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DURHAM, N.H. – The message coming from top name brands is clear: climate change poses a threat to business in the form of increased costs and risks associated with extreme weather. As a result, companies are prioritizing the need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and lower their carbon footprint. These findings are gleaned from an annual rating of consumer brands performed by Climate Counts, an affiliated program of the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire.

The latest scoring results show that 66 percent of companies rated have publicly available climate and energy strategies, compared to just 25 percent in 2007, the year the organization began rating companies.

“When the financial crisis hit, it was as if the climate discussion fell into a coma,” said Mike Bellamente, director of Climate Counts. “Now we’re seeing major consumer brands calling climate change by name and meeting aggressive targets to slash emissions—all while turning a profit and growing their business. It’s still dismally quiet on Capitol Hill, but it is promising to see signs of leadership emerging from the private sector.”

Five of the top six companies rated by Climate Counts — Unilever, Nike, UPS, Levi Strauss and L’Oreal — exhibited year-on-year revenue growth from 2010 to 2011 while reducing absolute emissions across some or all business units. Apple scored a respectable 62 points (out of 100), yet remained at the bottom of the 15-company technology pack. Wendy’s and Burger King continue to record single-digit scores for the fifth straight year, five and two respectively.

Unilever, the top-rated company for the second straight year, showed visible progress on their Sustainable Living Plan, an initiative to double the size of their business by 2020 while reducing emissions by half in that same timeframe.

“Never before has it been so important for business to step up its leadership to address both the causes and the impacts of climate change,” said Paul Polman, CEO of Unilever. “Ordinary people are increasingly suffering the effects of extreme weather events and the associated food and water shortages. They are expecting us to be responsible in helping them to manage these challenges. Each of us—government, business and civil society—know what we need to do. It is time to take concerted action. While we welcome this acknowledgement by Climate Counts, we still have more to do and we encourage all of our stakeholders to accelerate their commitments to responsible growth since moving in concert is what is needed.”

UPS, a perennial top performer on the Climate Counts scorecard, continues to see emissions minimization as a key part of corporate citizenship. “UPS’s sustainability strategy is rooted in a commitment to transparency and responsibility,” said Scott Davis, UPS chairman and chief executive.
officer. “Being recognized as the top corporation in our industry is an honor and validates our efforts to act responsibly as a business, an employer, and as a corporate citizen. We continue to advance our efforts to measure, manage, and mitigate our carbon footprint while offering our global, socially conscious customers innovative products and services.”

Climate Counts scores the largest 145 companies (by revenue) in 16 industry sectors on their actions to address climate change. The companies are assessed on a 100-point scale based on 22 criteria. The criteria measure a company’s efforts to assess their climate footprint, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support progress on climate legislation, and communicate their efforts clearly and comprehensively to consumers.

With average scores having nearly doubled since 2007, Climate Counts found it necessary to create an additional tier for “soaring” companies that earn 85 points and higher on the 100-point scorecard. Fifteen companies hit the soaring mark this year.

“The new tier of 'soaring' companies in the Climate Counts index is anything but an indication of mission accomplished. Far from it -- it's a two-pronged wake-up call,” said Wood Turner, Climate Counts board chair and vice president of Sustainability Innovation at Stonyfield Farm (which spearheaded the launch of Climate Counts in 2007). “First, it should remind lagging companies exactly how far off the pace they actually are in tooling themselves for a very different future marketplace. And second, it should tell U.S. lawmakers that many of the world’s biggest job creators consider climate leadership a winning and essential business strategy demanding serious and immediate public policy support.”

This year’s Climate Counts sector leaders are as follows:

- Airlines: Lufthansa (77)
- Apparel/Accessories: Nike (89)
- Beer: Heineken (79)
- Banks: Bank of America (86)
- Consumer Shipping: UPS (89)
- Food Products: Unilever (91)
- Food Services: Starbucks (69)
- Home and Office: Herman Miller (66)
- Hotels: Marriott (70)
- Household Products: L’Oreal (87)
- Internet/Software: Google (64)
- Large Appliances: AB Electrolux (87)
- Media: News Corporation (67)
- Pharmaceuticals: Johnson & Johnson (82)
- Technology (formerly Electronics): IBM (86)
- Toys & Children’s Equipment: Hasbro (73)
A report and the full 2012-13 Climate Counts review are available at [www.climatecounts.org](http://www.climatecounts.org) and on their [iPhone App](http).

Climate Counts is a nonprofit organization based within the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire. The project aims to bring consumers and companies together to address climate change. The Climate Counts Company Scorecard was developed with oversight from a panel of business and climate experts from leading non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. Since 2007, Climate Counts researchers have used the scorecard to rate the climate actions of nearly 150 companies (representing approximately 3,000 brands) in 16 industry sectors. Companies are given the opportunity to provide public data sources. Information on all scored companies is available at [www.climatecounts.org](http://www.climatecounts.org).

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