

Loren Zhao, one of the co-founders of Chinese company Fruitday, was presented with the inaugural *Produce Business* Trailblazer Award at this week's Amsterdam Produce Summit.

The Trailblazer Award recognizes 'discovery, courage, innovation and execution of an idea that advances the fruit and vegetable industry.'

It was presented by Ken Whitacre of *Produce Business*, who commended Zhao's pioneering vision and successful implementation of a concept.



Ken Whitacre (Left) and Loren Zhao at the Amsterdam Produce Summit

Fruitday now works with many of the world's leading fruit brands, including Driscoll's and Zespri, and is undergoing significant growth in the numerous regions of China where it operates.

"I am honored to receive this award from *Produce Business*," said Zhao. "I had not been expecting to be presented with this, as Fruitday is one of many omnichannel companies in China that has developed new approaches to selling fruits and vegetables.

"I would like to dedicate this award to China, which has the kind of the atmosphere which encourages the development of these new and innovative ways of selling produce and increasing consumption."

Fruitday was founded by Loren Zhao and Eric Wang 10 years ago, at a time when the e-commerce industry was just beginning in China.

The company started as online fruit retailer but has since undergone a significant expansion, now offering consumers the option to buy premium fruits through various channels including online, in brick-and-mortar stores and at vending machines placed in numerous locations around urban areas.

Although it began as a B2C (business-to-consumer) company, more recently it has been exploring a B2B (business-to-business) platform for a range of cities ranging in size from Tier 1 to Tier 4.

In 2015, Fruitday announced the completion of a US\$70 million financing deal, with one of the country's e-commerce giants, JD.com, as the lead investor.

During the annual Amsterdam Produce Summit, which took place from Nov 12 - 14 and included highly informative presentations on different aspects of omnichannel retailing given by a stellar line-up of expert speakers, Zhao explained to the audience how far China has come over recent years in optimizing the consumer experience of purchasing and receiving fresh food.

Through what in China is known as the 'New Retail' concept, the lines between the online and offline shopping experiences have become increasingly blurred, combining the best of both worlds.

Many companies, such as Fruitday, now offer consumers the option to make a purchase online and have the order delivered to their home within just 30 minutes.