

## **2017 Corporate Reputation Study: Canadians not Passive, do not Forgive Brands Quickly**

Toronto, ON (Friday, May 12, 2017) - Google, Shoppers Drug Mart and Canadian Tire are the most admired companies in Canada in 2017 while the reputations of tomato ketchup company Heinz and smartphone firm Samsung tumbled from last year, according to the NATIONAL Public Relations and Leger Corporate Reputation Study.

This marks the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Leger study that ranks corporate reputations yearly. It is the second year that NATIONAL has partnered with Leger and the first year for The Globe and Mail's *Report on Business* as its media partner.

"Over the past 20 years we have seen that very few companies manage to make it out of a crisis quickly and fully recover lost brand equity," says Christian Bourque, Executive Vice-President and Partner at Leger. "This year's results are compelling when it comes to demonstrating that Canadians are not passive in their judgment and do not forgive quickly. As trust and authenticity become the dominant drivers behind brand equity, making somebody trust you again is no easy feat."

For Google, it is the fifth straight year that it has earned the number one ranking in the study. Rounding out the top 10 corporate reputations in Canada are: Tim Hortons, Dollarama, Staples, Sony, Kellogg, Campbell Company of Canada and Home Depot.

Heinz, however, has dropped from its 2016 number two ranking to the 23<sup>rd</sup> position. The company has experienced much uncertainty and upheaval with plant closings and layoffs. Samsung, meanwhile, fell to 24<sup>th</sup> from its seventh place ranking, which it held for the past two years. Its overheated and burning smartphones, provoking a multi-million dollar public relations crisis, are behind its fall.

"What is very obvious today, more so than at any time since Leger began conducting its reputational research, is that companies must be able to withstand scrutiny that comes from journalists, customers, regulators and increasingly shareholders in a 24-hour, always-on, social media environment," says Kim West, Partner & Chief Client Officer, NATIONAL Public Relations, Toronto. "It's a world in which there are few places to find cover."

Among sectors, the study finds that the reputations of entertainment and industrial companies are declining, compared to breweries and automobile companies, which are on the rise.

Volkswagen is an example of consumers' renewed faith in the auto industry.

Last year, the car company was the biggest loser in the reputation survey after it was caught cheating on emissions tests.

But since its public relations disaster, Volkswagen has worked to restore its brand, pulling itself up from its 226<sup>th</sup> ranking to 164<sup>th</sup> place this year.

The 2017 reputation study is composed of 234 companies. Only companies with presence in all Canadian regions are part of the Canadian ranking.

Download the report: <http://www.corporatereputationstudy.com/>

#### **ABOUT LEGER:**

Leger is the largest Canadian-owned polling, research, and strategic marketing firm with 600 employees in Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Edmonton and Calgary in Canada, and Philadelphia in the United States. Leger is part of the WIN network partners in more than 100 countries, making it not only the largest Canadian-owned company in its sector, but also an internationally recognized brand.

Leger provides its clients with unique expertise in market research and information technology, in addition to business consulting and strategies in the fields of customer satisfaction, positioning, brand management, communication efficiency, corporate reputation, social acceptability, crisis management and customer experience. For more information on Leger, please consult its web site, [www.leger360.com](http://www.leger360.com).

#### **ABOUT NATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS:**

NATIONAL Public Relations connects clients to the people who matter most; delivering the right message, at the right time. Grounded in research, insight and deep sector understanding, we bring together teams of discipline experts from across our network to provide creative communications solutions that move people in thought and action. For 40 years, NATIONAL has been at the centre of issues and industries that matter, leading change for today and tomorrow.

NATIONAL is Canada's leading public relations firm, servicing clients across a wide range of sectors, with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Saint John, Halifax and St. John's. The NATIONAL network also includes NATIONAL Equicom, the industry's foremost investor relations and financial services communications practice; healthcare specialist AXON Communications, with offices in New York, Toronto, London and Copenhagen; Madano, a UK strategic communications consultancy based in London; and SHIFT Communications, an integrated communications agency with offices in Boston, San Francisco, New York and Austin. NATIONAL Public Relations is part of RES PUBLICA Consulting Group, and is affiliated internationally with public relations firm Burson-Marsteller, a WPP company. For more information about NATIONAL, please visit our website at [www.national.ca](http://www.national.ca) or you [can follow us on Twitter](#).

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