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Sonoco Named One of the 25 Top Companies for Leaders in North America by Aon Hewitt, The RBL Group and Fortune

HARTSVILLE, S.C., Nov 09, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON), one of the largest diversified global packaging companies, has been named to the 2011 list of North American Top Companies for Leaders, announced Allan McLeland, vice president, Human Resources. Sonoco was ranked number 16 on this year's list of North American Top Companies for Leaders.

Conducted by Aon Hewitt, the global human resource consulting and outsourcing business of Aon Corporation (NYSE: AON), in partnership with The RBL Group, a strategic HR and leadership systems advisory firm, and *Fortune* magazine, the Top Companies for Leaders list is the most comprehensive study of organizational leadership in the world. An expert panel of independent judges selected and ranked winners based on criteria including strength of leadership practices and culture, examples of leader development on a global scale, impact of leadership in communities in which they operate, business performance and company reputation.

"Sonoco is very proud to be recognized as a Top Company for Leaders for a fourth consecutive time and to be the only packaging company on this year's list," said McLeland. "The belief that 'People Build Businesses' has always been an integral part of our culture, which is why our managers, not HR, take the lead in selecting, developing and retaining Sonoco's leaders. Managers give their people ongoing coaching, focused training and exposure to new areas through special projects. They also make sure their people know they're valued, regularly communicate where they stand in terms of career growth and reward them based on performance."

When comparing its Top Companies with more than 470 other companies worldwide, Aon Hewitt identified a common characteristic that sets them apart from their peers--Top Companies are committed to building leadership capability within their organizations.

"Aon Hewitt would like to congratulate Sonoco on being named one of the North American Top Companies," said Pete Sanborn, global leader of the Talent and Organization Practice with Aon Hewitt. "Through our research, it's clear that Top Companies such as Sonoco understand the connection between investing in leaders and financial success. Leaders at these organizations are passionate and committed. They have a focus on talent and developing leaders in a manner that is aligned with business goals."

Other companies making the 2011 list are IBM; General Mills; Procter & Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive; McDonald's; Whirlpool; PepsiCo; General Electric; Deere & Company; Target; 3M; Eli Lilly; McKinsey & Company; Intel; Capital One; V.F. Corporation; Raytheon; Fluor; United Health Group; Honeywell; AT&T, Accenture; American Express Bank; and Kiewit Corporation.

#### About the Top Companies for Leaders Study

With more than 1,200 data points and 900 executive interviews, the Aon Hewitt 2011 Top Companies for Leaders Study is the most comprehensive global research on leadership in the market, examining the link between leadership practices and financial results. This study explores how organizations assess, select, develop and reward leaders, and examines the execution of leadership practices, as well as the strategy that guides it. To learn more or to download a copy of this study, please visit <http://www.aon.com/topcompanies>.

Aon Hewitt, The RBL Group and *Fortune* utilized 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. Aon Hewitt provided this information to a panel of independent judges in each region to select and rank a 2011 Top Companies for

Leaders list in Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America.

#### About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco is a global provider of a variety of consumer packaging, industrial products, protective packaging and packaging supply chain services. With annualized net sales of approximately \$5 billion, the Company has more than 19,000 employees working in 340 operations in 34 countries, serving some of the world's best known brands in some 85 nations. Sonoco is a proud member of the 2011/2012 Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. For more information on the Company, visit our website at <http://www.sonoco.com>.

SOURCE: Sonoco

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