

The World Most Powerful Brands



Google, with a brand value of \$66.434 billion, is the world's most powerful brand. The global search engine giant was started as a research project in January 1996 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, two Ph.D students at Stanford University, California. Google Inc was incorporated on September 7, 1998, at a friend's garage in Menlo Park, California. The company, known for its innovations and stupendous growth rate, went public on August 19, 2004.

Page and Brin's search engine was originally called BackRub. The name 'Google' originated from 'googol,' which refers to the number represented by a 1 followed by one-hundred zeros.

Eric E. Schmidt is the CEO of Google, while co-founder Sergey Brin and Larry page is Technology President and Products President, respectively.

The company is listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange under the symbol GOOG. 'Google' is now a verb, having found its way into the dictionary. It means 'to use the Google search engine to obtain information on the Internet.'



General Electric's brand value has been estimated at \$61.880 billion, making it the world's second most powerful brand. GE is a giant US multinational, with headquarters in Fairfield, Connecticut, engaged in technology and services industries. It is the world's second largest company in terms of market capitalization.

The famous inventor Thomas Alva Edison opened a new laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey in 1876, where the incandescent electric lamp was invented. By 1890, Edison formed the Edison General Electric Company.

In 1879, Elihu Thomson and Edwin J. Houston formed the Thomson-Houston Electric Company to rival Edison's firm. However, in 1892, both the companies merged to give birth to the General Electric Company.

GE slowly began to diversify its operations. Today its businesses span information technology, financial services, industrial technology, aviation, healthcare, oil and gas, films and entertainment, theme parks, locomotives, insurance, etc. In India, too, GE's enjoys widespread presence.

Jeffrey Immelt is GE's chairman & CEO; while Keith Sherin is the CFO, and Robert Wright is GE vice chairman.



Microsoft Corporation is the world's largest software company, with global annual revenue of over \$44.28 billion. With a brand value of \$54.951 billion, it also is the planet's third most powerful brand.

Bill Gates, the world's richest man, is the executive chairman of the software giant which he co-founded along with Paul Allen in 1975. On June 25, 1981, the company was incorporated on August 12, 1981, IBM introduced its personal computer with Microsoft's 16-bit operating system, MS-DOS 1.0.

On Feb 26, 1986, Microsoft moved to corporate campus in Redmond, Washington, and on March 13, 1986, Microsoft stock went public. On May 22, 1990, Microsoft launched Windows 3.0.

On November 20, 1985, Microsoft released its first retail version of Microsoft Windows, originally a graphical extension for its MS-DOS operating system.

Gates is equally admired for his insight and criticised for his business tactics.

Steve Ballmer is the company's CEO, while Ray Ozzie is chief software architect. Microsoft employs 76,000 people across 102 countries.



Coca-Cola's brand value has been estimated at \$44.134 billion, making it the world's fourth most powerful brand. Coca-Cola, a carbonated soft drink, was intended as a patent medicine when it was invented in 1885 by Dr. John Stith Pemberton in Covington, Georgia. It was then called Pemberton's French Wine Coca.

Pemberton's partner and bookkeeper, Frank M Robinson, suggested the name and penned the now famous trademark 'Coca-Cola' in his unique script. Coca-Cola was bought over by businessman Asa Griggs Candler in 1887 and incorporated it as the Coca Cola Company in 1892. Griggs made the brand a force to reckon with through his marketing strategies. Coca-Cola was sold in bottles for the first time on March 12, 1894.

In 1919, a group of investors headed by Ernest Woodruff and W C Bradley purchased The Coca-Cola Company for \$25 million. Coca-Cola is also the world's best known brand.

E Neville Isdell is the company's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.



CHINA MOBILE

China Mobile is the world's 5th most powerful brand with a value of \$41.214 billion. China Mobile Communications Corporation, also known as China Mobile or CMCC, is China's largest mobile phone operator.

It is the world's largest mobile phone operator ranked by number of subscribers, with over 296 million customers. By turnover it is second to Vodafone, which owns 3.3% of the China Mobile. A state-owned enterprise, it was spun off from former monopoly China Telecom in 2000, and now has a 65% share of the highly competitive Chinese mobile market. China Mobile is the largest company registered in Hong Kong.

Wang Jianzhou is the telecom major's Chairman and CEO.

Marlboro

Marlboro's brand value has been estimated at \$39.166 billion, making it the 6th most powerful brand. Marlboro, made by Altria, is the world's best selling cigarette brand. It is famous for its billboard advertisements and magazine ads of the Marlboro Man.

Philip Morris, a London-based cigarette manufacturer, created a New York subsidiary in 1902 to sell several of its cigarette brands, including Marlboro.

Marlboro then suddenly faltered badly in the market till the 1950s, when it made a rollicking comeback following the introduction of a new cowboy image for the brand. Sales skyrocketed by 5,000%. Marlboro with a filtered tip was launched in 1955.

The brand is named after Great Marlborough Street, the location of its original London factory. Richmond, Virginia, is now the location of the largest Marlboro cigarette manufacturing plant. Altria CEO & chairman is Louis Camilleri.



The world's 7th most powerful brand, Wal-Mart, is estimated to be worth \$36.880 billion.

Wal-Mart Stores is an American public corporation and the world's largest retailer. It is the largest private employer, the largest grocery retailer, and the largest toy seller in the United States.

It was founded by Sam Walton, who opened his first Wal-Mart discount store in Rogers, Arkansas, in 1962. The company was incorporated on October 31, 1969, and listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 1972. Sam Walton died on April 5, 1992 at the age of 74. His widow Helen R Walton, daughter Alice L Walton, and sons Jim C Walton, John T Walton and S Robson Walton, each with a personal wealth of \$20.5 billion, have all been ranked among the richest Americans by Forbes.

H Lee Scott is Wal-Mart CEO, while S Robson Walton, is the retail giant's chairman.



Citi is the world's 8th most powerful brand with an estimated value of \$33.706 billion. Citigroup Inc was formed following the \$140 billion merger of Citicorp and Travelers Group on April 7, 1998 to create the world's largest financial services organisation. The company employs almost 300,000 people around the world.

Travelers was founded in 1864 in Hartford, Connecticut. It dealt in insurance and is noted for many industry firsts: the first automobile policy, the first commercial airline policy, and the first policy for space travel. In the 1990s, it went through a series of mergers and acquisitions. It was bought by Primerica in 1993, but the resulting company retained the Travelers name. In 1995, it became The Travelers Group. It bought Aetna's property and casualty business in 1996.

Citicorp was the descendant of First National City Bank, founded in New York City. It was one of the oldest banks in the United States (founded in 1812), and had the largest international branch presence of any United States headquartered bank. In the 1960s and 1970s, chairman Walter Wriston led the bank into sovereign debt and loan syndication. It was Wriston who led the technology of ATM cards before the banks. He also spearheaded the name change to Citibank in the late 1970s.

Charles Prince is the company's Chairman & CEO.



International Business Machines Corporation, also called IBM or 'Big Blue', is a multinational computer technology corporation headquartered in Armonk, New York, USA.

Till 2006 it was the world's largest computer company, but has now ceded the top spot to Hewlett-Packard. With over 350,000 employees worldwide, IBM is the largest information technology employer in the world.

The company which became IBM was founded in 1888 as Herman Hollerith and the Tabulating Machine Company. It was incorporated as Computing Tabulating Recording Corporation (CTR) on June 15, 1911, and was listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 1916. IBM adopted its current name in 1924, where it became a Fortune 500 company.

Samuel J Palmisano is IBM Chairman & CEO.



Toyota with an estimated brand value of \$33.427 billion is the 10th most powerful brand in the world. Toyota Motor Corporation is a Japanese multinational corporation and the world's largest auto company that manufactures automobiles, trucks, buses, and robots. The headquarters of Toyota are located in Toyota, Aichi, Japan. It is the world's eighth largest company by revenue of \$179 billion as of 2006.

The company was founded in 1937 by Kiichiro Toyoda as a spinoff from his father's company Toyota Industries to create automobiles. It created, first as a department of Toyota Industries, its first product Type A engine in 1934 and its first passenger car in 1936. Toyota Motor Co. was established as an independent company in 1937. Although the founding family name is Toyoda, the company name was changed in order to signify the separation of the founders' work life from home life, to simplify the pronunciation, and to give the company a happy beginning. Toyota is considered luckier than Toyoda in Japan.

Katsuaki Watanabe is Toyota's president and CEO, while Fujio Cho is chairman. Shoichiro Toyoda is the company's honorary chairman; Hiroshi Okuda is Senior Advisor; and Katsuhiro Nakagawa is Vice Chairman.