

The world's favourite brands

BusinessWeek and Interbrand have listed this year's world's top 100 brands. This list is different from the latest publication of the top UK brands by a British newspaper. How international is a 'brand' name?

- 1 How important would it be for you to buy a well-known brand, if you were buying the products in the box below? Compare your answer with a partner.

car	camera	computer	mobile phone	hamburger
jeans	ice cream	soft drink	perfume / aftershave	trainers

- 2 Guess the world's top three brands from the following list of companies: *Coca Cola / Google / IBM / McDonald's / Microsoft / Nokia / Toyota*. Then, check your answer by scanning the second paragraph of the article below.

World's top brands – 2005-6	
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Based on figures by:
BusinessWeek / Interbrand

Interbrand vs. Superbrands

How do you calculate the strength and popularity of a brand name? Every year, BusinessWeek and Interbrand create a list of the top 100 brands in the world. The 'brand value' of each company is calculated and listed as 'The Best Global brands'. Last month, a major newspaper in the UK, the Sunday Times, printed a list, called Superbrands, ranking the top 100 brands in the UK.

The year 2005-6 had winners and losers. There are no surprises at the top, with Coca Cola leading as it has done for several years. Once again, Microsoft is second, with IBM in third place. The biggest winner, however, is Google, with a rise in brand value of an amazing 46%. Other high risers include Starbucks and eBay. The losers? Gap, the fashion chain, has fallen dramatically; Kodak's brand also suffered, due to the continuing interest in digital photography.

Second-place Microsoft is actually the strongest brand in the UK list. It is followed by the BBC and, in third place, British Airways. Airlines do not normally feature in the Interbrand list, as it is considered too difficult to separate the power of the brand itself and the income generated due to flying a particular route. One current trend in the area of branding is the popularity of healthy food; this partly explains why McDonald's is attempting to create a new image.

It is quite difficult to define the quality of a well-known brand. It is, partly, the power of a company name to attract customer loyalty. The name should be familiar outside of the companies' regular customer base. In calculating their list, Interbrand specify that the brand must receive at least a third of its earnings from outside its own country. Companies take notice of these lists and are already implementing plans to retain or regain their positions for next year.

- 3 Read the complete article. Who are the winners and the losers?
- 4 Replace the vowels in the following words, which all form collocations with the word 'brand'.

BRAND	(a) n-m-	(b) v-l - -	(c) -w-r-n-ss	(d) l-y-lty	(e) l - - d-r	(f) -m-g-
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- 5 Discuss your answers to the questions below in small groups.
- Decide on the top three brands in your country. You will report on your choice to the rest of the class.
 - What makes a brand successful?
 - How strong is your own company's brand value? Is it stronger than its competitors?