

Haier has best global reputation among Chinese companies

Tom Miller in Beijing

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Consumer goods maker Haier Group Corp has the best reputation internationally of any Chinese company, according to a survey of the world's biggest brands.

Haier ranked 13th globally in a list of the world's most admired companies released by the Reputation Institute, a private advisory and research firm that conducts an annual consumer survey that measures corporate reputations. Haier's high ranking reflected "the very strong penetration by the brand internationally", the institute's chief executive, Charles Fombrun, said at an awards ceremony yesterday in Beijing .

The survey asked consumers in 27 countries to assess 1,000 companies on a variety of factors, from product quality to corporate governance and citizenship. The results were then distilled to form a Global 200 of the world's most admired firms. Haier vice-president Cao Chunhua said: "Without world-class product quality, we would have no world-class reputation."

However, Haier was beaten back to second place in the table of the companies most admired by Chinese consumers by Finnish mobile-phone maker Nokia, which topped the domestic table for the second consecutive year.

Nokia recorded sales of 1.4 billion (HK\$78.65 billion) on the mainland last year, accounting for 13 per cent of its global business, its largest single market worldwide.

Japanese carmaker Toyota led the global ranking, followed closely by Google.

Haier's success comes despite last year's spate of bad publicity for mainland manufacturers after toys and pet food exported to the United States were found to be toxic.

"We need to establish trust overseas," Long Yongtu, the secretary general of the Boao Forum for Asia and the chief negotiator of China's accession to the World Trade Organisation, told the forum.

Greater transparency and uniform application of commercial laws, especially with regard to the protection of intellectual property rights, were necessary to improve the reputation of mainland companies, he said.