

HSBC Named World's Most Valuable Banking Brand

Article by David Matthews - HSBC Group Intranet

HSBC has been named the world's most valuable banking brand, according to an annual index of 500 leading global banks.

HSBC beat Citigroup and Bank of America to the top position in The Banker magazine and Brand Finance's 'Top 500 Bank Brands 2008'. It also achieved the highest possible triple 'A' brand rating.

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The Banker believes that HSBC's strategy of portraying itself as a large, powerful global bank with a uniform brand identity has been critical to its success. Brand building

supported by high profile advertising under the tagline 'the world's local bank' ensures global awareness and appeal.

This recognition follows last year's Interbrand study of the world's most valuable brands across all sectors which saw HSBC jump five places to 23, the second best growth performance of the top 40 companies surveyed.

Chris Clark, Head of Group Marketing, HSBC, says: "A brand like HSBC is clearly a very powerful asset to leverage against all business lines in the company and fuel growth in emerging markets. As we develop our understanding of the brand, we have learned that this positive predisposition we have created sets an expectation for customers and employees."

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Chris Clark, Head of Group Marketing at HSBC

Brand strength and diversity crucial during turbulent times

This year's index highlights the importance of maintaining a strong brand during turbulent market conditions. It confirms

that the sub-prime financial crisis has had a considerable impact on the performance of many financial institutions around the world. It also shows the importance of emerging markets and China in particular to the banking industry.

As the report notes, prospects for emerging economies remain strong: "Institutions such as HSBC have benefited from their high-growth market businesses by being able to offset their losses with strong revenue results from these areas."

Brand key to joining up

Chris believes the brand is absolutely essential to help HSBC realise maximum value from its unique global reach, pointing to the launch of HSBC Premier in September 2007.

"This is a fabulous example of the brand in action. HSBC Premier allows customers to open accounts in 37 countries and get assistance regardless of location. This shows us that the world's local bank strategy helps to differentiate our propositions, build customer preference and drive revenue across the company," he says.

Looking forward, Chris highlights a number of global marketing initiatives that will continue to build the HSBC brand. These include the high profile sponsorship of golf and the British Lions rugby tour and the continued expansion of the airports advertising programme. Other campaigns will promote HSBC's sustainability leadership and re-position Global Banking and Markets.

"One of the major challenges in the future will be to ensure that the customer experience not only lives up to the brand expectation we've created but perhaps exceeds it," says Chris.

"This means that the brand's management is in the hands of all 330,000 of us, no matter how far away we think we are from day to day contact with customers."

HSBC Brand Fast Facts

- HSBC named most valuable banking brand (The Banker)
- 23rd most valuable brand in the world (Interbrand, Business Week)
- 2002 – 'The world's local bank' branding strategy launches
- HSBC advertises in 41 airports around the world

