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Vodafone tops mobile operator brand rankings

By Anne Morris, Total Telecom
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Rankings from Branding Finance indicate brand strength of the world's leading mobile operators ahead of Mobile World Congress.

Vodafone is ranked as the number one brand in the 2010 ranking of the top 100 mobile brands, according to branding specialists Brand Finance.

In the ranking provided exclusively for *Total Telecom* ahead of Mobile World Congress, the world's largest mobile operator was attributed a "brand value" of US\$28.995 billion (up from US\$24.647 billion in 2009), a brand rating of AAA, and an enterprise value of US\$178.604 billion.

How Brand Finance comes to such conclusions will be more fully explained when we publish the company's top 500 telecoms brands (operators and vendors). Briefly, the company said it uses a discounted cash flow (DCF) technique to discount estimated future royalties, at an appropriate discount rate, to arrive at a net present value (NPV) of the trademark and associated intellectual property: the brand value.

For operators, such brand rankings provide useful points of reference for how well their brand is regarded from a business perspective.

"To be well ranked is very important," said Severine Legrix de La Salle, head of brand at Orange. "It's a signal as to the way we manage the brand."

Both Vodafone and Orange (Orange is ranked fifth in the mobile operator rankings and 6th in the top 500 for all telecoms brands) have extremely strong brands that are being pushed out to more global markets as the operators expand their global footprints.

Maintaining the standing of the brands as they are rolled out in other markets requires constant vigilance and hard work.

"The brand is always a reflection of the business," said Legrix de La Salle, who noted that the rebrand of the France Telecom group under Orange was an extremely important move for the company and proved it was able to bring several different services under one brand.

One of the next big challenges for Orange will be to make France Telecom completely "Orange".

"The France Telecom brand is part of French culture," said Legrix de La Salle, "and remains relevant in France at a corporate level."

But she said the Orange and France Telecom brands are now being mixed together on purpose in retail outlets and elsewhere in France.

"The France Telecom brand will disappear," said Legrix de La Salle. "When that will happen is not yet clear."

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