

2010 PRSA-MD Best in Maryland Awards Call For Entries

Sponsored by the Maryland Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the Best in Maryland Awards are presented annually to public relations practitioners who, in the judgment of their peers, have successfully addressed a communications challenge with exemplary professional skill, creativity and resourcefulness.

PRSA Maryland models the Best in Maryland Awards after the PRSA Silver and Bronze Anvil Awards of the national organization. The awards competition is open to all public relations, Communications and marketing professionals who work in Maryland or who wish to enter Projects completed in Maryland or on behalf of a Maryland-based client. Membership in PRSA is not required to enter. A major portion of the entry must have been executed in 2009 to qualify.

Entry Categories

Below are the entry categories for programs and single pieces. Please visit http://prsamd.org/awards/best_in_maryland.html for a definition of and/or more information on what to submit for each category.

Program Categories

P1	Blogger Campaign	Programs proactively utilizing blogs to communicate a message about a product, service or organization.
P2	Community Relations	Programs aimed at improving relations with the people or organizations of a community in which the sponsoring organization has an interest, need or opportunity.
P3	Crisis Communications	Programs undertaken to deal with an event that has had or may have an extraordinary impact on an organization's publics.
P4	Development or Fund-raising	A public relations program that supported an outstanding fund-raising program.
P5	Institutional Programs	Programs affecting an organization's stature, reputation or relations with its publics or key elements of its publics.
P6	Internal Communications	Programs targeted specifically to publics directly allied with an organization (for example, employees, affiliated dealers or franchisees).
P7	Investor Relations	Programs directed to shareowners, other investors and the investment community.
P8	Marketing Communications	Programs designed to publicize and promote services or products.
P9	Pro Bono Program	A program of contributed services.
P10	Public Affairs	Programs specifically designed to influence public policy and/or affect legislation, regulations, political activities or candidacies at the local, state or federal government levels in such a way that the entity funding the program benefits.

P11	Public Service	Programs that advance public understanding of a societal issue, problem or concern. (Similar programs conducted principally to enhance an organization's standing or to directly serve its interests ordinarily fall into P5: Institutional Programs.)
P12	Social Media/Viral Marketing	Program that gets key audiences talking or provides an avenue for conversation through the use of social media or viral marketing.
P13	Special Events and Observances	Programs or events involving communications, openings, observances, celebrations or other special activities.

Single-Piece Categories

S1	Advertorials	Paid advertising written as editorial matter to gain support for a product, issue, program or organization. Submit text of editorial matter and documentation of publication.
S2	Annual Reports S2a: Non-profit S2b: Publicly traded or privately held companies	Publications that report on an organization's annual performance.
S3	Audio	Submit no more than 10 minutes of the program.
S4	Blogs	Web-based journals, or blogs, that communicated either a corporate, public service, or industry position.
S5	Brochures	Pamphlets, booklets or other small publications designed to inform a target audience about an organization, products, services or issues.
S6	Direct Mail/Direct Response	Communications designed to solicit a specific, immediate response by the target audience.
S7	DVD	DVD that promotes an organization's products, services or issues.
S8	Editorial/Op-Ed Columns	Opinion articles written as an editorial, guest column or letter to the editor. Submit text of article and documentation of publication.
S9	Feature Stories	Submit text of feature article as well as documentation of publication.
S10	Magazines	Publications designed to provide in-depth information about an organization or topic on a regular basis. Submit three consecutive issues.
S11	Media/Press Kits	News releases, photographs and other background information compiled for an organization, product or issue.
S12	Media Relations	Tactics, programs and events driven entirely by media relations. Submit press releases, media advisories, pitch letters, requests for coverage, etc., along with the resulting media coverage and other results. Television coverage should be submitted on a DVD and radio coverage on a CD, not to exceed five minutes.

S13	Newsletters S13a: Print S13b: S Electronic	Publications designed, written and published periodically to provide brief and timely information to target audiences while supporting an organization's overall objectives. Submit three consecutive issues.
S14	PSAs (of one minute or less) S14a: Television S14b: Radio	Submit productions of one minute or less. Single productions or a series addressing the same issue may be submitted.
S15	Research/Evaluation	Research that provides a meaningful contribution or input to a public relations program, or an evaluation documenting the value or benefit of a public relations program or tactic. Sample of methodology and findings of any research should be included in the entry, along with the one-page summary. One-page summaries for evaluations should detail how and why this method is unique and valuable.
S16	Special-Purpose Publications	Books, posters, invitations and other collateral pieces not eligible for consideration in other categories.
S17	Speeches	Submit text of speech.
S18	Story Placement	A media placement that best represents the goals and objectives of a public relations campaign. Be sure to address the significance of this placement in meeting your objectives.
S19	Video	Submit no more than 10 minutes of the program.
S20	Web Site	Web site that promotes an organization's products, services or issues. Include the URL in your two-page summary.

Best in Show

The judges choose one overall winner from amongst all entries.

Other Awards:

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Every year, the PRSA Maryland Chapter honors a Maryland professional who has demonstrated a distinguished lifetime career of service in the public relations profession. To nominate someone for this award, submit a letter of 500 words or fewer describing the nominee's contributions to the profession. Submit the letter by April 30, 2010, in an envelope marked Lifetime Achievement Nomination.

NEW PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

The PSA Maryland Chapter also will recognize a newcomer to the profession with three or fewer years of experience. To nominate someone for the New Professional of the Year award, submit a letter of 500 words or fewer describing the nominee's work in public relations and his/her commitment to the profession. Submit the letter by April 30, 2010 in an envelope marked New Professional of the Year Nomination.

For specific nomination criteria for the Lifetime Achievement and New Professional of the Year awards, please visit www.PRSAMD.org.

Entry Guidelines

Please read these instructions carefully. If you have any questions about submitting an entry, please contact Lisa Miles at 410-598-2248 or lisamiles@milespr.com. Entries not adhering to the following guidelines may be disqualified.

- A major portion of the entry must have been executed in 2009 to qualify.
- No program may be entered in more than one category; however, components of a program may be entered separately in the single-piece categories.

What You Need to Submit

1. TWO BINDERS: Entries, including supporting materials, must be submitted in TWO three-ring binders; the only exceptions are entries in the category of "Media/Press Kits," which do not have to be in a three-ring binder. Label the spine and front of the three-ring binders with the category name and number, title of entry and name of submitting organization. Please do not use page protectors.

2. 100-WORD DESCRIPTION: Include a 100-word description of your project inside a 9"x12" envelope. Include the category name/number, entry title and the name of the submitting organization.

3. SUMMARIES: Insert a compelling summary into the front of each binder. Program entry summaries should be no longer than two pages. Single-piece entry summaries should be no longer than one page. Prepare your summary carefully, as the judges will review it closely. Make sure your summary addresses all of the program or single-piece entry judging criteria, with tabs to separate your supporting materials into the four judging criteria. Sample summaries of former national PRSA award winners are available online at www.silveranvil.org.

Program Entries: Summaries should include a brief situation analysis/overview and address all of the four program judging criteria: 1) research, 2) planning (including goal, target audiences, objectives and strategies), 3) execution (including tactics and budget) and 4) evaluation. If paid advertising materials were part of the program, they must be described. If other organizations or individuals cooperated or assisted with your program, describe their roles.

Single-piece Entries: Summaries should address all of the four single-piece judging criteria. 1) planning, 2) creativity/quality, 3) technical excellence and 4) evaluation/results. If other organizations or individuals assisted in the creation of your materials, describe their roles.

4. SUPPORTING MATERIALS: At a minimum, your TWO binders should include any supporting materials referred to in the summary. Supporting materials may include, but are not limited to: research results/summaries; photographs; publicity materials; news releases; media placements; letters; audio (CDs) and DVDs (no longer than five minutes); and other samples of planning documents and tactical materials. If a Web site is part of the program, please provide the URL. Use tabs to separate your supporting materials into the four judging criteria. Materials should be secured and labeled for easy identification. Do not include bulky or oversized items. Instead, include labeled photographs of these items.

5. ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS: Please place two copies of the completed entry form and two binders in one package. In a separate 9"x12" envelope, please enclose 1) the fee form, 2) a copy of all associated entry forms, 3) a CD with a company visual in JPEG format (for use during the awards ceremony), 4) 100-word description, and, if paying by check, 5) check payable to PRSA Maryland. Please label the envelope with the name of the submitting organization. If you are submitting one check to cover multiple entries, include everything in one envelope. If you are paying by personal check on behalf of your organization, please note the name of the organization somewhere on the check.

Where You Submit Them

Mail or deliver your Best in Maryland and award nominations to: PRSA Maryland Association Headquarters, 3517 Forest Haven Drive, Laurel, MD 20724 no later than 5 p.m. EST on May 7 (or April 23 for Early Bird rates).

Call 1.866.868.7772 with questions about delivery only. PRSA Maryland Association Headquarters assumes no liability for the entries.

If you have other questions, contact Lisa Miles at 410-598-2248 or lisamiles@milespr.com.

How the Entries are Judged

THE JUDGES: A panel of judges made up of public relations professionals from another PRSA Chapter will review entries and select winners.

Judging Criteria – Program Categories

RESEARCH: Each entry will be judged for the quality of original or secondary research and its relevance to overall planning and audience identification.

PLANNING: Judges will look for clearly defined objectives, strategies, originality, judgment in selected strategy and techniques, accuracy of budget, thoroughness of the plan of action and difficulties encountered/overcome.

EXECUTION: Judges will examine plan implementation, materials used, appropriateness of tactics to the objectives, creativity, in-progress adjustments to the plan, techniques in winning management support and other public relations techniques, difficulties encountered and effectiveness of the program's employment of dollars, personnel and other resources

EVALUATION: Judges will consider to what degree a program met its objectives and what efforts were made to identify, analyze and quantify results. Documentation of how success was measured should be included.

Judging Criteria – Single Piece Categories

PLANNING: Judges will consider whether any research was done in developing the entry. They will examine whether objectives and strategies were thoughtfully considered and clearly stated and if the medium was a proper vehicle for attaining the stated objectives.

CREATIVITY/QUALITY: Judges will consider whether the messages were directly tied to the objectives and if the content was substantive, understandable, consistent and appropriate for the target audience. Level of uniqueness and creativity also will be assessed.

TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE: Judges will examine graphic or communication elements that set the entry apart and the quality of production, with consideration for the scope of the project and its budget.

EVALUATION/RESULTS: Judges will consider whether efforts, quantitative or qualitative, were made to assess the degree to which the entry met its stated objectives.

AWARD PROCESS: Judges may only present one Best in Maryland award in each category. Up to two other entries in each category may be presented with an Award of Excellence if they meet the criteria. Judges reserve the right not to select an award in a given category. Judges also reserve the right to re-categorize materials. The decisions of the judges are final.

Finalists will be notified in late May and the winners will be announced at the awards luncheon on June 17 at the Chesapeake Conference. The Best of Show award will be announced at the end of the luncheon.

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