



CONSUMERS FOR SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT 2015



March 23, 2016

Introduction

Rank a Brand is an international community of responsible consumers who want to buy sustainable and fair products or services. Rank a Brand exist to enable consumers to make responsible shopping choices and to put pressure on brands to become more sustainable, socially responsible and transparent.

Rank a Brand was founded in 2009 in the Netherlands by [Niels Oskam](#). Under his leadership Rank a Brand has become one of Europe's largest brand-comparison sites on sustainability and corporate social responsibility. In 2015 Niels handed over the leadership of Rank a Brand to [Radboud van Delft](#) as the new managing director. In 2015 a new strategy was defined and agreed, which will be implemented in the coming years.

In this annual report you will find an overview of the main activities and results in 2015.

Mission

Rank a Brand contributes to a transition towards a sustainable and fair global economy by stimulating brands to continuously perform more responsibly, driven by consumers continuously making more responsible shopping choices. We do this by:

1. Creating a large international movement and a well-used tool by and for consumers to assess and compare policies and performance of brands on sustainability and social responsibility.
2. Creating pressure on brands through consumers, media and competitors to continuously improve their policies and performance on sustainability and social responsibility, and to be fully transparent on this.
3. Increasing awareness among consumers of their responsibility and influence on brands, and encouraging and facilitating them to select sustainable and fair brands.

Strategic plan 2015-2018

In October 2015 the Board approved the new strategic plan for 2015-2018. In order to progress on our mission, we aim to increase our impact and influence on brands and consumers. Therefore, we have formulated the following strategic objectives to be reached in 2018.

We want to increase our impact in the following way:

1. Increase the number of users of our website and app to at least 2.5 million.
2. Extend our activities to more countries.
3. Increase the amount of ranked brands to at least 1,000, of which 600 international brands.

In order to be able to increase our activities and impact, and also to address development needs of our organization, we have to do the following:

4. Review our methodology and criteria in order to ensure high quality and support for our ways of working.

5. Build a professional organization with 3 to 6 FTE paid staff members, in addition to our international network of voluntary rankers.
6. Create a coalition with 3 to 6 strategic partners.
7. Increase the annual income to between € 200,000 and € 300,000. This is the amount we will roughly need to be able to build a professional organization and decrease our vulnerability.

These objectives we aim to have achieved by 2018. After that (or sooner if possible) we want to further increase our activities, brands, supporters and income.

Objectives 2015

After the handover from Niels Oskam to Radboud van Delft mid 2015 the following objectives were set for 2015:

1. Establish or renew relations with potential partners and funders
2. Raise funds for 2016: € 25,000 (25 % of target for the whole year)
3. Implement existing contracts for 2015
4. Keep website and ranking process up and running, implement planned sector updates
5. Planning and preparing for 2016 (organisation and team, new board, annual plan and budget 2016)

At year end 2015 all objectives were met, except for no. 2, which was met a month later.

Rankings

Thanks to our voluntary rankers we were able to update the rankings for the following (sub)sectors in 2015:

Fashion:

- [shoes & footwear](#)
- [casual clothing](#)
- [denim & jeans](#)
- [retailers](#)
- [luxury brands](#)
- [baby and children clothing](#)
- [lingerie & underwear](#)
- [sport & outdoor - clothing & shoes](#)
- [sport & outdoor - clothing](#)
- [surf, beach & swimwear](#)
- [premium brands](#)

Food and beverages:

- [supermarkets](#)
- [restaurant chains](#)

- [beer](#)
- [soda](#)
- [chips / crisps](#)

Technology and online:

- [telecom](#)
- [websites](#)
- [webshops](#)

The total number of brands on our website has increased from 600 to 720 in 25 different (sub)sectors.

Partners and clients

In 2015 we have been cooperating with the following partners and clients:

- [Hivos](#) has granted a subsidy for the project Shop Sustainable, which enabled us to update most of our rankings in 2015.
- For the [Clean Clothes Campaign](#) we have assessed and ranked more than 100 Dutch fashion brands.
- For [FSC](#) (Forest Stewardship Council) we have assessed the use of FSC certified packaging in several sectors (web shops, supermarkets, beer and chocolate).

Other organisations we have been cooperating or partnering with include [Nudge](#) and [4morgen](#).

In Germany we have cooperated with the [Fair Finance Guide](#) (on banks) and [Changing Markets](#) (on supermarkets).

Outreach and media

Our main communication channel is our [website](#), which is available in 3 languages: [English](#), [German](#) and [Dutch](#). There are also [mobile](#) versions available. We also have an app for iOS.

The number of visitors of all our websites together has increased from 543,000 (2014) to 760,000 (2015). 82% are new and 18% returning visitors. 40% is from the Netherlands, 28% from Germany, 7% from Belgium and 6% from the US. The number of page views has increased from 2.2 million (2014) to 3.1 million (2015).

In 2015 2,063 emails have been sent by our users to nudge a brand to improve their sustainability and labour conditions. In 2014 this number was 747.

In 2015 we sent out 11 press releases. This has led to 286,000 impressions (page views) of news items online and 4.3 million print impressions. We had 3 interviews on Dutch radio (Radio 1, FUNXL and Amsterdam FM).

Organisation and Board

Rank a Brand had 3 paid staff members in 2015: [Niels Oskam](#) (Managing Director till 31 July 2015), [Radboud van Delft](#) (Managing Director since 1 August 2015), and [Mario Dziamski](#) (Head of Research).

We also have 55 volunteers, mainly [rankers](#), who do research on brands, and some supporting on IT, communication and fundraising.

There is a Board who supports and supervises the managing director. Till 15 July 2015 the Board consisted of:

- [Annick Schmeddes](#) (chair)
- [Han Meertens](#) (treasurer)
- [Jane de Jong-Aerts](#)

Since 15 July 2015 the Board consists of:

- [Krista Jansen](#) (chair)
- [Han Meertens](#) (treasurer)
- [Caroline Stoop](#)

This is an interim board. A new Board will be appointed in March 2016

There is also an Advisory Council, to support management and board, which in 2015 consisted of:

- [Marleen Janssen Groesbeek](#) (chair)
- [Maurits Groen](#)
- [Jan Jonker](#)
- [Gerhard Schuil](#)

Finances

In 2015 our income has increased compared to 2014. This is mainly thanks to a large subsidy from Hivos € 10,120 in 2014 plus € 67,380 in 2015, of which € 22,380 was transferred in 2014 but used and accounted for in 2015. Another factor was an increase in donations, mainly due to own contributions (contributions from freelancers).

The extra income is used mainly for staff costs and overhead, related to increased activities.

Thanks to a positive result the free reserves have increased to €32.000. The main purpose is to mitigate risks in income.

Income and expenditure (in euros)	Actuals 2014	Actuals 2015
Subsidies and funds	16.620	67.380
Assignments (sales)	9.081	8.310
Own contributions	5.356	12.320
Other donations	1.896	3.577
Other income	270	714
Total income	33.223	92.301
Direct costs *)	16.551	-
Staff costs	16.423	25.552
Freelancers and consultancy	-	32.412
Communication	-	8.806
Fundraising	-	50
Overhead	3.668	12.349
Other	131	477
Total costs	36.773	79.646
Result	-3.550	12.655

*) 'Direct costs' as reported in 2014 includes costs for research and communication for projects. In 2015 this is reported under freelancers resp. communication.

Balance sheet (in euros per year end)	2014	2015
Accounts receivable	-	-
Deposits	100	450
Amounts to be received	-	457
Total current assets	100	907
Cash and banks	51.097	36.189
Total assets	51.197	37.096
Accounts payable	2.904	912
Taxes payable	3.263	2.984
Subsidies received in advance	22.380	-
Other liabilities	3.972	1.862
Total short term liabilities	32.519	5.758
General reserves	18.678	31.338
Total liabilities	51.197	37.096