

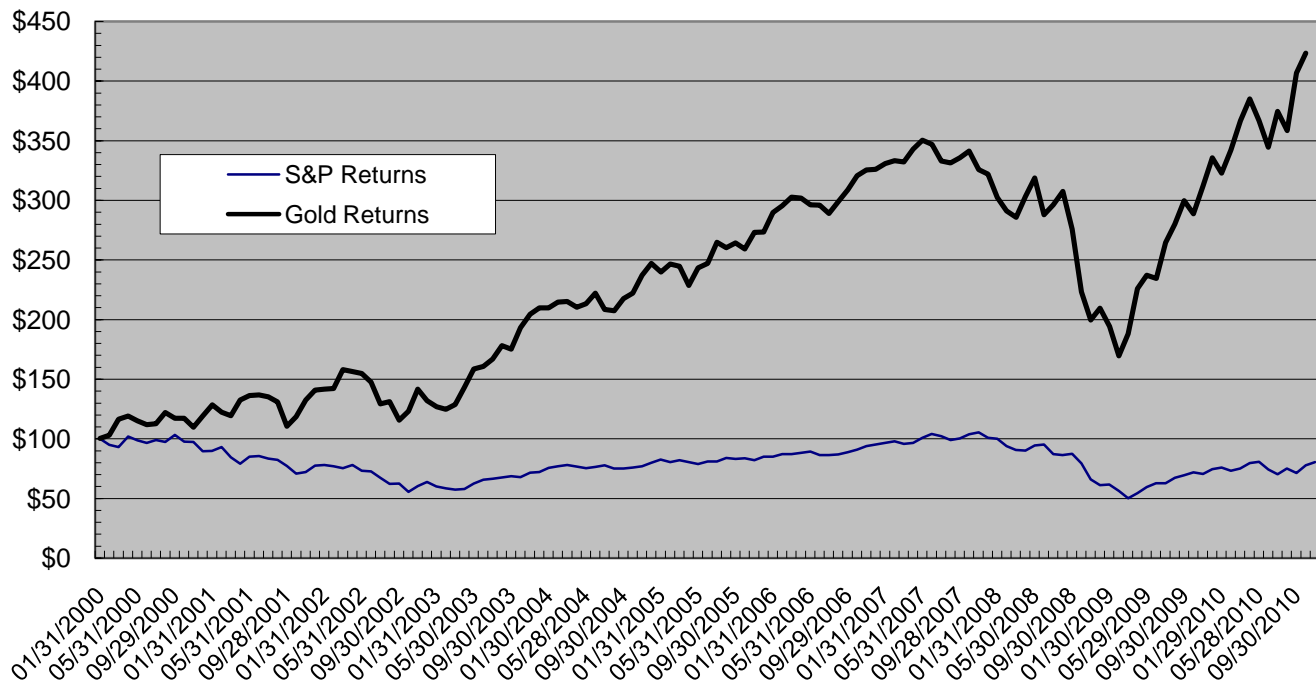
Trust Correlates to Financial Performance at America's Corporations

Many companies exhibiting the most trustworthy business behavior are surging ahead of the S&P as America recovers from its most recent recession. But somehow debate continues over whether companies that act in a socially responsible manner are doing so at the cost of lower profits. In fact, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an article this past August called "The Case Against Corporate Social Responsibility" in which University of Michigan Professor Aneel Karnani argued against the notion that "you can have your cake and eat it too."

In response to this need for greater transparency for trust, The Trust Across America™ team (TAA), including two Harvard MBA's and a top PhD Quantitative Analyst, has just finished a comprehensive fact-based audit of trustworthy business behavior. It analyzes data for almost 3000 US companies, across all business sectors, covering 12 years from 1998-2010, and over 500 data points. TAA believes this to be the most holistic, comprehensive and integrated measurement of trustworthy corporate behavior yet produced. The audit includes assessments of five key trust drivers: Financial stability and strength, Accounting conservativeness, Corporate integrity, Transparency and Sustainability (using the acronym FACTS™).

Only fifty-nine companies met our minimum benchmarks. As a group, these ("Gold" Honorees), outperformed the S&P 500 by over 300% (equally weighted with dividends).

Cumulative Returns to \$100 Invested in the Gold Portfolio Vs. S&P500: Jan 2000 - Oct 31 2010



The TAA analysis provides a rich picture of what drives trustworthy behavior, and which companies are behaving in a trustworthy manner. It also provides, at the 'big picture' level, support for the idea that trustworthy behavior is rewarded in the marketplace. So while the news continues to be filled with surveys showing that consumers' and investors' mistrust of business is on the rise, and that companies can't possibly do good and be profitable at the same time, perhaps it's time to change the message. And if we can just refocus the media's attention to companies that are "doing the right thing" maybe we can reverse this negative trend. It's a win/win for great companies and the media. Perhaps just as important,

consumers can now choose to do business with trustworthy companies, and investors have an added level of protection from the next corporate scandal.

Trust Across America™ is a program of Next Decade, Inc., an award winning communications firm. The program sets standards for trustworthy business behavior and provides a framework for public companies to improve trustworthy business practices, as well as media opportunities to highlight companies that are exhibiting high levels of trust and integrity.

Contact: For additional assistance, feature story inquiries or interviews contact Barbara Kimmel, Executive Director, Trust Across America™ at 908 879 6625 barbara@trustacrossamerica.com or simply hit reply.