

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANTHONY VON MANDL AND A.G. LAFLEY RECEIVE THE 2011 WARREN BENNIS AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

Prestigious Award Honors the World's Most Influential and Inspirational Leaders

Burlington, MA – (December 21, 2011) - [Anthony von Mandl](#), Founder and CEO of The Mark Anthony Group of Companies and Proprietor of Mission Hill Family Estate winery and [A.G. Lafley](#), former P&G Chairman & CEO are the 2011 recipients of the *Warren Bennis Award for Leadership Excellence*. The awards were presented at Linkage's [Global Institute for Leadership Development \(GILD\)](#) in Palm Desert, California.

Anthony von Mandl is the first Canadian business leader to receive this award which has been bestowed on some of the most influential leaders in the world. Past winners include Mikhail Gorbachev, Benazir Bhutto, and Howard Schultz, among others.

The award's namesake, [Warren Bennis](#), is a pioneer in the field of Leadership Studies and Founding Chairman of The Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California. Today, in his early 80's, Bennis continues to serve as a highly-respected organizational consultant and personal coach for some of the world's most influential business leaders, including Jack Welch and Howard Schultz.

Each year, GILD presents the *Warren Bennis Award for Leadership Excellence* to two leaders who exemplify the traits of Linkage's [High Impact Leadership Model™](#). Sharing the spotlight with von Mandl is this year's other recipient, A.G. Lafley, former Chairman of the Board, President, and CEO of Proctor & Gamble.

In his acceptance of the award, Anthony von Mandl delivered a 90-minute address to the audience of more than 1,000 business leaders from global organizations such as BMW, Boeing, Deloitte, Dow Chemical, Kraft Food, Microsoft, Nike, Nokia and Pfizer. He spoke to his humble origins as an independent wine merchant and his unwavering commitment to his vision: to build one of the world's 10 most recognized wineries in the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, Canada. This commitment to his vision enabled him to overcome obstacles in order to self-finance his dream by creating a portfolio of distinctive brands and quality products including [mike's hard lemonade](#) which has achieved iconic brand status. He also shared several key learnings that have enabled his company to evolve into a leader in the alcohol beverage industry and continue to underpin his personal leadership philosophy that guides his businesses today. The inspirational talk earned von Mandl a standing ovation in recognition of his accomplishments and an illustrious career spanning almost 40 years.

"To call this recognition an honor is an understatement," says von Mandl. "It represents a profound personal and professional achievement for everything our company has accomplished. I proudly share this prestigious accolade with each and every team member at the Mark Anthony Group."

About Mark Anthony Group of Companies

Founded by Anthony von Mandl in 1972, the Mark Anthony Group of Companies serves the alcohol beverage industry in Canada, and around the world. Its presence is defined by a portfolio of distinctive brands, quality products and a team of passionate people. The Company has evolved to specialize in several distinct consumer product categories, including Canadian wine produced by Mission Hill Family Estate winery, premium Company-owned craft beer and Ready-to-Drink beverages including Mike's hard lemonade which in 2010 earned the distinction of being named the 'Company of the Year' at The Beverage Forum, the annual global beverage industry conference. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding performance in the beverage industry for companies under \$1 billion in revenue.

The Mark Anthony Group is the exclusive distributor for SAB International Brands in Canada, including Grolsch, Peroni and Pilsner Urquell, as well as prestigious wines sourced from our winery partners around the world, including Antinori, Henkell and Louis Latour. Von Mandl is also the Proprietor of Mission Hill Family Estate winery in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, Canada. Today, Mission Hill has been successfully transformed into an internationally renowned landmark winery which has been called "the gold standard of wineries" by *Condé Nast Traveler*. www.missionhillwinery.com

About Linkage

Linkage works with leaders and leadership teams worldwide to build organizations that produce superior results. For over 25 years, we have delivered on this promise by strategically aligning leadership, talent, and culture within organizations globally. We do this by providing strategic consulting on leadership development and talent management topics and through our learning institutes, skill-building workshops, tailored assessment services, and executive coaching.

Linkage's Global Institute for Leadership Development (GILD) is a unique experience for leaders and leadership teams that provides transformational growth in areas proven to differentiate superior leaders from average leaders. The core of the experience is a five-day immersion program that integrates the best learning methods employed by university executive education programs, leadership academies, and large-scale, global conferences to deliver accelerated growth. This is accompanied by The Year of Learning, a year-long development process that combines peer learning with content-rich resources to sustain leadership growth. www.linkageinc.com

Linkage is headquartered in Burlington, Massachusetts with operations in Atlanta, Boston, New York, San Francisco, St. Louis and outside the U.S. in Athens, Bangalore, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Hamilton, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait City, Mexico City, Rome, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney, Vilnius.

###

Media Contacts:

Ian Galbraith - Director, Corporate Communications

Mark Anthony Group of Companies

Tel: (604) 269-7017

igalbraith@markanthony.com

Sarah Breigle – Director of Marketing

Linkage

Tel: (781) 402-5599

sbreigle@linkageinc.com