

For immediate release

International think-tank announces 2006 Top Brands with a Conscience

Stockholm, Seal Beach, Calif., and Wellington, December 20 (JY&A Media)

The Medinge Group, an international think-tank on branding and business, today releases its third annual Top Brands with a Conscience list. In the Group's opinion, these nine brands show that it is possible for brands to succeed as they contribute to the betterment of the society by sustainable, socially responsible and humanistic behaviour.

The international collective of brand practitioners meets annually in August at a secluded location outside Stockholm, Sweden, and collaborate on the list, judging nominees on principles of humanity and ethics, rather than financial worth. The Brands with a Conscience list is evaluated on criteria including evidence of the human implications of the brand and considering the question of whether the brand takes risks in line with its beliefs.

Evaluations are made based on reputation, self-representation, history, direct experience, contacts with individuals within the organizations, media and analysts, and an assessment of the expressed values of sustainability. The 2006 list criteria was expanded to recognize brands now in positive transformation.

This year, the group singled out the following for recognition:

ABN AMRO/Banco/Banco Real
BP
Dr Hauschka
First Mile Solutions
Interface Carpet/Interface Inc.
Slow Food Movement
Sovereign Global Investment
Toyota Prius
Watabaran

Announcing the 2006 Top Brands with a Conscience, Stanley Moss, a director of the Medinge Group and chairman of the initiative, remarked, 'We of the Medinge Group are encouraged by the clear evolution of understanding that corporations today demonstrate. Humanistic behaviour and adoption of conscience-driven and socially responsible programmes are the key to success in the world of tomorrow.'

Nicholas Ind, a founding member of the group, said, 'There's a new maturity in the choice of 2006 Brands with a Conscience. This year we acknowledge more large corporate organizations on the list. It represents a recognition that while such brands might not always be perfect, they are significantly changing attitudes about their industries.'



'The 2006 list indicates that it is possible for corporations to maintain their goal of producing shareholder returns, while helping the planet,' said Jack Yan, a director of the Medinge Group. 'The list also shows that there are plenty of companies operating on the cutting edge of developments, such as First Mile Solutions. Medinge will always peer into the near future, to show where business can head. All too often, those who lead by example don't get properly exposed. We attempt to change that, while bringing the world closer together.'

Ian Ryder, a founding member of the Medinge Group, commented, 'As more and more companies realize they have a duty to those with whom they share our world, the Brands with a Conscience awards are not only gaining strength of entry, but also honouring those companies that genuinely care and try to give something back. This year we honour both global corporations and niche, smaller enterprises that share a goal of sustainability with true "conscience"—they should be a role model for all.'

This year's BWAC initiative is dedicated to memory of Medinge Group member Colin Morley, who died in the July 7, 2005 London subway bombings.

Expanded descriptions and web links

ABN AMRO/Banco/Banco Real

The Dutch-based ABN AMRO is the 20th largest bank in the world. It has a burgeoning commitment to sustainability and publishes a comprehensive sustainability report on its activities each year. Importantly, it does not see sustainability as an addition to its business, but rather as a central component, so increasingly sustainable thinking is being integrated into core business practices and into its decision-making. As a testament to this progress, the bank was recognized as the most transparent organization in the Netherlands this year. As well as the parent, two parts of the bank deserve special mention: Banco, an ethical fund management company based in Stockholm, is an active campaigner for ethical behaviour; and Banco Real, the Brazilian arm of the bank, which is particularly strong in microfinance. Not only do these parts of the bank deliver sustainability in their specific markets, they are an active force for change within the bank as a whole.

www.banco.se/ombanco/globalcompact.asp

www.bancoreal.com.br

BP

BP was formed from a merger of a group of multinational oil companies. Today BP does more than others in renewables and is more ahead in CSR than their competitors. It thinks of itself more as a sustainable energy company than a petroleum company today, and there is evidence that its tagline, 'Beyond Petroleum', is not mere lip service to the green movement. Positive changes are being implemented at BP, which impressed the members of the awards' committee.

www.bp.com

Dr Hauschka

Dr Hauschka began as so many companies creating skin care products did. A nurse mixed homoeopathic medicines into creams to help burns' victims, found that they worked remarkably well, and contacted WALA of Germany to start the line. WALA has been involved in organic farming for decades, and an entire community now works to produce the pure, hand-harvested ingredients found in Dr Hauschka skin care products. All the products are homoeopathic

and anthroposophical, and have been tested by *Lucire* and other media to be the equal of or superior to "pharmaceutical" equivalents. Its corporate structure is that of a trust, which prevents directors from taking supernormal dividends.

www.drhauschka.com

First Mile Solutions

The internet is the nervous system of our planet and the billions of people who lack communications infrastructure do not see themselves as the "last mile problem".

FMS regards last-mile problems as first-mile opportunities for both operators and end users. For under \$1 per user, rural communities that have never seen a newspaper can do things like email, browse the web, and have their own voicemail box using FMS technology. FMS technology leverages major trends that are rapidly driving costs down: WiFi and digital storage. FMS is based in Cambridge, Mass., where research and development is performed by management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

www.firstmilesolutions.com

Interface Carpet/Interface Inc.

Interface is a recognized leader in the commercial interiors market, offering floor coverings and fabrics. The company is committed to the goal of sustainability and doing business in ways that minimize the impact on the environment while enhancing shareholder value. Interface was founded in 1973 by chairman Ray Anderson, considered to be a pioneer from the start, being a trailblazer of the modular carpet industry in the United States. The company promotes sustainable business practices—within its global community and in the products it makes.

For Interface, sustainability is a belief that is built into the business model, an underlying corporate value, ensuring that business decisions are weighed against their potential impact on economic, natural and social systems. It is a means for associates to deliver superior value to customers and shareholders.

Interface is a global company with manufacturing locations on four continents and offices in more than 100 countries.

www.interfacesustainability.com

www.interfaceinc.com

Slow Food Movement

Started in Italy in 1986, this organization exists to promote the individuality of gastronomic culture. It now has 83,000 members around the world. It runs counter to everything that fast food stands for. It supports localized and regional cuisine and produce, conserves agricultural biodiversity and protects food quality. It aims at delivering quality rather than speed.

www.slowfood.com

Sovereign Global Investment

Sovereign Global (formerly Sovereign Asset Management) is a privately owned, independent investment organization which has been investing in the international capital markets for over 20 years. Based in Dubai, Sovereign focuses its activities on countries and companies that play a significant role in the global economy. Sovereign believes that the critical keys are successful allocation of capital assists in financing industry and government, creating

employment, reducing poverty and providing opportunity for growth and fulfillment. Sovereign seeks prosperity for all, by promoting effective capital allocation and good corporate governance in the companies and countries in which it invests.

www.sov.com

Toyota Prius

The first commercially available and successful petrol–electric hybrid car self-charges through the petrol engine, innovating leading-edge technologies. Toyota is the clear front runner in mainstreaming of hybrid vehicles: the Prius paves the way for the addition of the Toyota Highlander and Camry hybrids, and has even licensed its technology to rivals.

www.prius.com

Watabaran

Watabaran is a company in Nepal, emulating values of fair trade. They recycle paper and produce hand-made Christmas cards, calendars and gifts for organisations and companies all over the world. Watabaran represents environmental sustainability and good working practices and conditions. All employees are shareholders of the company and their salaries are well above local averages.

www.watabaran.org

History and upcoming plans

In 2002, the Medinge Group published a brand manifesto of eight statements encapsulating a vision of healthy brands for the future. In 2003 the group authored a collection of essays entitled *Beyond Branding*, which explored the ways in which brands could add value within alternative business and social models. In 2004, the group established the annual Brands with a Conscience list. In addition to the ongoing BWAC initiative, in January 2005 the Medinge Group launched an online, automated speakers' and experts' bureau, accessible through their web site at www.medinge.org.

This February, the Medinge Group will announce a Medinge Fellowship programme, as a vehicle to encourage graduate level students working in the brand discipline.

About the Medinge Group

The Medinge Group is a top-level think tank of brand professionals who meet annually to exchange ideas about theory, strategy and trends in international branding. The group meets in August at Medinge, Sweden and often in January at an alternative European location.

The Medinge Group strives to influence businesses from inside—and outside—to become more human, and more humane. The group believes it possible to accelerate change across enterprises and societies by acting on principles of compassionate branding.

The Group's web site can be found at www.medinge.org.

2006 BWAC Committee

Anders Abrahamsson

Paulina Borsook

Edward Daniel

Pierre d'Huy
Thomas Gad
Sicco van Gelder
Patrick Harris
Nicholas Ind
Rikard Jansson
Tim Kitchin
Denzil Meyers
Johnnie Moore
Stanley Moss (chairman)
Tony Quinlan
Ian Ryder
Jack Yan

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

For more information, speaker availability or other resources, contact:

<i>Asia, Pacific, Australasia</i>	Jack Yan	JY&A	+64 4 387-3213
<i>UK and Europe</i>	Johnnie Moore		+44 20 7354-5578
<i>USA</i>	Stanley Moss	Diganzi	+1 503 312-2592