

Business Day, South Africa - Posted to the web on: 04 December 2006

SA firms score on reputation

Lesley Stones

IN WOOLWORTHS and Vodacom we trust; of most of the others we are suspicious.

That is the verdict of a global survey that assesses which companies have a solid reputation earning them the esteem, trust, goodwill and admiration of their stakeholders.

The two South African companies both scored well in the survey, conducted by the International Reputation Institute and published by Forbes.

Woolies ranked 43rd and Vodacom 52nd out of 600 companies from 25 countries. Vodacom was ranked as the global leader in the category for large telecoms service companies — an industry that suffered the worst reputation out of the 22 sectors assessed. Vodacom trounced its 50% owner Vodafone, which rated 10th overall for UK companies but did not crack a mention in the top 200 global companies.

The overall winner was Italy's Barilla Holdings, the world's leading pasta manufacturer, which scored 87,79%. In second place was Lego of Denmark, with Lufthansa waving the German flag in third position.

Woolworths scored 76,78% and Vodacom 75,97%.

Posting the results on the Forbes.com website, writer Hannah Clark said the Enron and Hewlett-Packard scandals, compounded by backdated stock options, fudged earnings and sky-high executive wages, meant business leaders now wallowed among lowly journalists and politicians in the list of least-trusted professions.

But safeguarding a company's image was now a top priority for many CEOs. In the ratings by the Reputation Institute, a New York consulting firm, only one American company made it into the top 10. That was Kraft Foods, in 10th position.

The Reputation Institute consulted 30000 people around the world to rank 600 of the largest companies worldwide.

Of those, the company with the worst reputation was defence contractor Halliburton, with a score of 21,86%.