

UTA expands into cyberspace

Five months after launching its first Uncommitted Tobacco Auction in Antwerp, Belgium, UTA is creating an online platform for selling and buying uncommitted tobaccos worldwide. UTA's new platform will feature a permanent online catalog, periodic online auctions and complementary services for the leaf supply chain.

The permanent online catalog is already operational. It provides sellers an additional opportunity to reach traditional and nontraditional buyers for uncommitted stocks and enables them to sell online without revealing their identity.

Buyers can match their requirements against a large portion of worldwide stocks. They can find and track lots online through selection criteria such as variety and price range. After viewing a photograph of the tobacco online, they can evaluate the desired

samples in person during a public or private viewing. They can also receive samples and cut rags at their offices.

The next public viewing will take place between April and June 2007 at Tabaknatie's warehouse in Antwerp. UTA is exploring additional viewing locations in other parts of the world.

Meanwhile, UTA has introduced new memberships for sellers and buyers. A membership costs €2,500 (\$3,277) per year and offers the following benefits:

- Permanent access to an unlimited inventory of common tobacco varieties, 100 percent under the control of the sellers
- Permanent access to the entire online catalog, containing detailed description and photographs of the tobaccos

- Possibility to sell as well as buy
- The ongoing ability to conclude contracts anonymously via UTA
- Participation and ability to sell and buy via periodic online auctions
- Free periodic mass viewing of samples of all lots on offer
- Private viewing of samples
- Undisclosed trade from start to finish
- Reports of results following auctions

UTA has registered many new companies since its first auction. The company's staff continues visiting potential customers around the world to broaden the platform. For more information, please contact Marc Verhaeghen. Telephone: +31 20 406 7352. E-mail: info@uta-web.com. Web site: www.uta-web.com.

tine and fewer tobacco-specific nitrosamines than do cigarettes with a comparable smoke profile.

The new version of Loe Tabac is designed according to the same principle as the original one but contains 50 percent less tobacco than do traditional products. GTC believes its cigarette will appeal to health-conscious cigarette smokers who are not prepared to kick the habit altogether.

Low-tobacco cigarettes will be an integral part of GTC's corporate strat-

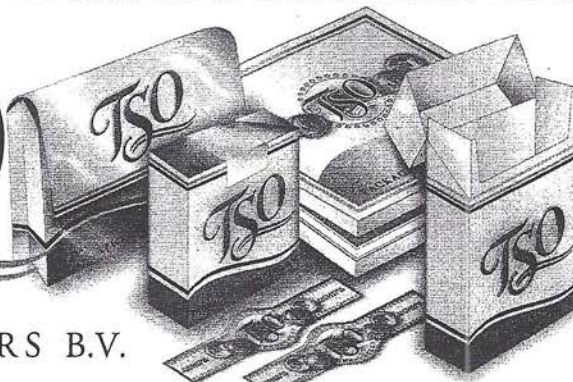
egy at home and abroad. Tobacco consumption in India is on the rise, but so is health awareness. And smokers around the world want less risky products.

While initial consumer response has been favorable, GTC has its work cut out for it. Tobacco advertising is heavily restricted in India and other markets, which means the company will have to rely on point-of-sales promotions. It might be able to compete on price as well. Mehra hopes govern-

ments will recognize the benefits that Loe Tabac offers and encourage smokers to switch to it by taxing it appropriately. The company is currently discussing the matter with the appropriate authorities in India.

For the future, GTC intends to develop new varieties of its Loe Tabac cigarette, gradually reducing the level of tobacco even further. "The next challenge is to go from a low-tobacco to a no-tobacco cigarette," says Mehra.

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