

How Webranking created a culture of transparency

Launched in Stockholm in 1997 as a way to monitor the corporate and financial communication of major European companies, the Webranking research has played a much greater role in Italy and in Switzerland. It has promoted a culture of transparency, helped companies prioritize information, measured the effectiveness of their communication, fostered a richer internal culture and opened up companies to international stakeholders.



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Recently we celebrated 20 years of doing business in Italy and in Switzerland, so it seems an opportune moment to reflect on past achievements and future challenges.

We believe we have succeeded in helping promote a culture of transparency in these two markets through research.

We think the Webranking research in particular allowed us to promote transparency in corporate

communications, specifically through five Webranking steps:

1. Know Thyself.

Our research has provided companies with a tool to measure the effectiveness of their corporate and financial communication, and at the same time, has helped them face their weaknesses. The most open-minded companies recognize the potential of this tool to improve and measure progress over time.

2. Change of perspective: from the inside out. In meetings with companies, we have pushed them hard to shift from an internal perspective ("what I want to communicate") to recognizing external needs ("what the market and stakeholders expect").

Looking beyond their own objectives has enabled companies to plan their communication strategies by taking into account the needs of the public.

3. Promote internal dialogue.

One of the biggest challenges for larger and more structured corporations is getting different areas of the company to talk and work towards a common goal.

Leveraging a healthy spirit of competition among companies, with the help of research, we have gathered around the table different stakeholders (from general counsel and employer branding managers to CFOs and brand managers) to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and build a common plan of action.

4. International perspective.

The international focus of our research, which evaluates companies from all over Europe, has helped our clients recognize the importance of opening up to foreign markets. It has also given them the opportunity to understand

communication trends and to gauge their performance against continental competitors.

5. Sportsmanship.

Scores and position in the ranking have become an obsession for some companies, often sparking healthy competition, pushing them to innovate in not only content, but also communication methods.

Our research has raised the bar for corporate communication, anticipating trends that have since become "mainstream", such as the role of sustainability and governance, employer branding, and the importance of a good user experience (as illustrated in the timeline).

While rankings help illustrate how one is doing compared to other companies, annual seminars also allow communication professionals to share challenges and experiences.

The role of Webranking research has proven to be a fundamental factor in the growth and spread of the culture of transparency over these 20 years.

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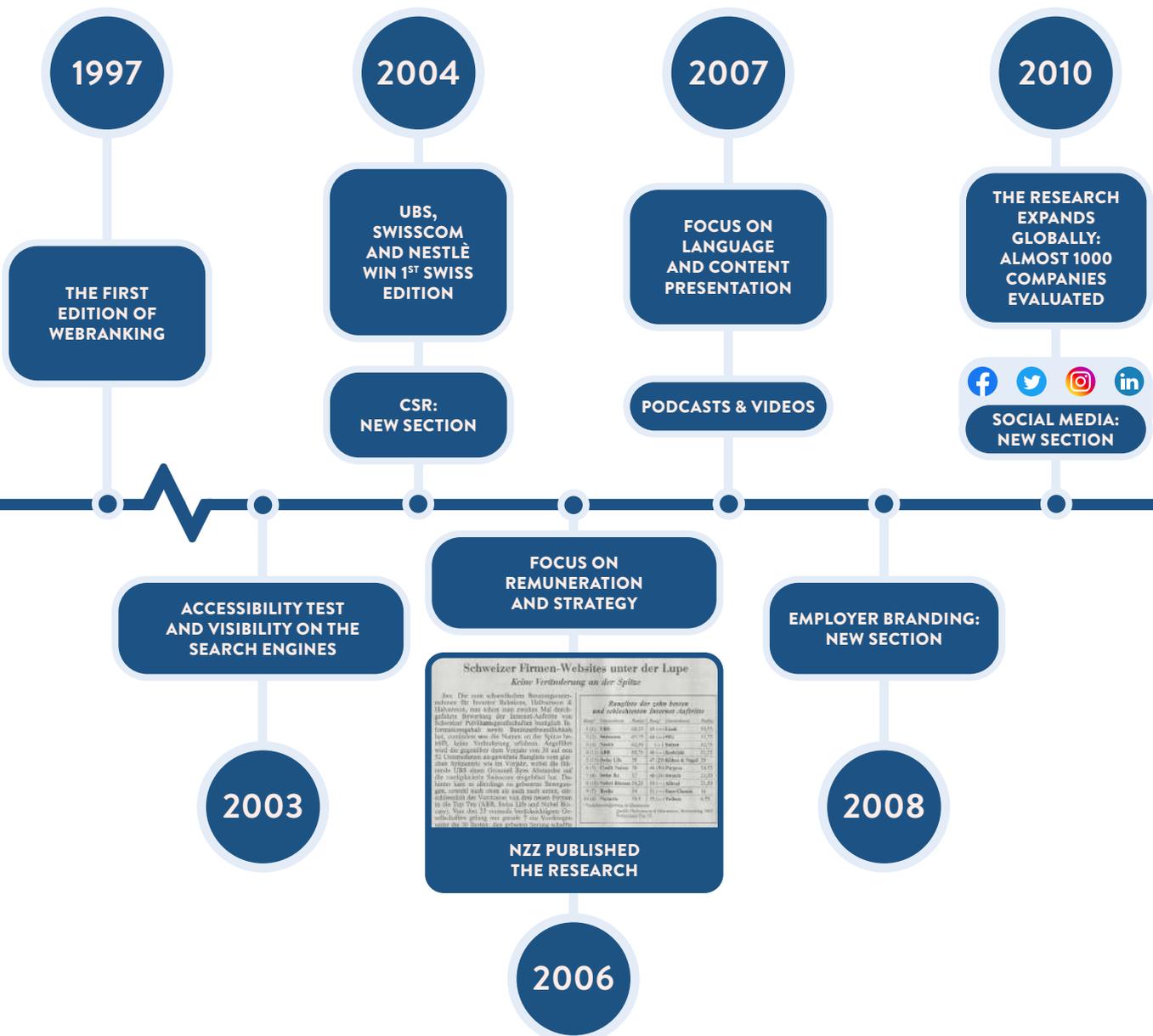
For 20 years we have promoted a culture of transparency. Today, however, a quantum leap is needed. Webranking needs to evolve, too.

In our 20-year Record of Achievement, we acknowledge companies that have consistently committed to responding to market needs and go beyond mere compliance. However, we now need to go beyond that. Today we want to understand companies' future prospects. And it's not just a matter of financial performance, but of business prospects and brand value. Companies need to bring a sense of purpose, corporate strategy, sustainability commitments and innovative

initiatives to employees, customers and communities. These elements are at the heart of our ".trust" research, and it's through these elements that the game of competitiveness and credibility with stakeholders is played and won.

These new dynamics are also pushing us to rethink the structure of the research on transparency, allowing us to continue to help companies keep up with the times.

THE TIMELINE OF WEBRANKING IN SWITZERLAND: FORERUNNER OF TRENDS IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION



TRACK RECORD OF THE LAST 10 YEARS OF WEBRANKING

Companies with most positions held in Top 10 in Switzerland.

COMPANY	YEARS IN TOP 10
 Nestlé	10
 Roche	10
 swisscom	10
 Jika	9
 CREDIT SUISSE	8
 ZURICH	8
 sonova	7
 ABB	6
 UBS	6
 BARRY CALLEBAUT	6
Givaudan	5
 HOLCIM	4

