creating currently, and will create in the future? The creation of financial value is not only important; it is necessary - but is it enough?

Today we are in the midst of a rapid global transformation with increased demand on corporations to perform not only financially but to be good corporate citizens. One of the most important aspects of this transformation is the critical importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. Climate change; community health, education and development; and business sustainability are some of the most pressing issues of our time. Businesses are increasingly involved in these areas as are their clients and their people. This raises the importance of accurately and transparently accounting for and reporting these activities. Lord Michael Hastings, Global Head of Citizenship & Diversity, KPMG International (KPMG, 2008, p. 2).

This paper explores the relationships between and among lists of top performers - Newsweek's Green Rankings of America's 500 largest corporations, Fortune's World's Most Admired Companies, Harris Interactive's Reputation Quotient for the Most Visible Companies, and Boston College's Corporate Social Responsibility Index. Its objective is to see whether in spite of differing methodologies and criteria for rankings, there is a commonality of inclusion in lists. In effect, this paper attempts use various statistical analyses in order to determine if there is an agreement as to which companies are top corporate citizens in the United States.

Key Words: Corporate Social Responsibility; Corporate Reputation