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## Ethisphere Announces 2010 World's Most Ethical Companies

*Annual List Shows Strong Correlation between Business Ethics and Performance*

**New York** – March 22, 2010 – The Ethisphere Institute today announced its fourth annual selection of the World's Most Ethical Companies, highlighting 100 organizations that lead the way in promoting ethical business standards. These companies go beyond legal minimums, introduce innovative ideas benefiting the public and force their competitors to follow suit.

"The competition for the World's Most Ethical Companies was the strongest it has ever been, with a record number of organizations vying for this distinguished honor," said Alex Brigham, Executive Director of the Ethisphere Institute. "This year's group recognizes the important role ethics play in brand reputation, which ultimately is the most valuable asset for a corporation. There is a strong correlation between a company's ethics program and its performance, with ethical companies outperforming the market both in terms of upside performance as well as in avoidance of catastrophic investor loss. This proves that having a commitment to ethics is a competitive advantage and is imperative to business."

Ethisphere began identifying the World's Most Ethical Companies in 2007. Thirty-six companies on this year's list have the distinction of earning this honor all four years, including General Electric, Starbucks, American Express, Google, Nike, Time Warner and PepsiCo.

"We are honored to be included on Ethisphere's World's Most Ethical Companies list for the fourth year in a row," said General Electric CEO Jeffrey Immelt. "General Electric has always believed it is important to institute ethical behavior across our company. Our commitment to integrity and transparency is aimed at ensuring that we are doing the right thing for our customers, employees, investors and other stakeholders and we are building a stronger company for the future because of it."

This year's list features more than two dozen first time recipients, including Ford Motor Company, Adobe Systems, Campbell Soup Company and Hospital Corporation of America (HCA).

"Ford Motor Company is honored and pleased to receive this recognition," said Ford Executive Chairman Bill Ford. "At Ford, we're not only committed to making great products and building a strong business, we believe in contributing to a better world and doing business in an ethical way. This honor underscores the efforts by the men and women at Ford Motor Company who diligently and consistently work every day to do the right thing on behalf of all of our stakeholders."

The 2010 World's Most Ethical Companies have outperformed the S&P 500 by delivering a 53 percent return to shareholders since 2005—compared to the S&P's four percent shareholder loss over the same period. In addition to improving a company's bottom line, a strong ethics program has shown to lead to increased consumer loyalty, regulatory leniency in the event of a transgression and stronger employee retention rates.

"Established by our founder 50 years ago, Xerox has long held true to core values that define and influence how we do business—from how we serve our customers and engage our employees to how we act as a responsible corporate citizen," said Ursula M Burns, Xerox chief executive officer. "This recognition from Ethisphere is highly valued, and reflects the respect Xerox people have for our ethical business practices as well as our responsibility to live our values every day."

Through in-depth research and a multi-step analysis, Ethisphere reviewed nominations from companies in more than 100 countries and 36 industries. The methodology for the World's Most Ethical Companies

includes reviewing codes of ethics, litigation and regulatory infraction histories; evaluating the investment in innovation and sustainable business practices; looking at activities designed to improve corporate citizenship; and studying nominations from senior executives, industry peers, suppliers and customers.

"We appreciate the recognition from Ethisphere. Thousands of HCA employees work every day to help our patients, and they do it with diligence, compassion, and integrity," said HCA Chairman and CEO Richard M. Bracken. "These individuals have helped us to build an organizational culture that encourages high ethics. We are proud of all of them."

Read about the methodology and view the complete list of the 2010 World's Most Ethical Companies at [www.ethisphere.com/wme-2010](http://www.ethisphere.com/wme-2010). The World's Most Ethical Companies will also be featured in the Q1 issue of the quarterly magazine Ethisphere, which will be released March 29.

### **About Ethisphere Institute**

The research-based Ethisphere Institute is a leading international think-tank dedicated to the creation, advancement and sharing of best practices in business ethics, corporate social responsibility, anti-corruption and sustainability. The Institute's associated membership group, the Ethisphere Council, is a forum for business ethics that includes over 200 leading corporations, universities and institutions. The Ethisphere Council is dedicated to the development and advancement of individuals on its membership council through increased efficiency, innovation, tools, mentoring, advice, and unique career opportunities. Ethisphere Magazine, which publishes the globally recognized World's Most Ethical Companies Ranking™, is the quarterly publication of the Institute. More information on the Ethisphere Institute, including ranking projects and membership, can be found at <http://www.ethisphere.com>.

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