

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Announcing the 2008 recipients of the BMJ-sponsored Golden Leaf Awards

TR Staff Report

Tobacco Reporter is pleased to announce the winners of the third Golden Leaf Awards competition. Tobacco Reporter's Golden Leaf Awards are sponsored exclusively by BMJ. The winners are Universal Leaf (two awards!), Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers Inc., Tobaccotoday.info and ITC Packaging & Printing. Andromeda Forwarding took home the people's choice award for the second year in a row. The awards ceremony took place at the Intercontinental Hotel in Rio de Janeiro during the Global Tobacco Networking Forum. Winners received a trophy and a \$1,000 donation to a charity of their choice.

Universal Leaf Tobacco

Universal Leaf Tobacco Co. Inc. won two Golden Leaf Awards—one for most impressive public service initiative and one for most outstanding service to the industry.

Universal Leaf has always believed in strongly supporting the communities it serves. The company has implemented social programs worldwide, and one of its success stories is in Brazil, where Universal is helping the needy in the Santa Cruz do Sul region.

By 2004, Universal's program had helped more than 700 families with job training, education, healthcare, basic sanitation, housing and environmental preserva-



tion. The company continues its efforts to help alleviate poverty in the areas where it works.

Because the strength, efficiency and security of the tobacco supply chain is vital, Universal works diligently to ensure the quality and integrity of its tobacco from the time it's planted, through its processing facilities and until it's delivered to its customers.

In 2004, the company initiated its Supply Chain Integrity Program (SCIP) to clarify its supply chain goals and responsibilities, strengthen its policies and procedures and combine its efforts relating to common program objectives.

As part of its efforts, Universal continuously reviews its global policies, procedures and customer requirements and revises them as necessary.

U.S. Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers Inc.

U.S. Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers Inc. won a Golden Leaf Award in the most promising new product introduction category.

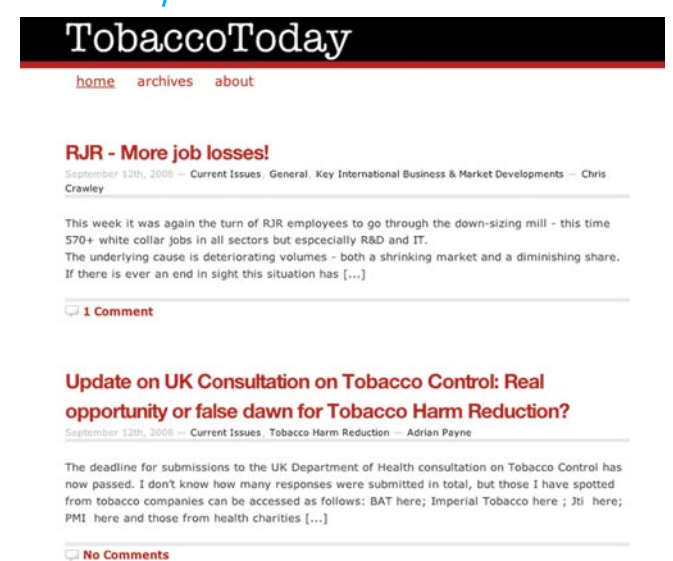


After the United States abolished its tobacco support program in 2003, the Flue-Cured Tobacco Stabilization Corp. had to transition from an organization designed to help mediate prices for its tobacco growers to another type of organization. It chose to become a tobacco manufacturer and purchased a manufacturing facility in Timberlake, North Carolina.

In 2006, the company, now called U.S. Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers Inc., launched its 1839 MYO/RYO brand, followed by a cigarette product line. The company plans to launch an 1839 cigar as well.

Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers has put great effort into coming up with the right name, packaging and blend for its new brand, which it developed to serve the interests of smokers and U.S. tobacco farmers alike.

Tobaccotoday.info



Tobaccotoday.info won a Golden Leaf Award in the most exciting newcomer category. Tobaccotoday came online late last year, following the 2007 Tobacco Science Research Conference. Located at www.tobaccotoday.info, Tobaccotoday is an online discussion forum where people can comment on tobacco-related issues.

Recent popular topics include the regulatory climate, tobacco harm reduction and industry mergers and acquisitions.

The blog has empowered participants to express opinions and share what's on their minds—all in a respectful environment. It has also added a new source of information to help balance the mainstream media's mostly negative coverage of tobacco.

The number of visitors to Tobaccotoday has increased considerably since the blog went live.

ITC Packaging and Printing

ITC Ltd. SBU Packaging and Printing of Chennai, India, won a Golden Leaf Award in the BMJ most committed to quality category. ITC Packaging and Printing is the first company in India to receive a Level 8 rating

in the International Quality Rating System (IQRS).

The company was recognized for its exemplary efforts in ensuring growing customer satisfaction through continuous process improvements that are well woven along all elements covering the entire gamut of the organization.



Developed by DNV in Norway, IQRS is an amalgam of ISO 9000, European Foundation for Quality Management, the Malcolm Baldrige Award and QS 9000 standards. The IQRS assessment is done across 14 elements.

ITC Packaging achieved high marks in the categories of leadership and strategy, human resources and employee involvement, customer satisfaction, operations, systems and process and continuous improvement.

Andromeda Forwarding

Andromeda Forwarding took home the people's choice award for the second year in a row. The company was nominated by a whopping 44 business partners—12 more than last year—which is a significant endorsement in itself. With international trade booming, shipping has become a scarce "commodity," and Andromeda has clearly created a following among its clients.

To serve its customers in the tobacco industry even better, the company has recently created a specialized tobacco forwarding department, which sets itself apart through its flexibility and attention to detail.

When customers contact Andromeda, they will be connected to their dedicated service representative, who will arrange everything. Andromeda provides a one-stop shop for door-to-door delivery, including warehousing, fumigation, customs formalities and other services, allowing its customers to focus on their core business: tobacco. TR