

O.C. firms honored at the American Business Awards

Eight companies bring home a total of 22 awards, including 4 Golden Stevies

By Caitlin Adams

The American Business Awards, held June 18 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York, recognized dozens of the country's most innovative and successful companies, including several Orange County-based firms, as leaders in their industries.

The Stevie Awards, nicknamed for the word "crowned" in Greek, evaluate and rank companies in dozens of categories, in areas ranging from best corporate responsibility programs to customer service team of the year.

Eight Orange County businesses were awarded a total of 22 honors at last week's gala awards ceremony. The most recognized among local honorees was Quality Systems Inc. (QSI), an Irvine-based software developer and management programs firm serving the medical industry. The company took home 14 awards in total, including five silver awards and seven bronze awards. The company also took top honors for best online marketing or sales brochure, and executive of the year in the health products and services industry, recognizing the company's CEO, Steven Plochocki. Plochocki likened the awards to "the Oscars of business."

"We're proud of the fact that so many of our areas in the business were recognized. We have over two thousand employees and it's a great testimony to the team," Plochocki said. "As one of the top companies in this sector we value per-



formance, we believe in third party competition. These awards are based on comparability and ranking, how the judges view your product and performance. It's awfully nice for us to be recognized among all the different companies."

Two other Orange County companies were also recognized with Golden Stevies. SecureAuth Corporation in Irvine was selected as the top firm among the fastest-growing businesses with up to 100 employees. And BDS Marketing Inc., also in Irvine, took home the top recognition as company of the year in the advertising, marketing and public relations industry.

This round of awards represents the first half of the American Business Awards. The next set of awards, recognizing tech industry honorees, will be announced Sept. 17 in San Francisco.

Whereas multiple silver and bronze honorees may be recognized for each award, only one Golden Stevie honoree is selected for each category.

Other local companies to win awards:

Silver Stevies

- College Works Painting, Irvine: Company of the year in the construction, manufacturing and materials industry
- Lantronix Inc., Irvine: Best B2B marketing campaign
- Lantronix Inc., Irvine: Best small-budget marketing campaign under \$3 million
- Pacific Life, Newport Beach: Best small-budget marketing campaign under \$3 million
- Hyundai Motor America, Costa Mesa: Best corporate social responsibility program in a company larger than 2,500 employees (Hyundai Hope on Wheels)

Bronze Stevies

- Epicor Software Corporation, Irvine: Best customer service department in the computer software industry

"We're delighted that the first of our two American Business Awards banquets honored so many deserving organizations and executives," said Michael Gallagher, president and founder of the Stevie Awards. "It's gratifying and inspiring to have received so many remarkable entries for this year's competition. We're looking forward to celebrating other Gold, Silver and Bronze Stevie winners at our new tech awards ceremony in San Francisco on September 17."

Judging for the Stevies is a two-step process. Qualified individuals are recruited or may apply to serve as preliminary judges, and are assigned to evaluate categories based on industry expertise and experience. During the first stage of judging, each entry is reviewed by at least five judges and rated on a 1-to-10 scale. Entries that earn an overall score of least 7.0 qualify as finalists and move on to final judging. More than 140 judges reviewed a total of more than 3,000 entries for the 2012 American Business Awards during the preliminary judging stages.

Final judging committees evaluate the finalists, with initial scores carried over and averaged against final judging. The entry with the highest average overall score is determined as the Golden Stevie honoree in each category. Entries that receive a final average score of at least 8.0 are awarded silver awards. All other finalists are designated as Bronze Stevie winners. More than 270 executives, industry leaders and experts nationwide participated in the judging process.

