



These Were Last Year's Most Controversial Companies

UBER, FIFA, AND GENERAL MOTORS MADE THE LIST, HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPRESSIVE SPEED AT WHICH COMPANIES CAN SCREW THINGS UP.

What do Uber, [Neiman Marcus](#), and the Zhongrong Metal Products company have in common? Answer: They all faced big scandals last year and consequently make it to a list of the "Most Controversial Companies" for 2014.

The ranking comes from a reputation analysis firm in Switzerland called [RepRisk](#). It's based on a survey of public information sources and news reports, and it quantifies environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks. Uber makes the list, for example, because of sexual assault accusations against several of its drivers.



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The report highlights the impressive speed at which incidents tend to affect a company's reputation. In one case, it says, a controversy nearly forced a firm into liquidation, it says.

Top 10 controversial companies:

1. Chonghaejin Marine Company
2. Takata Corp
3. Chang Guann Company
4. Zhongrong Metal Products
5. [Uber Technologies](#)
6. FIFA
7. Dongguan Shinyang Electronics
8. General Motors
9. KT ENS Corp
10. [Neiman Marcus Group](#)

Another controversial company is Chonghaejin Marine Company, the Korean company at the center of the Sewol ferry disaster. Then there's Takata, the Japanese [auto-parts maker](#) that was accused of knowingly selling defective airbags. In third place is Chang Guann, which was accused by Taiwanese regulators of passing off "[gutter oil](#)" as [food oil](#).

It's a quite a list of corporate malfeasance, and, in fact, some of the stories make you think the companies are not so much "controversial" as downright evil. Zhongrong, in fourth place, had a fire at one of its factories that killed more than 70 workers. NGOs accused the company of failing to follow safety advice and regulations.

Compared to some of the other companies on the list, Neiman Marcus's failings perhaps don't look so bad. It had a major data breach (like several companies last year) and was accused of using child labor in its supply chain. But then its inclusion, in 10th place, shows how seriously such issues can tarnish a brand and why companies are wise to avoid them even if initial costs seem high. The list as a whole also shows where regulators may need to step in, before we're all drinking gutter oil and risking our lives in defective cars (or with scary Uber drivers).



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