

For immediate release

International think-tank announces 'Top Brands with a Conscience'

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The Medinge Group, a high-level international think-tank on branding and business, releases its first annual 'Top Brands With a Conscience' list. Announcement of the list coincides with the launch of the new book *Beyond Branding: How the New Values of Transparency and Integrity Are Changing the World of Brands* (London: Kogan Page, 2003), which contains essays by 14 Medinge Group members.

The Medinge Group, an international collective of brand experts who meet annually in August at a secluded location outside Stockholm, Sweden, collaborated on the list based around principles of humanity and ethics, rather than financial worth. Evaluating on criteria including evidence of an ethical programme, the human implications of the brand and considering the question of whether the brand takes risks in line with its beliefs, the group singled out the following companies for recognition:

CaféDirect (www.cafedirect.co.uk): one of the best known Fair Trade coffee retailers.

Infosys (www.infosys.com): headquartered in Bangalore, India, Infosys has a commitment to egalitarian, cross-border relations—even an on-site meditation room.

Innocent (www.innocentdrinks.co.uk): this UK company is committed not only to producing fresh drinks, but recycling and an open dialogue with Fair Trade groups.

Kiehl's (www.kiehls.com): since 1851, Kiehl's, based in New York City, has focused on the finest ingredients for skincare, does not advertise and is a constant supporter of philanthropic ventures, including Aids benefits.

Max Havelaar (www.maxhavelaar.nl): Max Havelaar, a Dutch coffee trader, is committed to Fair Trade and sustainable production. Consumers and retailers pay to cover social and environmental costs.

Natures & Découvertes (www.natureetdecouvertes.com): French company sells giftware but has a strong environmental focus, providing regular information on protecting nature.

Patagonia (www.patagonia.com): an American sports gear company, dedicated to the environment, so much so that its employees work with suppliers on finding solutions and it trains people in non-violent protests.

Sanrio (www.sanrio.com): known for the Hello Kitty range of merchandise, the guiding principle behind this Japanese company, founded by Shintaro Tsuji, is expressed in compassionate interpersonal communication.



Announcing the list, Medinge Group member and *Beyond Branding* co-author, Jack Yan of Jack Yan & Associates, said, "Even the most traditional companies tell us that brands are emotive. Yet the brand valuation lists continue to measure only in financial terms. We set out to make a change. As the most authoritative and global group on branding, we put our heads together on how to shape this list. Brands are not about how much money they can generate, but how much passion," Yan continued. "These brands tap in to our consciousness and our causes."

Stanley Moss, another member of the Medinge Group, remarked the list is intended to demonstrate that brands can move in a positive direction. "In the past, bottom-line driven practices promoted great distortions in the marketplace. We believe that brands with a conscience can lead us to a new paradigm of value."

Mr Yan promises ongoing lists each year, the next following the Medinge Group meeting in Sweden in August 2004.

Related links

The Medinge Group www.medinge.org

Beyond Branding www.beyond-branding.com

Medinge Säteri www.medinge.com

Related documents

The Medinge Group Fact Sheet

The Medinge Group Q&A

'Top Brands with a Conscience' Criteria

The Medinge Group Brand Manifesto

The Medinge Group Members' Roster

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