

Par excellence

Coca-Cola retains its number one position
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COCA-COLA, the world's most valuable brand, has retained its position as the undisputed top brand in South Africa.

In a testament to its strong affinity with local consumers, the brand's relationship score of 13.9 outpaces the top 10 brands by a range of between 4.5 times for SAB Limited and 10 times for Pick 'n Pay.

Until last year, when the survey included the most-admired company in South Africa, Coca-Cola and Toyota were the only global brands among the top 10, a position they dominated perennially among stalwart local SA companies such as Telkom, Eskom and SAB.

This year, the top 10 category, a rationalisation and consolidation of the most-admired company and most-admired SA brand overall into "South Africa's overall favourite brand" category features three other global brands, Toyota, Nike and Nokia.

Underscoring its position, Coca-Cola dominates the top 10 favourite brands in the soft drinks, cool drinks and fruit juices category. The only non-Coke brands on the list are LiquiFruit at number seven and Oros at number nine.

In an unprecedented and unequalled run, the Atlanta-based company occupied the top spot in one or more of the following categories — most admired brands, most admired company, company operating in South Africa which has done the most for community upliftment, and overall favourite brand — since Markinor started researching the Top Brands 10 years ago.

"Coca-Cola is a pervasive brand with a dominant top-of-mind awareness, trust and confidence," says Markinor's Suzanne Broadley.

"Like many stable and leading brands in a mature category — such as Telkom and Eskom — they have invested in building their brand, especially in support of local and rural communities where it is its strongest."

Coca-Cola, which has a market share in excess of 90% in the carbonated soft drinks market, spent R193.6-million (AIS/AdEx Nielsen Media Research 2004) on advertising across all media for 2004. It invests several millions more on corporate social responsibility and sponsorships of, among others, the Premier Soccer League's Coca-Cola Cup and music's Coca-Cola Popstars.

The company has featured in the top three of Corporate and Social Market Research's list of SA's most caring companies for each of the past 10 years.

In this year's Top Brands survey, Coke has edged ahead of last year's winners Eskom and Telkom as the company operating in South Africa that has done the most for community upliftment.

Success with consumers is matched with the bottom line. Coke's SA division has won back-to-back Woodruff Cups — a global competition that includes measures of growth in profitability, volume and quality — beating the likes of Japan, the US and Australia. — Ikalafeng is MD of Brand Leadership