Hewitt Associates Names Sonoco A Top Company for Leaders

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HARTSVILLE, S.C.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sept. 21, 2007--Sonoco (NYSE: SON), one of the largest diversified global packaging companies, has been named one of North America's Top Companies for Leaders by Hewitt Associates, it was announced by Cindy Hartley, senior vice president, Human Resources.

Sponsored by global human resources services company Hewitt Associates, in partnership with The RBL Group and FORTUNE magazine, the 20 Top Companies for Leaders in North America were selected and ranked by a panel of judges using criteria that included leadership practices, company reputation, leadership culture and values, and business performance.

"Sonoco is honored to be named to this prestigious list for a second time," said Hartley. "We're also very pleased to have moved from number 20 on the list in 2005 to number 17 this year."

When comparing this year's 20 Top Companies for Leaders in North America, Hewitt reported it found one overarching characteristic that set companies on the list apart--each makes leadership a critical part of the company's organizational fabric, intertwining developing future leaders with running the business.

"Our Company has always believed 'People Build Businesses.' We also know the most financially successful companies have managers deeply involved in selecting, developing and retaining leaders," said Hartley. "At Sonoco, managers, not Human Resources, are responsible for employee development. They provide employees with ongoing coaching, focused training and exposure to new areas through special projects. They let employees know they're valued, reward them based on their contributions and make it clear where they stand regarding career growth," Hartley added.

"Hewitt would like to congratulate Sonoco for being named one of the Top Companies for Leaders in North America," said Bob Gandossy, principal and global practice leader of Hewitt's Consulting business. "While many North American companies have made significant strides in building leadership capabilities, our research reveals that Top Companies such as Sonoco have cultures that cultivate and nurture their talent, and a reputation for doing it well. In an increasingly complex and global marketplace, these characteristics differentiate successful businesses from unsuccessful ones."

Other companies making the 2007 list of North American Top Companies for Leaders include: General Electric Company, Capital One Financial Corporation, Procter & Gamble, General Mills, Inc., McKinsey & Company, IBM, Medtronic, Inc., Washington Group International, Eli Lilly and Company, McDonald's Corporation, Whirlpool Corporation, Avery Dennison Corporation, Lockheed Martin Corporation, Cummins, Inc., Caterpillar, Inc., Colgate-Palmolive Company, 3M Company, American Express Company and Liz Claiborne, Inc.

About the Top Companies for Leaders Survey

The Top Companies for Leaders Study is based on approximately 550 global organizations with an average employee size of 27,000. Almost 70 percent of the participating companies have revenues of $500 million or more.

Hewitt, The RBL Group and FORTUNE used a three-step screening process to identify the finalist companies. This included assessing survey responses, conducting in-depth interviews and analyzing financial performance in relation to industry. This information was then provided to a panel of expert judges in four regions to select and rank a 2007 Top Companies for Leaders list in Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America.

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco is a $3.7 billion global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with more than 325 operations in 35 countries, serving customers in some 85 nations. For more information on the Company, visit our Web site at http://www.sonoco.com/.

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