



## **Business Influentials Pick Web Over TV for Trusted News**

### ***Edelman Study Also Shows Sharp Increase in Intensity on Expectations for Responsible Corporate Behavior***

September 24, 2007 -- Hong Kong -- An annual study of regional business stakeholders shows that web-based media has overtaken television as a first source of trusted news and information about business. Web-based media now trails only newspapers in the study.

The Asia-Pacific Edelman study released today and part of global public relations firm Edelman's annual Asia Pacific Stakeholder Study conducted by Harris Interactive Inc., examines the opinions of 1050 business stakeholders in Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Australia.

"The web is no longer an alternative to mainstream media, it is the mainstream media," said Alan VanderMolen, Edelman's Asia-Pacific President. "The key point for business is not that the web is a source of information, it is that web-based media are a source of dialogue with business influentials. Business needs to view itself as enablers of conversations about products, services and issues instead of viewing itself as communicators of a specific message."

Further underscoring the strength and influence of the web, respondents in the survey said they would turn to a company's website more often than any other source of information when gathering information about that company. Following the company's website, respondents said they would talk to friends that work at the company, use newspapers, turn to business blogs and, finally, look to local broadcast media.

"We believe the massive shift in media selection -- to web-based news sources, to a company's own website and to employees of the company -- underscores a broader trend in democratization of media and information, Mr. VanderMolen added. "In today's world, consumers of news and information are increasingly skeptical and discerning; not to mention, they want to talk back to the source of information not simply consume it."

#### Corresponding Shifts in Image and Responsibility Drivers

While business stakeholders are moving toward more interactive sources and channels of information, they are also increasingly changing what drives their views of companies.

Two characteristics of reputation moved significantly in this year's study: Management/Leadership Strength and Ethics/Integrity. Management/Leadership Strength is now the top reputation driver for business operating in Asia Pacific, overtaking brand and product quality. Complementary to that, the biggest increase in any reputation driver during the past twelve months is Ethics/Integrity.

"We believe both of these factors reflect the increased access to information about business that is driven by the web," Mr. VanderMolen said. "We are seeing a near insatiable thirst for information about who leads companies and how those companies conduct their businesses."



Also increasing considerably is this year's study is the intensity in all drivers of 'good and responsible behavior'. Three of those drivers, in particular, are becoming more important: open communication with employees, transparency and concerned/active about community welfare.

"The study shows that stakeholder expectations of business have risen across the board, especially in areas related to how businesses are using their core competencies to address the needs of stakeholders," noted Mr. VanderMolen.

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### **About the Survey**

This was Edelman's fifth annual Asia Pacific Stakeholder Research study conducted in partnership with Harris Interactive Inc., one of the world's leading research houses. The research objective was to understand which factors are most important to stakeholders when corporations build relationships with them. Within this, the research examined:

- Trust in Asia Pacific institutions and information sources
- The drivers of stakeholder opinions
- The drivers of responsible corporate behavior / Corporate Social Responsibility

The regional respondents represented six different stakeholder groups, including:

- Senior business executives: C-Suite executive decision makers
- Institutional investors
- Government officials: Mid-range officials or above, such as senior officers and senior executive officers
- Media: Senior Business Editors/Reporters/Journalists and Producers
- NGOs/trade associations: Managers or above working in institutions, charity organizations, industry associations and/or trade associations
- Up-scale consumers: Middle to upper class consumers with buying power; work in multi-national corporations and large corporations

### **About Edelman**

Edelman is the world's largest independent public relations firm, with 3,000 employees in 48 offices worldwide. The firm was named PRWeek's Large Agency of the Year for 2006. Advertising Age named Edelman as one of ten marketing firms to watch in 2007 in its Best Agencies issue. Edelman was also named 2006 Large Agency of the Year and 2005 International Agency of the Year by The Holmes Group. A&R Edelman was formed following the acquisition of A&R Partners in May 2006. For more information, please visit [www.edelman.com](http://www.edelman.com) or [www.edelmanapac.com](http://www.edelmanapac.com)

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