

# 2021 Global RepTrak 100

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# Introduction

As a result of the pandemic, companies are facing an increasingly complex set of pressures and demands from stakeholders, including seismic shifts in societal engagement and corporate citizenship expectations, and acute uncertainty about the future.

If COVID-19 has shown us anything, it's the importance of each and every stakeholder in a company's ability to function and thrive. The crisis has validated the logic behind the [Business Roundtable's statement](#) on corporate purpose where 181 CEOs pledged a commitment to each of five stakeholder groups — customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and shareholders. Business leaders will continue to face increased pressure to incorporate evolving stakeholder perspectives and voices, especially those of employees, into their oversight and decision-making.

The pandemic has shed an enduring light on the connection between business and society and underscored the threats posed by risks stemming from large-scale societal problems. Amid uneven government responses, many companies rose to the occasion, bringing their unique capabilities to bear.

COVID-19 has shown that unexpected events and simmering issues aren't only areas of concern; they are sources of opportunity.

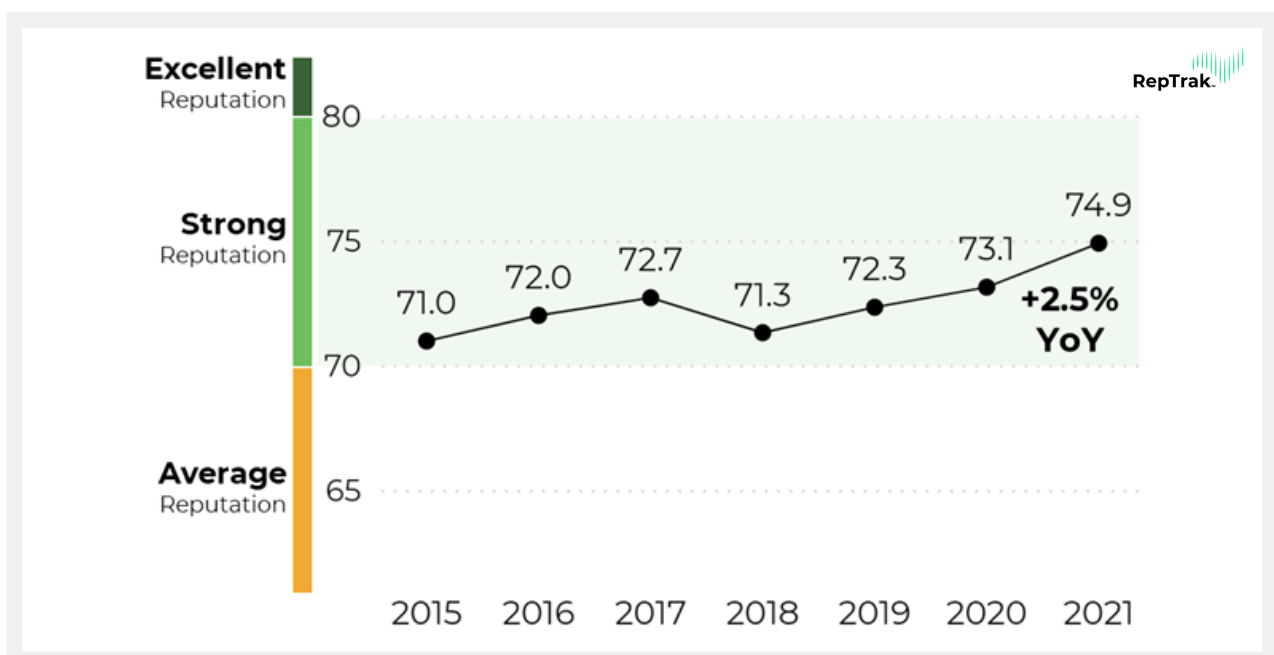
# Key Takeaways

## #1 There's No Such Thing As A Bad Time To Focus On Reputation

In a year when “super-spreader event,” “social distancing,” and “doomscrolling” entered the popular lexicon, the outlook for corporate reputation was uncertain. With a raging global pandemic, a financial crisis, protests against systemic racism, and multiple continents on fire - all at the same time - there were many ways that companies could go wrong. Instead, the top 100 emerged with stronger-than-ever reputations. Despite the many challenges of 2020, the increase in corporate reputation worldwide indicates that not only did this year's winners respond to these simultaneous crises, but they also communicated their responses to their stakeholders determinedly. Today's winners will become tomorrow's even bigger winners, capturing hearts and minds at a pivotal moment in time.

In 2021, the top 100 companies achieved a “strong” global Reputation Score of 74.9 points vs. 73.1 points in 2020, a 2.5% increase year-over-year. In fact, this global Reputation Score reached its highest point ever in 2021, maintaining a positive trajectory since 2018.

**Figure 1: Global RepTrak 100 Reputation Score 2015-2021**





## What does this mean for Communications leaders?

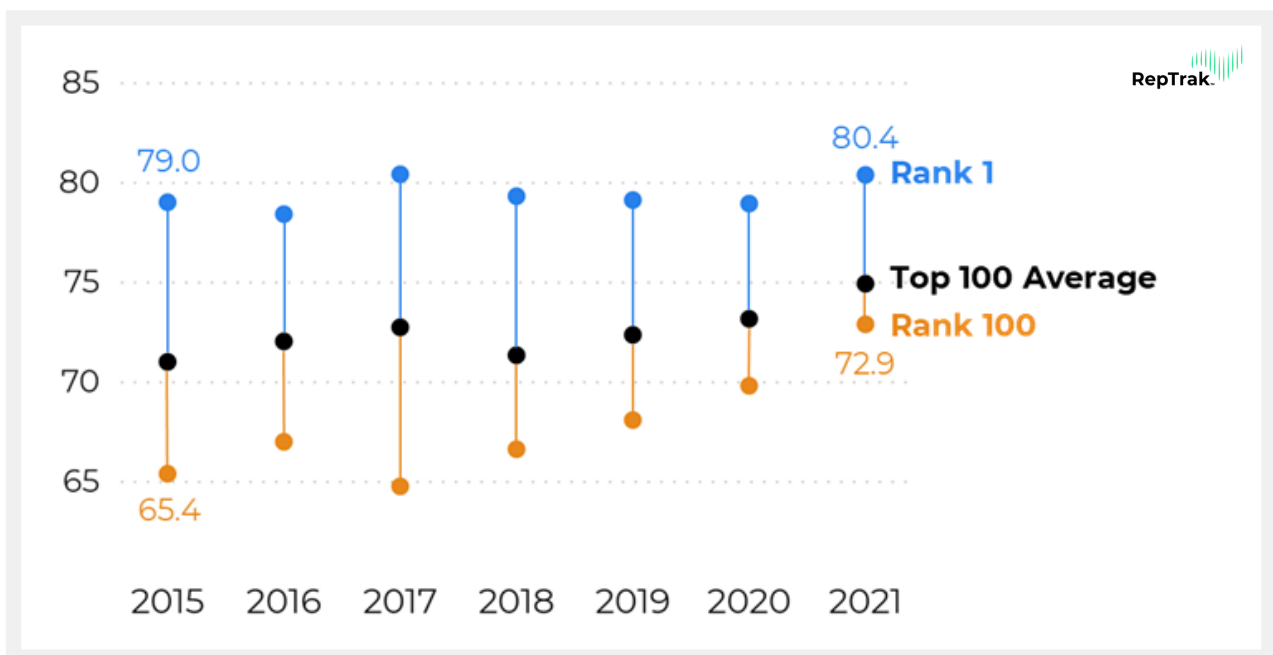
- It means there is no such thing as a bad time to focus on your corporate reputation. With corporate reputation reaching new highs in a year of tumult, it is time to get rid of the notion that there are good or bad times to focus on reputation. If Reputation Scores can improve in 2020, they can improve anytime.
- It shows that the global public wants companies to take a stand and communicate what they are doing to address the problems of the moment. We would not have seen such notable increases in scores if people wanted more of the same.
- The data shows that reputation isn't static - it is fluid, constantly evolving, and does not always act in ways you would expect. It is critical that Communications leaders continuously measure and monitor their corporate reputations to scale up initiatives that resonate and quickly dial back those that don't.



## #2 When It Comes To Reputation, Go Big Or Go Home

An interesting result of improved Reputation Scores across the board means it is just that much harder to boost your reputation relative to your industry and competitors. In 2015, an “average” Reputation Score of 65.4 could get you into the top 100. This year, you need a “strong” score of at least 72.9 to break into the top 100 – a 7.5 point increase in a short amount of time. Not only is it harder to break into the top 100, but the competition within the top 100 is also fiercer than ever. In 2015, the gap between the No. 1 and No. 100 ranked company was 13.6 points. Fast forward to 2021 and the gap has narrowed to just 7.5 points, a 1.8x smaller gap than just six years ago.

**Figure 2: Global RepTrak 100 Reputation Score Range 2015-2021**



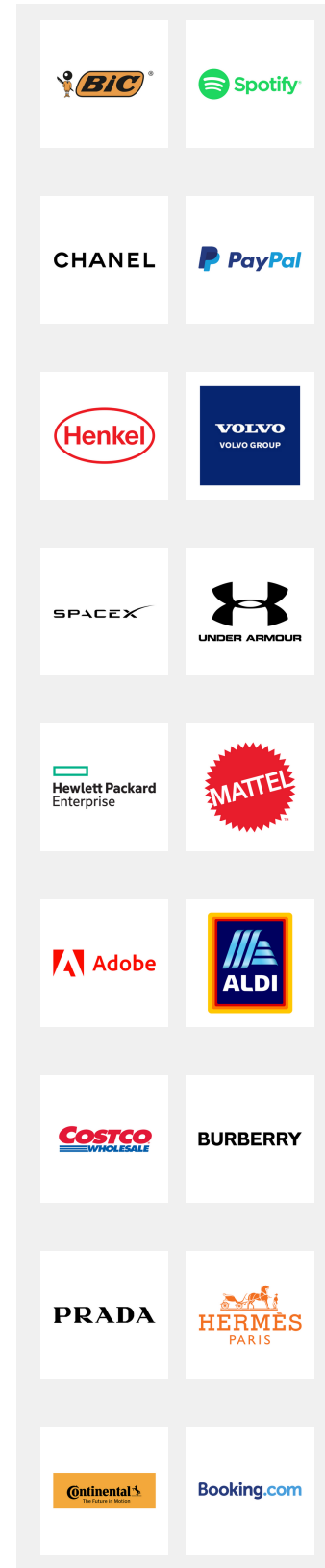
Not only is there more competition to get into the top 100 - it is also much harder to stay there. Several companies that made the Global RepTrak 100 in 2020 achieved similar scores this year, but due to this increased competition, they saw drops in their ranking relative to last year. In other words, even if you achieved the same result as last year, you may find yourself behind this year. What was considered ‘good’ in 2020 is only ‘average’ in 2021, so companies looking to leverage their reputation as a competitive advantage need to up their game, and they need to do it quickly. More than anything, this year has shown that companies must seize these pivotal moments - these times of high uncertainty - to demonstrate leadership and forge ahead.

### #3 Reputation Management Isn't A "Set It And Forget It" Initiative

There were an impressive eighteen new entrants to the top 100 who shook things up - one of the reasons many companies experienced declines in their 2021 ranking. These newcomers represent a range of B2C and B2B companies and industries - from well-known mass-market and luxury brands - to automotive, retail, and technology companies. A third of the eighteen hail from the Consumer Durables and Apparel Industry. Not only did these newcomers boost their reputations enough to break into the top 100 - their Reputation Scores are, on average, 5 - 10 points higher than the companies they replaced.

What does this mean for Communications, Marketing, and Sustainability leaders with mature reputation management initiatives? Even companies with established reputation strategies are at risk of losing ground due to seismic events or disruptive companies entering their space. Just because something has worked in the past is no guarantee it will work in the present. In fact, younger and younger generations are expecting more from business leaders. As we see in this year's data, companies had to do more just to maintain their ranking. Staying the same was equivalent to falling behind.

Reputation changes constantly, and as this year highlights, your communications strategy needs to adapt just as quickly. If your approach does not include continuously measuring your reputation and adapting your communications to changing stakeholder perceptions, you are already behind. For leaders who are new to the reputation space, the good news is that these eighteen companies prove that you can make big strides in less than a year and demonstrate that legacy players aren't a barrier to breaking into the top 100.

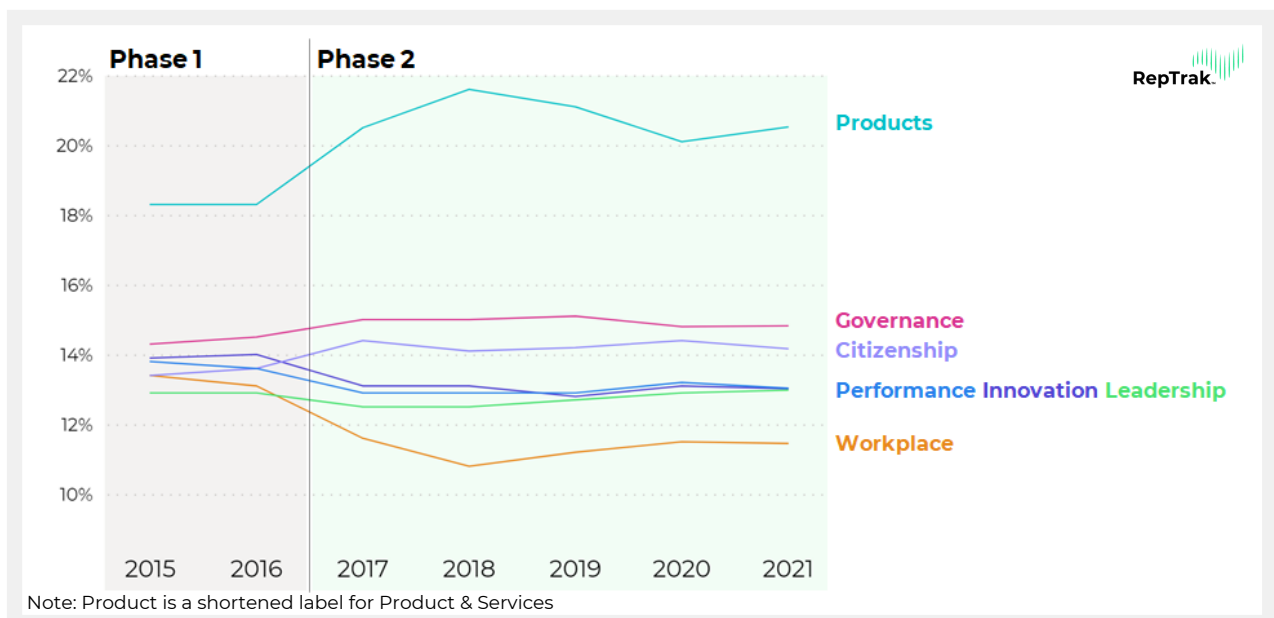


# What's Driving Corporate Reputation in 2021?

## “May the Industry Force Be With You”

[Seven areas of your business](#) drive your corporate reputation - the perception of your company's Products & Services, Innovation, Workplace, Governance, Citizenship, Leadership, and Performance. But how do you know where to focus? This depends on the impact each of these areas has on your reputation, how you perform in these areas, and how expectations evolve. For example, if we look at Citizenship in Phase 1 (2015-2016) we see it towards the bottom of the pack, but by the time we get to Phase 2 (2017-2021), Citizenship is firmly established as one of the top 3 Drivers. Looking at the top 100, you would think the most important areas of focus your Products & Services, Governance, and Citizenship - in that order.

**Figure 3: Global RepTrak 100 Driver Weights 2015-2021**



But this ignores the powerful role your industry can play in your reputation. Exploring the top 100, we find the following industries: Automotive; Banks, Diversified Financials, & Insurance; Consumer Durables; Household Products; and Media & Entertainment veering from the norm.



**Figure 4: 2021 Global RepTrak Driver Weights by Industry**

	Most industries	Automotive	Banks	Consumer Durables	Household Products	Media
Rank 1	Products	Products	Governance	Products	Products	Governance
Rank 2	Governance	Governance	Citizenship	Performance	Citizenship	Products
Rank 3	Citizenship	Performance	Products	Governance	Governance	Citizenship

Note: Banks is a shortened label for Banks, Diversified Financials, and Insurance. Media is a shortened label for Media & Entertainment

Within the **Automotive Industry**, we see that Financial Performance cracks the top three most important Drivers of reputation. Why? Well, as with nearly everything in 2020, it has to do with COVID-19. As people shunned mass-transit systems as incubators of death and disease, we saw a surge in automotive sales - even in cities like New York where not owning a car was a badge of honor. Given the sudden demand for private transportation, the Automotive Industry's ability to hit its financial targets is critical to its ability to produce the cars and components we want to buy. Interestingly, we see a similar story when we look at Consumer Durables.

**Consumer Durables** is an especially interesting industry to look at during times of upheaval as it is highly cyclical and dependent on consumer discretionary spending. Deemed non-essential goods and services, the Consumer Durables industry was especially hurt by factory and retail shutdowns. With consumers stuck at home, there were surges of unexpected demand in certain categories, especially low-commitment products and services tied to in-home entertainment, hobbies, and home improvement. Indeed, if you suddenly found yourself working from home, then a monitor or a desk was an essential necessity. If you were trying to reduce your trips to the grocery store, then an extra freezer was a must-have item. As the world suddenly stopped and we found ourselves forced to spend time at home, we urgently needed things we don't usually need - all at the same time. In this context, it isn't surprising that people prioritized a company's ability to get you the product you want when you want it. Performance is a key focus area in the months ahead, as demand starts to play catch up in higher-commitment categories.

An especially interesting finding is that **Banks, Diversified Financials, & Insurance, and Media & Entertainment** are the only two industries where Governance is the most important Driver of corporate reputation.



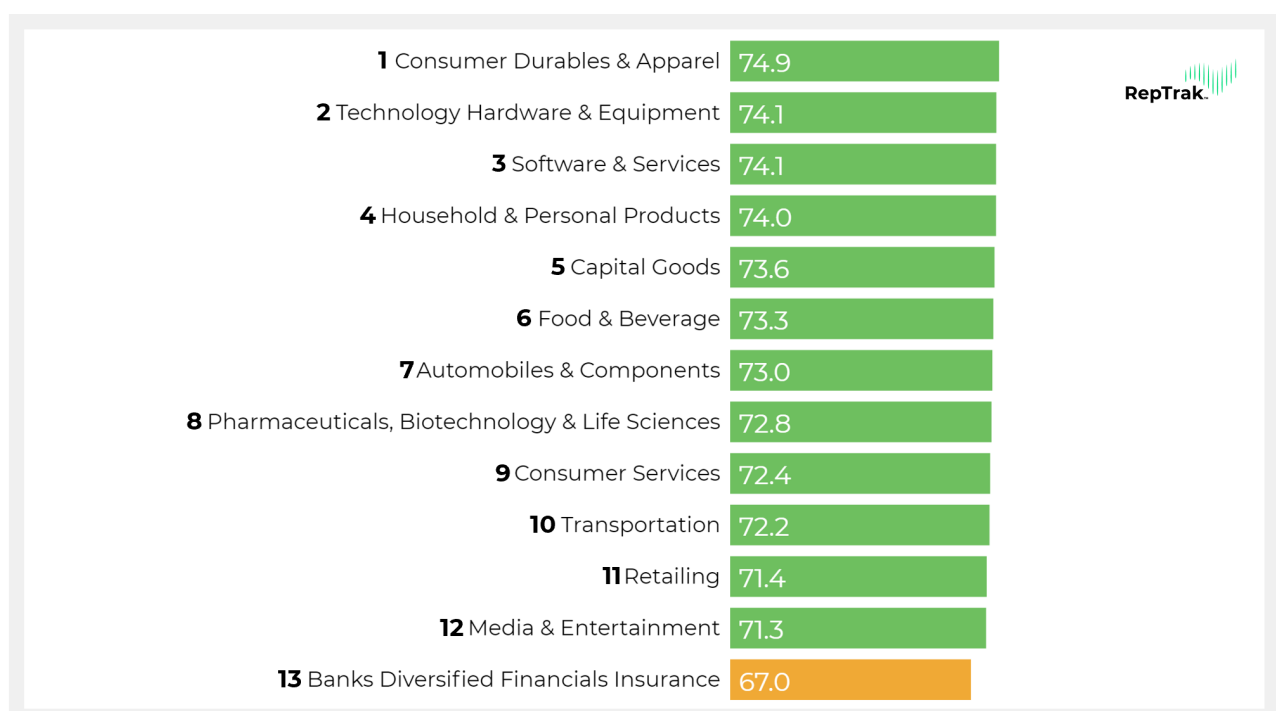
In every other industry, Products & Services is most important. Is it a coincidence that both Banks and the Media have Governance as the most important Driver? We think not. Banks' reputations have yet to fully recover from The Great Recession, and that lingering mistrust helps explain why Governance (i.e., a company's ethical behavior, transparency, and fairness) is what matters most to the public when it comes to Banks. With Citizenship as the second most important Driver and Product the lowest of any industry, it is evident the public still feels distrust as to whether Banks can be trusted to do the right thing.

Media & Entertainment, the only other industry where the public emphasizes the importance of good behavior, is also struggling with its image. "Fake News" is a regular part of our lexicon and politicization of the news is almost a given. With increased polarization and exposure to ideas that already conform to current world views, it is no surprise there is distrust.

## Corporate Reputation By Industry

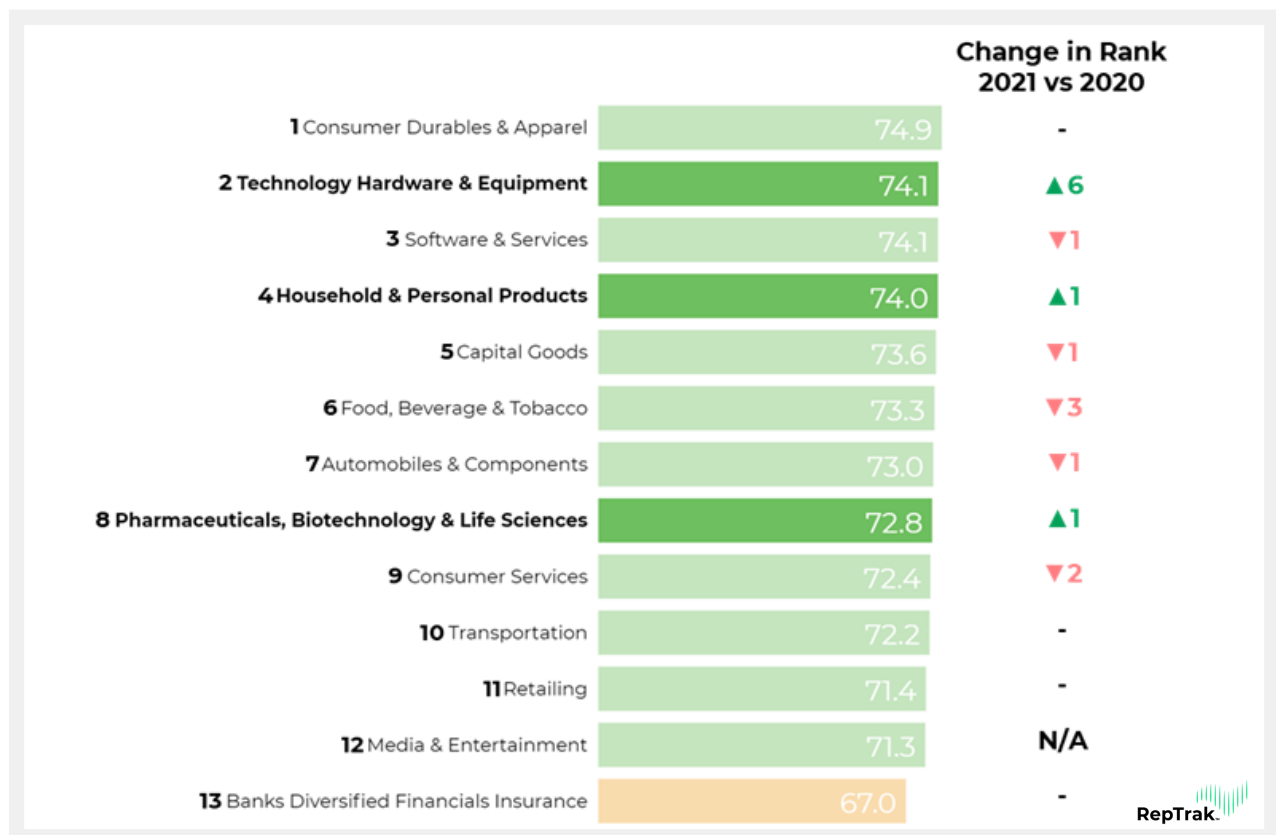
In a year where every industry was forced to rapidly adapt to a new normal, it is extraordinary to see there were improvements across the board. Even more impressive, nearly every industry achieved a "strong" Reputation Score:

**Figure 5: 2021 Global RepTrak Industry Ranking and Reputation Score**



While the Consumer Durables Industry retained the No. 1 spot and Banks, Diversified Financials & Insurance sectors remained at the bottom - all other industries changed significantly, with especially big gains made in Technology Hardware & Equipment, Household & Personal Products, and Pharmaceuticals, Biotech, & Life Sciences:

**Figure 6: 2021 Global RepTrak Industry Rank Change**



Why did these three industries see such improvements? Presumably, it had to do with their key role in getting us through the pandemic, especially for Pharma. The Technology Hardware & Equipment Industry saw the biggest improvement, jumping from No. 8 in 2020 to No. 2 in 2021, with a 3.8 point increase year over year. This was propelled by significant improvements in perception related to Governance, Citizenship, and Workplace concerns.

If there was ever a year for Pharma to move from an “average” to a “strong” score, it was in 2021. Pharma will likely see a bigger bump in 2022 as more people get vaccinated. Interestingly, Pharma’s “strong” Reputation Score wasn’t global - it received “strong” scores in EMEA, APAC, and LATAM, but Pharma’s Reputation Score in North America remained “average.”


Household & Personal Products also garnered more favorable views due to the central role of health and hygiene during the pandemic. Household products become more important when you can't actually leave your house, and being housebound provides a similar boost for the personal products in our lives. Household & Personal Products and Pharma also performed well in how the public perceived their ESG (Environmental - Social - Governance) efforts. These two were the only industries with a "strong" score in E, S, and G, leaving plenty of room for other industries to make up ground by improving their ESG perception scores.

## Generational Differences

When analyzing how different generations looked at corporate reputation, we saw interesting points of divergence, as well as similarity. While GenZ and Millennials are often grouped together, they often diverge when it comes to how positively or negatively they view company reputations. As you can see from the chart below, GenZ is the most skeptical when it comes to the areas of business impacting corporate reputation, and Millennials the most positive:

**Figure 7: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 Driver Scores by Generation**

Driver	18-25 GenZ	26-40 Millennials	41-55 GenX	56-64 Boomers	Overall
Products	74.5	76.1	76.6	76.9	76.1
Innovation	70.4	72.9	73.2	73.1	72.5
Workplace	68.3	70.3	69.8	69.4	69.6
Governance	69.1	71.1	70.6	70.1	70.3
Citizenship	68.0	70.2	69.8	69.5	69.5
Leadership	72.4	74.2	74.4	74.4	73.9
Performance	73.9	75.6	75.8	75.8	75.4



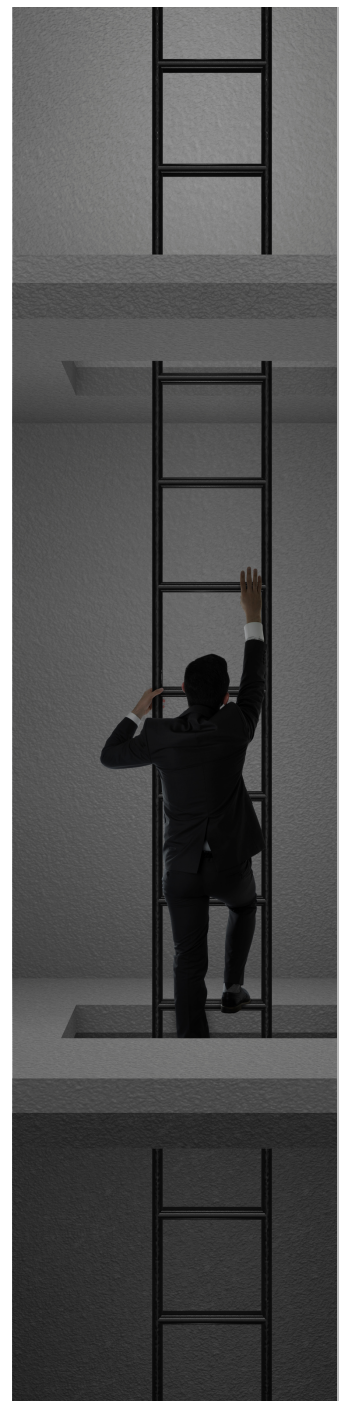
Looking at the other end of the spectrum, there is surprisingly little difference between the views of GenX and Boomers. Not only do they rate the reputation Drivers the same in terms of having an "average" score, but the scores themselves are in line.

So why the similarity between GenX and Boomers and the divergence between GenZ and Millennials? Our data shows that Communications leaders need to avoid lumping GenZ and Millennials together. As digital-friendly or digital-native generations, they share a lot in common. The divergence in their scores suggests that these are unique generations with different priorities, and what one generation responds well to, the other might not.

## Areas of Improvement, Even For The Top 100

The pandemic is a defining moment for companies. It has cemented the view that companies have a broader responsibility to be responsive to all stakeholders, especially employees and their communities. The crisis has clearly underscored this essential point: business has a leadership role to play in society. Companies need to not only act as good corporate citizens; they also need to communicate this broader role to more stakeholders in a more targeted way. In today's environment, stakeholders want clear, direct communication of reliable information to minimize uncertainty.

Despite this backdrop, all companies (including the top 100) have work to do when it comes to how they are perceived as corporate citizens and employers. While other areas - Products, Innovation, Governance, Citizenship, and Performance - received high marks from consumers, a lack of progress was found in Citizenship and Workplace, receiving "average" scores. If this is true of the most reputable global companies, then every company can and needs to improve here. This view holds true across generations, including GenZ, a critical demographic for the next hiring wave. Companies can improve their standing by focusing on these areas and segments.





## Citizenship

Whether or not your company is viewed as a global citizen is critically important to your corporate reputation. RepTrak defines Citizenship as acting responsibly to protect the environment, having a positive influence on society, and supporting good causes.

The public currently sees companies as having a positive influence on society, but the other two areas that define Citizenship tell a different story. Not only does acting responsibly to protect the environment get “average” marks across the board; the story is especially vexing at lower age cohorts, particularly respondents 18 - 24 years old.

Why are companies struggling when it comes to public perception of their environmental efforts? One possible explanation is that the public sees companies launching new initiatives, but see little follow-up, action, or results. Given the importance of ESG and the increasing regulations around it, companies need to make sure they are walking the walk in addition to talking the talk.

**Figure 8: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 Citizenship Factors by Age Group**

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	Overall
<b><u>Citizenship</u></b>					
Acts responsibly to protect the environment	64.5	68.2	68.9	67.9	67.6
Has a positive influence on society	70.3	72.6	72.8	72.2	72.1
Supports good causes	67.2	69.8	69.8	68.0	68.7



## Workplace

Last year, few business leaders considered the spread of infectious disease a looming global risk. Nor did companies expect that a pandemic might test their reputation as a responsible employer. But that it did with all employers having to address the urgent concerns of all workers - essential, remote, non-remote, and those unable to work. Companies were called upon to protect the health of their employees and safeguard their workplaces like never before. Most companies put up new measures for their workforces quickly, with no comparable experiences to fall back on.

This crisis is a defining leadership moment for companies to provide the best possible outcomes to all stakeholders, especially employees. To do so, companies need to understand their perspectives and engage them in decision-making. Our data shows that companies still have a way to go when it comes to demonstrating concern for the health and well-being of their employees. This holds true across age groups. During a pandemic when well-being assumes a new sense of urgency, employer actions are critical to maintaining workforce resilience. Companies need to clearly articulate key policies and procedures and also prioritize empathetic and personalized communications. This crisis is a chance to be there for employees in meaningful ways. Companies have the opportunity to clearly communicate the importance and value of their benefits and help guide employees to improved use of benefits and services.

**Figure 9: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 Workplace Factors by Age Group**

<u>Workplace</u>	RepTrak				
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	Overall
Offers equal opportunities in the workplace	68.1	70.8	71.2	70.4	70.3
Rewards its employees fairly	68.3	70.5	70.7	69.0	69.7
Demonstrates concern for the health and well-being of its employees	66.6	69.4	69.7	68.8	68.8

# No Matter What Your Business Goal Is, You Need To Care About ESG

Regardless of what your company's 2021 strategy and key business goals are, a strong ESG performance needs to be a part of them. Our ESG data measures public perception to help companies see past their blind spots and better understand how their ESG efforts are perceived among the public. This helps companies take control of their ESG narrative. Why is this important for companies at a global level? Because ESG is among the top 3 most important factors when it comes to whether the public will give a company the benefit of the doubt in a time of crisis, buy from that company, trust it to do the right thing, and recommend it to others:

**Figure 10: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 Business Outcome Drivers**

RepTrak	Benefit of doubt	Buy	Trust	Recommend
Rank 1	ESG	Product	ESG	Brand
Rank 2	Leadership	Brand	Brand	ESG
Rank 3	Workplace	ESG	Product	Product

When it comes to giving a company the benefit of the doubt, its Products don't even crack the top 3. Instead, ESG is the No. 1 determining factor of whether you will get the benefit of the doubt in a time of crisis. If 2020 showed us anything, it was that a crisis can happen anytime, and usually when you least expect it. Having "strong" ESG-perception scores can go a long way in helping your company weather a crisis.

If getting people to buy your product is a key business outcome, and it is for nearly every single company, then it is no surprise that your Products influence buying behavior the most.

It is also not very surprising that Brand comes in at No. 2, as consumers buying into a brand is often as important as buying the product itself. What is surprising is that ESG comes in at No. 3. The fact that ESG makes it into the top 3 areas to consider when making a purchase decision should be a big wake-up call for companies who think ESG isn't more than a trendy buzzword. Consumers increasingly expect companies and brands to not only have functional benefits but a social purpose as well.

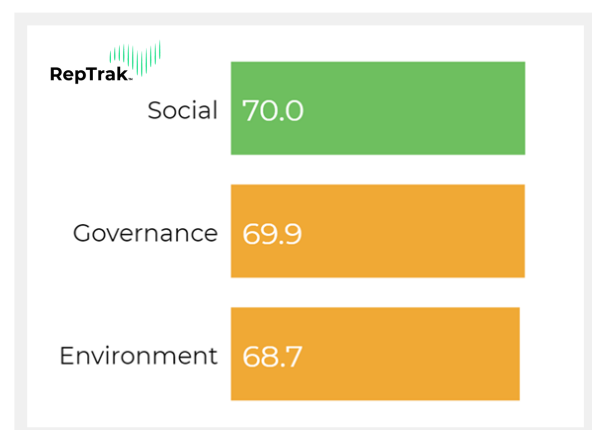
When it comes to whether the public trusts a company to do the right thing, ESG is the single most important determining factor. If you want your stakeholders to trust you, you need to ensure that you are clearly and consistently communicating your ESG initiatives to your stakeholders. If your business goal is to get your stakeholders to recommend your company, then you guessed it, ESG is also critical. Basically, no matter what business goal you care about, the public's perception of your ESG efforts is key to advancing it.

## ESG: The Public Says “Do Better”

Given record-high Reputation Scores, you might expect to see similarly high ESG Scores. ESG is not simply trending - it's here to stay - and more and more companies are publicly committing sizeable time and resources to these efforts. But when it comes to the public's perception of these ESG initiatives, they aren't impressed. In fact, only 4 of the top 10 companies in The Global RepTrak 100 have “strong” ESG Scores: The Lego Group 72.9, Microsoft 71.5, The Bosch Group, and The Walt Disney Company 71.4.

- The E in ESG - Environment refers to the resources companies take in and expend.
- The S in ESG - Social refers to the relationships companies have with the people and communities where they do business.
- The G in ESG - Governance refers to the internal systems companies adopt to govern themselves, make decisions, comply with the law, and meet the needs of stakeholders.

**Figure 11:**  
2021 Global RepTrak 100  
E, S, and G Score (ESG)



ESG Scores are lower when compared to Reputation Scores and there's significant variation across the individual Environmental, Social, and Governance Scores. Globally, the overall ESG Score is an "average" 69.5, with Social receiving the highest perception score, followed by Governance and the Environment. Each of these areas has its own inherent challenges, which feed into their public perception. For example, macroeconomic events can shape their relative importance at any given moment, as can shifting industry, regional, and country-level expectations.

The year 2020 was not only the year of the pandemic; it was a call for more equality, racial, and gender justice. While companies have made progress disclosing environmental impact and governance standards, social factors have not been given the same attention. We are able to measure the public's perception of companies when it comes to their ESG efforts. When the 'S' in ESG gained prominence in 2020, our data is able to show us that the public perceived these top 100 companies as "strong" when it comes to social issues. This shows no sign of abating as consumer expectations on social issues remain high. The top 100 companies perform "average" when it comes to perceptions around Governance and the Environment, clear areas for improvement. With continuously changing expectations, companies would be wise to continuously monitor each individual area. ESG may still be a work in progress in your organization, but there is a chance to shine using ESG as a way to engage key stakeholders.

## ESG By Industry

While ESG Scores were "average" for most industries, there were two industries that received "strong" ESG Scores: Pharma and Household & Personal Products.

**Figure 12: 2021 Global RepTrak ESG and E, S, G Scores by Industry**

GICS Industry	Environment	Social	Governance	ESG
Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology & Life Sciences	70.7	72.0	70.5	71.0
Household & Personal Products	70.0	70.9	70.4	70.4
Capital Goods	68.9	70.2	70.0	69.7
Software & Services	68.4	70.1	69.7	69.4
Food & Beverage	67.9	69.0	69.4	68.8
Technology Hardware & Equipment	67.8	69.3	69.0	68.7
Transportation	66.7	68.9	68.9	68.2
Automobiles & Components	67.0	68.6	68.6	68.1
Consumer Durables & Apparel	67.1	68.2	68.5	67.9
Consumer Services	66.7	67.8	68.6	67.7
Retailing	66.8	68.2	68.1	67.7
Media & Entertainment	65.7	67.5	66.3	66.5
Banks Diversified Financials Insurance	64.0	66.5	65.0	65.2



Pharma taking the lead on ESG in 2021 is somewhat surprising as the narrative around Pharma has been centered around vaccines since the beginning of the pandemic. As one of the most regulated industries and one whose communication style has been compared to a “black box”, Pharma has found a way to voice its ESG efforts in a way that resonates with the public. It is also possible that Pharma is getting a “halo” effect from the unprecedented speed and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines, a theory made more likely by the fact that Pharma’s Social Score of 72.0 is at least 1 full point higher than either E or G. While this high ESG Score is good for Pharma, the industry should make sure that this positive perception mirrors its actions and initiatives - otherwise, it may face a severe backlash in coming years.

In a year when toilet paper nearly became its own currency, it is no surprise that the public has the warm and fuzzies when it comes to Household & Personal Products. Few things brought more joy in the early days of the pandemic than getting your hands on Lysol, and if you were really lucky, hand sanitizer.

## If You Care About Millennials, You Need To Care About ESG

For companies who care about Millennials, especially if you want them to say positive things about your company, [a strong ESG Score is critical](#). Looking at Millennials, ESG is 1.8x more important than it is to non-Millennials when it comes to positive word of mouth or saying good things about a company. In fact, it is the No. 1 metric in determining whether or not Millennials will say good things about your business, whether they will give your company the benefit of the doubt in a time of crisis, or trust you. Targeting GenZ? ESG is also the most important factor for whether this generation will say good things about your company, give it the benefit of the doubt, or trust it. Given that neither of these generations is shy about sharing their likes and dislikes (let alone outrage and indignation) on social media, Communications leaders need to develop robust plans to communicate their ESG commitments to these groups and prepare mitigation strategies for potential risks.



ESG isn’t going anywhere, so Communications leaders need to understand why they aren’t getting credit for their ESG initiatives, and how they can change that before it begins to negatively impact their business.



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11▲	12▼	13▲	14▼	15▼	16▼	17▲	18▲	19▲	20▼
21▼	22▲	23▲	24▼	25▼	26▼	27▼	28★	29★	30▼
31▲	32▼	33★	34★	35=	36▲	37▼	38▼	39▲	40★
41★	42▲	43★	44▼	45★	46▲	47▼	48▼	49★	50▼
51▼	52▼	53▼	54▼	55▼	56▲	57▼	58▲	59▲	60★
61▼	62★	63▼	64▲	65★	66=	67▲	68▼	69▼	70▼
71▼	72▲	73▼	74▼	75▼	76▼	77▼	78★	79▼	80▲
81▲	82▲	83★	84★	85▼	86▼	87▼	88★	89▼	90▼
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LEGEND: ▼ Rank change down ▲ Rank change up = Rank no change ★ Rank New

## The Top 10: How Did These Companies Make The Top 10, And How Can You Make It In 2022?

Keeping with the general theme that it was harder than ever to break into (or even stay in) the top 100, it was equally competitive for those who made it into the top 10. With an “average” Reputation Score of 78.2, this year’s average was 1.7% higher than last year’s, with all ten companies achieving strong results in every area.

**Figure 13: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 – Top 10 Companies**

Rank	Company	Reputation Score
1	LEGO Group	80.4
2	Rolex	79.6
3	Ferrari	78.8
4	The Bosch Group	78.1
5	Harley-Davidson	78.1
6	Canon	77.6
7	adidas	77.6
8	The Walt Disney Company	77.5
9	Microsoft	77.1
10	Sony	77.0

How did these companies do it, even in one of the most competitive years? “Strong” scores across all the reputation Drivers wasn’t enough. As we saw with the top 100, having the same scores in 2021 as in 2020 often meant a decrease in rank or falling out of the top 100 altogether due to increased competitiveness, and this was equally true with the top 10. Instead, the companies that made the top 10 this year showed significant improvement on last year’s already “strong” scores in Products, Performance, and Leadership. Out of the 10 companies, eight saw significant year-over-year improvement in their reputation with the other two remaining on par from last year.

This year saw three new entrants to the top 10 with Harley Davidson, Canon, and Sony joining this elite group. What is interesting about these three companies, in particular, is that it is Harley-Davidson's first time making the top 10, and it is also a comeback year for Canon and Sony who dropped out of the top 10 in 2020 but climbed back this year. This movement is just another reminder of the unprecedented competitiveness and amount of change in this year's ranking and an excellent sign for companies who didn't rank as highly as they wanted. Why? Because these companies show that you can make great reputational gains in just one year. In fact, the question that Communications leaders need to answer in 2021 is what obstacle stood between you and a stronger reputation? The three newcomers to the top 10 and the eighteen newcomers to the top 100 prove that there is no bad time to invest in your reputation or that it will take too long to reap the rewards. If all of these companies could do it in one of the most difficult years imaginable, what is your excuse for not making it?

While it was surprising to see so much change this year and encouraging for companies hoping to breakthrough next year, it's no coincidence that the majority of the top 10 are no strangers to this list. In years with less change in the ranking, it was easier to see the top 10 list as remaining static - these companies had built strong reputations and the resilience that comes with it. What this year proves is that the companies frequently appearing in the top 10 didn't put their reputation management programs on autopilot. Instead, they kept investing and progressing their reputation efforts. If they hadn't, we wouldn't see such strong improvements from last year when they already were the cream of the reputation crop. These companies are where they are today because they didn't rest on their reputation laurels, but saw reputation as a moving target that needs continuous monitoring to take advantage of potential or avoid emerging pitfalls.

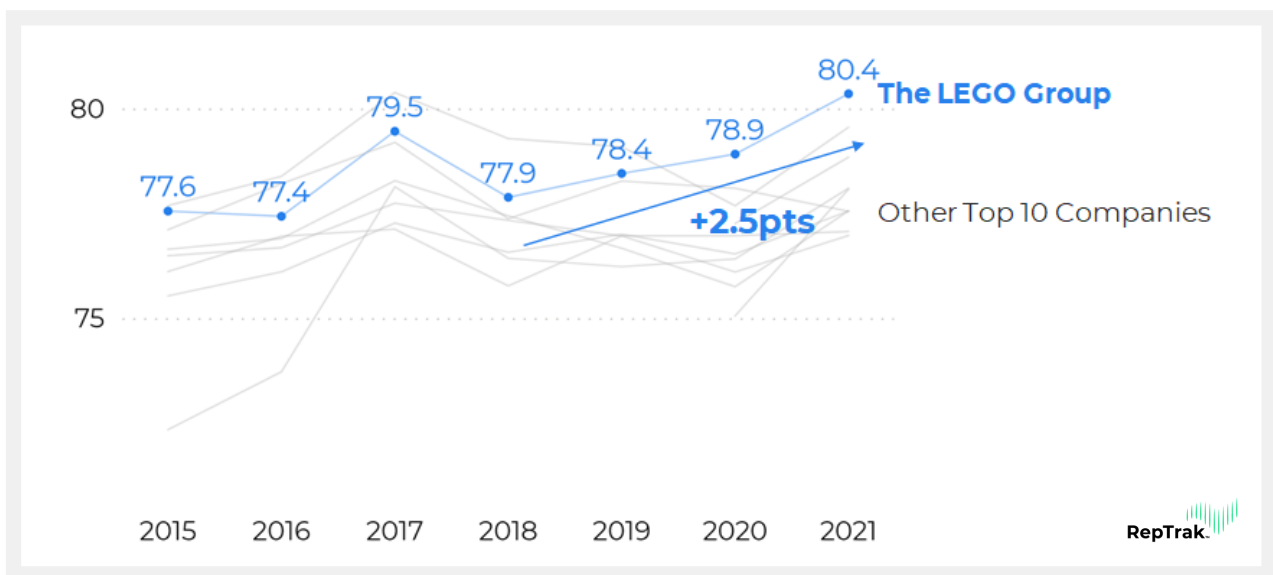
## Lessons On How The Lego Group Stayed At No. 1

The Lego Group's unwavering product credentials in concert with their strong commitment to society are paying off. The company remains the most reputable company with an "excellent" Reputation Score of 80.4 across 15 markets and is the only company to receive an "excellent" score this year.



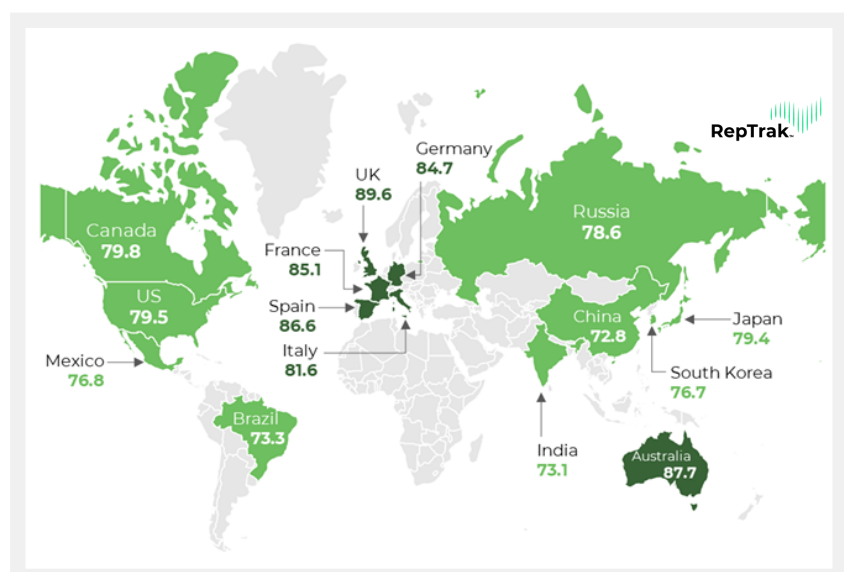
Even though The Lego Group is no stranger to the No. 1 spot, they haven't rested on their laurels or let their reputation coast. Instead, as you can see from the below chart, The Lego Group has continued to invest in its corporate reputation and saw a corresponding increase in its score over the past three years.

**Figure 14: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 The Lego Group**  
Global Reputation Score 2015 - 2021



Another insight into how The Lego Group has maintained the top spot and continues to increase its reputation each year can be seen in its global Reputation Scores, with “excellent” scores in Europe and Australia and “strong” scores in the rest of the markets.

**Figure 15: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 The Lego Group**  
Global Reputation Score Across 15 Markets



The Lego Group achieves the top reputation spot, in part, by having a “strong” reputation across the 15 largest economies. Local reputation is important, but for companies looking to break into the top 10 or even try and steal the top spot from The Lego Group, they need to continuously measure and manage their reputation in the 15 largest markets. An “average” score in just one market is enough to block a company from the top 10.

## The Top 10 for GenZ, Millennials, GenX & Boomers

As we expected after the debate around “OK, Boomer,” there is significant disagreement about what companies deserve to be in the top 10 by generation. In fact, only two companies make it into the top 10 for GenZ, Millennials, GenX, and Boomers: The Lego Group and Rolex. While the top 10 most reputable companies by generation always seemed important to share, we didn’t expect the results to veer into a sociological commentary of the different generations. Well, what can we say? The top 10 list by generation reflects that generation and results in very different lists that each have a whiff of generational stereotyping about them:

**Figure 16: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 Top 10 Most Reputable Companies By Generation**

Rank	18-25 GenZ	26-40 Millennials	41-55 GenX	56-64 Boomers
1	Netflix 81.5	Microsoft 80.8	LEGO Group 82.0	LEGO Group 81.4
2	Spotify 80.5	LEGO Group 79.9	Harley-Davidson 80.6	Ferrari 81.0
3	Nike, Inc. 80.0	The Bosch Group 79.6	Rolex 80.6	Harley-Davidson 80.1
4	Nintendo 79.9	Rolex 79.5	The Bosch Group 78.5	Rolex 80.0
5	Canon 79.7	adidas 79.2	Ferrari 78.4	The Bosch Group 79.8
6	The Walt Disney Company 79.1	Ferrari 79.2	Samsung Group 78.3	Singapore Airlines 78.8
7	LEGO Group 78.9	Google 79.0	adidas 78.2	Hyatt Hotels 78.2
8	Google 78.9	Barilla 79.0	Levi Strauss & Co. 78.1	Novo Nordisk 77.9
9	Rolex 78.5	Netflix 78.7	Ferrero 77.7	The Walt Disney Company 77.9
10	Microsoft 78.3	Pirelli 78.3	Sony 77.3	Canon 77.8

In the parlance of GenZ, their top 10 ranking “is the most GenZ thing ever.” Netflix at No. 1 and Spotify at No. 2 speaks to a digital-first generation used to streaming content and media as a way of life. Netflix makes the top 10 for Millennials as well but is absent from the top 10 for GenX and Boomers, and while Spotify is No. 2 for GenZ, it doesn’t make the top 10 for any of the other generations. We see a similar pattern with another tech company, Google - it makes the top 10 for GenZ and Millennials but not For GenX or Boomers.



The older generations have their own unique preferences with Harley-Davidson making the top 3 for both GenX and Boomers but not cracking the top 10 for GenZ or Millennials. Is it a coincidence that only the Boomers, a generation that tends to prioritize healthcare, is the only generation to have a Pharma company (Novo Nordisk) in the top 10? We think not.

Not every company fits the generational divide with some companies like The Walt Disney Company and Canon making the top 10 for GenZ and Boomers but not for Millennials and GenX. What can we say, the struggle is real.

## Media

Conversations in earned media channels play a key role in a company's reputation. There's no question you need to be aware of how your company is portrayed in the media. RepTrak's proprietary media analysis sheds a light on media sentiment. With so many conversations out there, it's hard to filter out the noise and zoom in on what's moving the needle. The secret lies in understanding how media impacts your company's perception by having a 360-degree view of your reputation. We provide our clients with forward-looking insights by analyzing millions of media data points from earned media channels. Powered by the latest in AI/machine learning and our Data Science Team, this data is analyzed by applying our proprietary RepTrak® model and smart algorithms. Investing in earned media during times of crisis is a communications best practice. We measure both media data and stakeholder perception data and look at media through a lens of reputation. This allows us to understand the impact between perception and media and its impact on reputation.



Barilla, an Italian multinational food company and the world's largest producer of pasta, came in 11th place in the 2021 Global RepTrak 100. Barilla's overall Reputation Score has steadily risen over the past 4 years, reaching a high of 76.9 points this year. Barilla posts "strong" Reputation Scores in all regions, far and away above the Food & Beverage industry as a whole. Barilla also over-performs the Food & Beverage Industry in several areas, including Governance, Citizenship, Workplace, and Innovation. One area where Barilla shines is the company's ability to know the right message to share at the right time. Barilla's current Media Score of 80.9 points is within the "excellent" range. Barilla's earned media coverage will continue to positively impact its Reputation Score if it remains at its current levels, as a company's Media Score is a leading indicator of reputation success. Barilla achieves impressive earned media coverage by focusing on messages that resonate with its key stakeholders. For example, 29% of Barilla's earned media volume spotlights diversity, inclusion, community, and social progress efforts, and 18% of volume on product-related topics, as Product & Services is a critical focal point for the Food & Beverage Industry. Barilla demonstrated prowess by creating a Top Hits Spaghetti playlist, bringing its products into the conversation in an innovative way. Once companies know what themes resonate most, they can get creative in how they blend messages and take advantage of diverse channels.



# Things That We Were Expecting to See But Didn't

We at The RepTrak Company always let the data tell the story, but that doesn't mean we don't have predictions about exciting findings we think the Data Science team will find. Sometimes our predictions come true, and other times they fall flat. Here are some of the things we were expecting to see...and then we didn't:

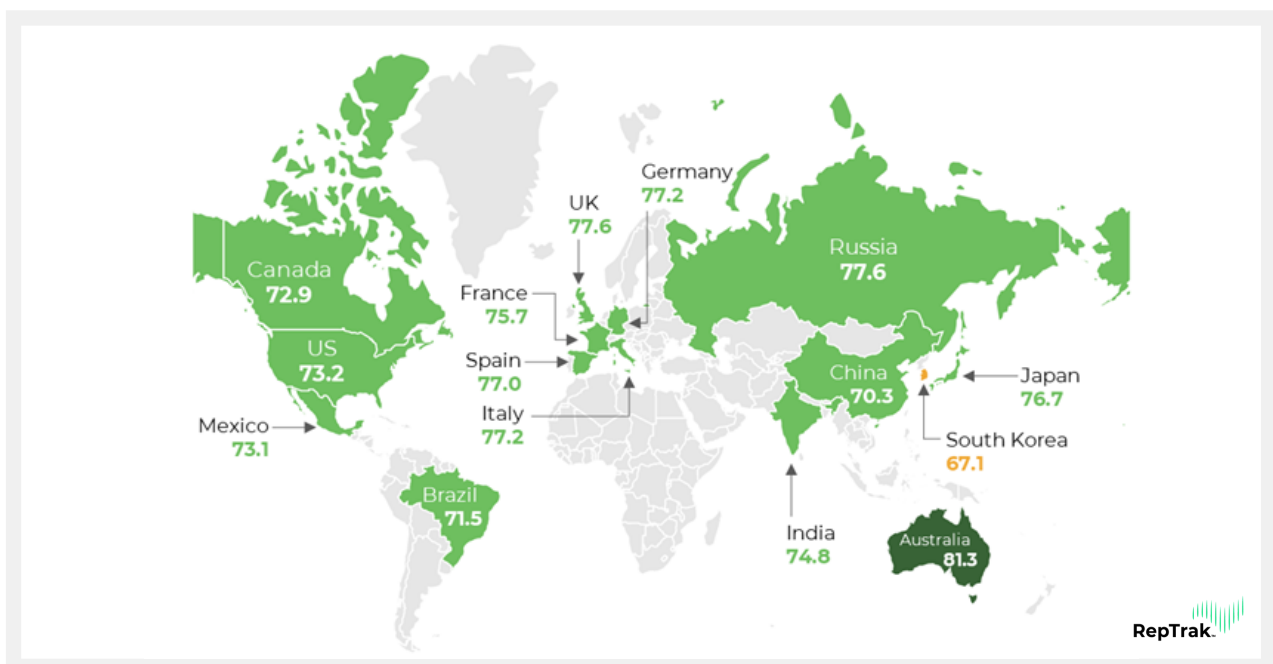
- GenZ and Millennials aren't all that different when it comes to purchasing behavior

We were ready to "spill the tea" on how GenZ and Millennials differ when it comes to influencing their willingness to buy, but alas, the statistical differences between these two groups were minor at best. It is worth noting that ESG is a big influencing factor to both groups, but given the overall importance of ESG to both groups, this finding was "basic."

- Regional differences, or lack thereof

Every region is different and had different experiences over the past year, so we thought we would see interesting differences in the Reputation Scores across regions, and then we didn't:

**Figure 17: 2021 Global RepTrak 100 Reputation Score Across 15 Markets**



- Of course, we are going to see a big change in reputation Drivers due to the general chaos of 2020...or not.

Given that the world turned upside down in 2020, we wouldn't have been shocked if there had been a big change in the importance of companies' reputation Drivers. Well, the world may have changed, but the relative importance of reputation Drivers didn't and scores remained stable year over year.

- The pandemic was especially challenging for working mothers. We are definitely going to see that reflected when we look at scores through the lens of gender...nope, no story there.

We couldn't wait to write about how gender influenced scores in terms of Drivers, industries, ESG, etc., only to find not much there. Sure, female respondents view the top 100 more positively when it comes to Product, Innovation, and Performance, but this was hardly the juicy story we were waiting for.



# Our Methodology

The Global RepTrak® 100 is the definitive ranking of corporate reputation for the world's leading companies. It showcases how people feel, think, and act towards companies globally. For over a decade, The RepTrak Company™ has ranked the top 100 most reputable companies to celebrate global reputation leaders.

By consistently measuring the corporate reputation of leading global brands, we help companies understand:

- How people feel about them through the emotional connection they demonstrate
- How people think about them by how they assess specific areas of their business
- How people act towards them based on what they say and do

For consideration in the 2021 Global RepTrak 100, a company had to meet the following criteria:

- Be a corporate brand with global revenue above USD \$2 billion
- Achieve a global average familiarity threshold above 20 percent in all fifteen countries measured and a familiarity threshold above 20 percent in eight or more of the fifteen countries measured
- Reach a qualifying Reputation Score above the median score (i.e., 67.3 points) based on thousands of companies featured in RepTrak's reputation intelligence database

A company's corporate reputation is determined using RepTrak's Reputation Score - a score from 0-100 that measures how people feel towards a particular company. To establish the ranking, The RepTrak Company analyzed reputation data for thousands of companies. Companies that met these criteria were then ranked based on their global Reputation Scores. Reputation Scores demonstrate a strong positive relationship with business outcomes, such as stakeholders' willingness to buy, recommend or trust a company to do the right thing in a time of crisis. The top 100 companies with the highest Reputation Scores made the final ranking.

The Global RepTrak100 ranking is based on data collected globally across the 15 largest economies\* from 68,577 respondents through online surveys. Data for this survey was collected from December 2020 through January 2021 and also includes data from RepTrak's extensive reputation intelligence database.

\*The 15 countries measured include Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Spain, the U.K., and the U.S.A.

## About Us

The RepTrak Company™ is the world's leading reputation data and insights company.

We provide the only global platform for data-driven insights on Reputation, Brand, and ESG. Our proprietary RepTrak® model is the global standard for measuring and analyzing the sentiment of the world using proven data science models and machine learning techniques across industries and geographies. Subscribers to the RepTrak® Program use our predictive insights to protect business value, improve their return on investment, and increase their positive impact on society.

Established in 2004, The RepTrak Company owns the world's largest reputation benchmarking database with over 1 million company ratings per year that are used by CEOs, boards, and executives in more than 60 countries worldwide.

# 2021 Global RepTrak 100

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[www.reptrak.com/rankings](http://www.reptrak.com/rankings)