

Technology stars top ranking of brand value

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People are seen at Google headquarters in Mountain View, California, January 2010. Google was crowned the world's most valuable brand on Wednesday by a research firm that found technology firms dominate when it comes to how much a name is worth in today's markets.

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Google, IBM, Apple and Microsoft topped global stalwarts Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and Marlboro in a Top Ten brand value list packed with seven technology companies.

Google's brand was worth more than 114 billion dollars, a 14 percent climb from 2009, according to the annual Millward Brown Optimor "BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands" report.

US technology titan IBM saw its "brand value" surge 30 percent to 86 billion dollars while the worth of Apple's name climbed 32 percent to 83 billion dollars, according to the report.

Factors taken into consideration in the ranking include customer loyalty and opinions regarding brands and how they influence earnings.

Microsoft ranked fourth with its brand valued at slightly more than 76 billion dollars, just ahead of the nearly 68 billion dollars that Coca-Cola's brand was said to be worth.

China Mobile, General Electric, and Vodafone claimed the eighth through tenth spots respectively.

Social-networking powerhouse Facebook made it onto a separate Top Twenty technology brands list for the first time with its company name value at 5.5 billion dollars.

Electronics powerhouse Samsung saw the largest jump in brand value, soaring 80 percent from the previous year to 11.3 billion dollars.

"Technology brands demonstrated their pervasiveness in our daily lives," Millward Brown said in a release. "Use of social media was a key trend across many of the successful brands."

The overall value of the Top 100 brands rose four percent to more than two trillion dollars, according to Millward Brown, which specializes in advertising, marketing communications, media and brand equity research.

"This ranking has elevated the importance of building brands among some of the world's most successful companies," said Millward Brown global chief executive Eileen Campbell.

"CEOs and CFOs around the world should be asking their brand and marketing teams how they can leverage brand to both protect and grow the business."

An investor who put their money into a Brandz portfolio five years ago would have earned a double-digit return as opposed to losing cash with a set of stocks based on the S&P 500 index, according to Millward Brown.

"In the past, many companies were quick to cut their marketing spend during a down economy," said Joanna Seddon, head of Millward Brown Optimor.

"A new trend has emerged in the wake of the recession as more companies realized the importance of maintaining and even increasing budgets to support brand loyalty and engagement."

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