

# Chart: What the documentary 'Blackfish' has done to SeaWorld

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The troubles of SeaWorld are once again on public display — and so, too, is the power of a single documentary.

Jim Atchison, the chief executive of SeaWorld Entertainment, which operates SeaWorld theme parks, resigned Friday morning. Atchison's departure comes on the heels of what has been a terrible year for the company. In the first nine months of 2014, SeaWorld's revenue fell by more than seven percent, and its attendance dropped by nearly five percent.

The changing of the guard is likely the result of something that occurred in July 2013: namely, the release of the documentary "Blackfish."

"Blackfish" was met with both critical praise and public uproar. The documentary depicted cruel treatment of the orca (or killer) whales that SeaWorld holds in captivity and features among its biggest attractions. It was seen widely. And the response has been paralyzing (even despite an effort to discredit the documentary).

SeaWorld's stock price, which peaked just ahead of the documentary's release, has fallen by roughly 60 percent since "Blackfish" first aired in theaters (as shown in the chart above). Resultant legal actions, including a corrective disclosure in August, which accused the company of downplaying the impact of the documentary, and a class-action lawsuit filed in September, which alleges the company failed to disclose that it had mistreated its orcas, have further validated the impact of "Blackfish."

What's more, the aftermath has landed SeaWorld the unenviable distinction of being one of the four "Worst Companies in America," according to Consumerist.

By Roberto Ferdman

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