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Applause, Applause! TRSA Names '03 Truck of the Year

MacIntosh, Merk claim top honors in TRSA truck competition



U.S. and International division Truck of the Year award winners are shown at right and on the facing page. Above, James J. Rodgers Sr. of MacIntosh Linen accepts his company's award from TRSA Chairman David Rawlin-son. On pg. 45 (top right) are Truck of the Year judges (second from left after TRSA's Roger Cocivera) Jay Thomas, Kwik Kopy Printing and Brian Marquis, Marquis Graphic Design Associates, both of Alexandria, VA; and Ted Lesley Springside Communications, Bluemont, VA.



By Laura Humphrey

At one time or another, most of us have jotted down a phone number seen on a service truck with the idea of contacting that company either to hire, or consider doing business with them. This common occurrence underscores the impact of vehicle design and graphics. Specifically, companies can derive value by designing their trucks with prominent side, rear and front panels that project a positive image.

TRSA congratulates two members who have taken maximum advantage of this promotional "vehicle"—the winners of the 2003 Truck of the Year Contest: MacIntosh Linen & Uniform Services, Allentown, PA, (U.S. Division) and Merk Textil-Mietdienste GmbH & Co. KG, Zirndorf, Germany (International Division). TRSA members responded enthusiastically to this year's contest,

with 19 companies submitting truck photos and descriptive text.

M-shaped pants

Judging the contest were Brian W. Marquis, Marquis Graphic Design Associates, Alexandria, VA; Jay Thomas, Kwik Kopy Printing, Alexandria, VA; and Ted Lesley, Springside Communications, Bluemont, VA. Judging took place on July 15 at TRSA's offices in Alexandria, VA.

Each judge evaluated all 19 entries based on their use of their logo, lettering and color, their enhancement of company advertising and promotion and the projection of a favorable image for the company. The trucks were scored on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest.

The winning U.S. company, MacIntosh Linen, says in its entry materials that when designing trucks, it strives for a sleek modern look, accessibility, a simple message visible from various angles, graphics with staying power, simple contact information and dura-

Winners



bility. The truck is a 4300LP International with a BIG EZ body from Supreme Corp. The standard aerodynamic fiberglass front is the perfect place for a highly visible secondary graphic. The sleek line of the truck provides a contemporary, clean image. The BIG EZ includes features specifically designed for industrial laundry usage.

Clean & simple

Merk Textil, the winner of the contest's International Division, says its truck, an IVECO, designed in 2002, includes a logo created to represent "water in motion." The four water drops shown are "in circulation, symbolizing our industry," the company says.

Marquis notes that, "The Merk Textil truck's logo and design represented the best balance between graphics and application to the format of a truck. ... It is a simple, clean design that is contemporary and effectively conveys their business."

Thomas says he "liked the MacIntosh truck's use of the logo. It is easy to read and an effective use of space ... all four sides of the truck have signage."

Wait 'til next year ...

Wondering about some of the qualities that attracted praise? Lesley noted the "eye-grabbing color, straightforward message, and all the data about the company's services and products, including the motto, prominent phone number and Web site" of one of the top

scoring entrants. "I got the feeling that a company that was this straightforward about its trucks would be straightforward with its business dealings," he said.

Of vehicle designs in general, Marquis says, "I wish more companies took better advantage of the potential that the truck offers. ... There is a lot of opportunity for graphics, color and scale."

Bottom line? Trucks make a statement about the identity of a company—wherever they go, often in multiple cities and states, every day. What a fleet says to the world deserves careful attention and priority treatment in any marketing strategy. Service trucks, always on the move, provide a free ride for logos and graphics, and a golden opportunity to draw new business.

Think your vehicle deserves recognition as TRSA's Truck of the Year? If so, there's always next year. TRSA looks forward to receiving



entries to its 2004 Truck of the Year competition—sponsored, as it was this year, by the TRSA Marketing Committee. For information, please contact Roger Cocivera, vice president—industry affairs, at 877/770-9274 or e-mail rcocivera@trsa.org.

Until then, keep on truckin' ... with style. **TR**

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