

The Canadian Public Relations Society Awards of Excellence 2015

CPRS Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding public relations and communications management campaigns, internal and external programs and tactics. Enter as an opportunity to showcase your best work, stand out among your peers and put your personal stamp on the public relations profession.

The Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding achievement in a comprehensive public relations project or program. The program should be identifiable as a complete entity, consisting of the elements of normal public relations practice including use of the R-A-C-E¹ formula and inclusion of a budget.

The most important reason to submit one's work is to learn and grow as a public relations professional. Even winning submissions include judges' feedback that can provide additional insights for future projects.

CRITERIA

Eligibility

All CPRS National Members and Associates in good standing are eligible. Each submission must have been planned, produced and completed within a period of two years prior to the entry deadline. A project may have been started prior to the previous two years, however, the evaluation/completion of the project must have been within the last two years.

Entry

Submissions can be in English or French and must be sent electronically. The submissions should be submitted directly via the CPRS website. An online system is available that will allow entrants to upload their submission documents. Simply click the following link <http://cprs.ca/awards/awardlogin.aspx> and fill in the requested data including the category you would like to enter, then click the "Submit" button. Please note that only e-submissions will be accepted. A communications project or program can only be entered in a maximum of two categories. To be valid, each submission must include the following:

1. Entry Form:

Each entry form should be properly completed online. Read the instructions thoroughly to ensure your entry is in the correct category.

2. Submission Summary:

Each entry form must include a maximum of three (3) page summary with a type size of 10 points. **NEW FOR 2015 - A cover page including the name of the organization (and client if applicable), campaign title and award category is required in addition to the three-page summary. Using the **R-AC-E** formula as your outline, your summary must include a brief description of the following areas:**

¹ * R-A-C-E is an acronym for Research, Analysis, Communications and Evaluation and is the peer-recognized (within CPRS, IABC, PRSA) strategic communications planning framework for communications excellence today.

- Research
- Analysis, planning and, strategy
- Communication, execution and production, including budget and human or other resources
- Evaluation and measurement

The summary adds clarity to the submission and allows the judges to quickly see the rationale and degree of organization behind each entry as well as its impact. It is the storyline that explains why and how you achieved your goals.

Submitters must cover the **R-A-C-E** formula in their work. Good public relations and communications practice requires a strategic approach. All submissions should outline what research was undertaken and how the research informed the strategy, communications approach and tactics taken. The budget must be mentioned in the three page summary, however, more detailed information can be provided in an appendix. The evaluation must be linked back to the original communication objectives whether through quantitative and/or qualitative means. Judges use scoring tools for all Awards of Excellence submissions.

Note: Marks will be deducted for those who do not provide details of the R-A-C-E formula, including the budget and/or human resources allocations in their summary as outlined above.

Note: The use of CPRS' Media Relations Rating Points (MRP)[®] system for the evaluation of media relations activities is encouraged. However, programs that do not use the MRP[®] system must include an evaluation in addition to total stories generated, such as story tone and/or delivery of key messages and/or evaluation against program objectives, etc.

3. Supporting Information:

All supporting information should be uploaded on the CPRS website and only three (3) attachments will be allowed per submission. Each attachment should not exceed 25MB and should also not exceeds 50 pages.

Note: (1) The onus is on CPRS members to ensure all elements meet any standards set out in the CPRS Code of Professional Standards. (2) All submissions and supporting documents become the property of CPRS and will not be returned.

4. Entry Fees:

Each award submission must be accompanied by a nonrefundable **\$250. entry fee** + HST. **Payment should be made online when you submit your submission. NEW FOR 2015 – A \$50 discount code will be provided to members who have entered a submission to a local CPRS Society Award.** **Note:** Fees are used to administer the program e.g. administration, couriers, webinars, conference calls, etc. Jury co-ordinators, judges and the Presiding Chair are CPRS members who volunteer their time for this program.

Note: If you experience trouble with the online submission, please contact Elizabeth Tang at etang@cprs.ca

Important Information

Submissions must be received on or before **Monday, March 9, 2015 at midnight ET.**

Note: Only electronic submissions will be accepted – please submit online at cprs.ca/awards/awardsignup.aspx.

Questions? Contact Elizabeth Tang
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To review Frequently Asked Questions about the awards, please visit cprs.ca/awards/

The Judges

The judges are public relations and communications practitioners selected by their local jury co-ordinator to serve as a volunteer on a judging team. They generously give their time and energy and expertise to ensure our professional awards reflect public relations and communications excellence. While not all judges have their accreditation, they will have worked in the field for several years and are chosen for their professionalism.

To maintain the integrity of the program, judges' names are not released prior to the submission deadline. The list of judges is always displayed in the event program at the Conference Gala and will be posted online at that time.

Judging Criteria

The entries received at CPRS National office will be sent to the judges to review. All submissions will be kept confidential. Judging is done by an expert panel of leading public relations and communications practitioners. Judges score each submission and evaluate the entry based on the **three-page summary**, and review all supporting documentation provided, as needed.

The score sheet and judging criteria for *Communications Programs* and *Communications Projects* are available on the CPRS website.

Awards of Excellence judges reserve the right to recognize only those entries that meet the evaluation criteria. Judges will present one **Gold Award of Excellence** per category for the highest scoring submission above 85 per cent. In the case of more than one entry exceeding the 85 per cent mark, the highest scoring entry will be deemed the winner. A **Silver Award of Excellence** will go to the second highest scoring submission above 75 per cent in each category. A **Bronze Award of Excellence** will be awarded to the third highest scoring submission above 75. If no entry scores 75 per cent or above in a category, no award will be given in that category. Please note that judges may reserve the right to withhold an award in a category should they determine no submission qualifies for a Gold Award of Excellence.

Judges will evaluate each submission based on:

- How research influenced analysis and planning
- How analysis and planning influenced strategy formulation
- How strategy influenced execution
- How evaluation and measurement was factored in all stages
- Thoroughness and cohesiveness.

Include detailed information describing:

- The intended audiences or publics
- The resources used, such as budgets, people, consultants, services, or in-kind donations
- The tools or techniques employed.

Those programs and projects that have set and achieved their public relations and communications objectives will receive high marks as will originality, creativity and measurable results. Members are encouraged to enter their work throughout their careers as a way to develop as professionals.

Note: Submissions are judged on content as a whole and not on a particular contributing element such as budget. This is key since low-budget programs can be equally as, or more effective, than a costly one. Smaller budgets may require more creativity and greater ingenuity and these elements will score highly. Entries are received nationwide and a previous win in another local competition does not guarantee a winning score in the CPRS Awards of Excellence.

Your entry will be disqualified if:

**Your executive summary exceeds the three page limit and the type size is less than 10 point.
Your entry was not entered in the correct category.
Your entry does not cover the RACE formula.**

Winners

Awards will be presented during the CPRS Awards Gala dinner on Tuesday, June 2, 2015, in Montréal, Québec. Finalists will be notified in advance to ensure they can attend the presentation. All entrants will receive judges' comments on their submission(s). Awards of Excellence Gold, Silver and Bronze winners will receive a handcrafted glass sculpture created by **Kelly Lowe**. Winning submissions will be sent, with permission, to the CPRS National Resource Library at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta for future reference. In addition, **recipients will be featured in a CNW news release announcing the winners and on the CPRS website.** Member Societies are encouraged to honour and promote the winners locally.

CATEGORIES

Communication Programs

Awards within this category are presented to honour excellence in overall public relations programs within the profession. All submissions must adhere to the RACE formula.

A communication program can be entered in a maximum of two of the following categories:

1. Canadian External Communications Campaign of the Year

Programs geared to improve relationships with the community, influence public attitude and behaviour, to generate greater public understanding of the organization, and/or increase corporate or organizational identity with various audiences. The External Communications categories include:

a) Canadian Marketing Communications Campaign of the Year

Programs that integrate public relations, marketing and advertising strategies to help market products, services or places to external audiences.

b) Canadian Community Relations Campaign of the Year

Community programs (such as philanthropy, volunteerism and partnerships) that enable an organization to build and maintain positive and sustainable relationships with key individuals, groups or organizations within its communities.

c) Canadian Advocacy and Social Marketing Campaign of the Year

Advocacy-based communication programs targeted to multiple audiences that focus on sustainable development and economic, social and environmental issues. May include programs where the primary objective is to address and enhance the long-term well-being of specific communities/and or the environment. Entries may include economic revitalization projects and cause-related issues in cultural preservation, education, literacy, health, poverty reduction, employment, the environment, and corporate social responsibility.

d) Canadian Media Relations Agency Campaign of the Year

Media relations programs should exhibit improvement of an organization's media profile measured against desired objectives, or the adept management of issues involving media coverage, or the development of a successful media relations campaign created by an agency.

e) Canadian Media Relations Non-Agency Campaign of the Year

Media relations programs should exhibit improvement of an organization's media profile measured against desired objectives, or the adept management of issues involving media coverage, or the development of a successful media relations campaign created by non-agency (private sector corporation, not-for-profit-governmental and government).

f) Canadian Issues/Crisis Management Campaign of the Year

Communication programs that demonstrate proactive planning and preventative action during an extraordinary event. Also, communication programs that show actions taken to address trends, issues and interest group attitudes with major impact on an organization.

g) Canadian Government Relations Campaign of the Year

Programs targeted at government bodies and government agencies or programs that recognize the effective use of public affairs to change/enlist public opinion in order to influence government policy and/or regulations.

2. Canadian Internal Communications Campaign of the Year

Programs focusing on internal audiences, such as employees, members, volunteers or franchisees. Such programs should aim at improving relationships between employees and management; a better understanding of the organization's strategic plan and the importance of their role therein, or both. Such programs can also aim at rallying personnel around the strategic planning or improving employee/management morale, motivation and interest towards the organization. Finally, these programs should focus on explaining new policies or new projects.

Communication Projects

Awards within this category honour excellence in the strategic development of materials and individual public relations products that advance the goals and objectives of an overall public relations program. Special emphasis should be placed on the relevance of the initiative to the public relations objectives. **A communication project can be entered in a maximum of two of the following categories:**

a) Best Special Events Projects

A public relations program for openings, anniversaries and other ceremonies commemorating a one-time event or series of special events or occasions.

b) Best Multi-Media Projects

Communications projects that utilize a range of one or more multi-media tactics to achieve an organization's communication objectives including but not limited to video, video news releases, audio only, podcasting, CD ROMs, or computer generated slide presentations developed for internal or external target audiences.

c) Best Print Projects

Printed material developed for internal or external target audiences, such as newsletters, annual reports, newspaper insert, brochures, handbooks, promotional campaigns, posters, programs, or displays.

d) Best Electronic and Social Media Projects

A communications project using electronic and social media to achieve an organization's communications objectives including but not limited to websites, intranet sites, blogs, webcasts, on-line productions, discussion boards, Facebook and Twitter. The summary should include a rationale for the use of electronic and social media, targeted audiences and statistics or other means of quantifiable measurement that meet stated objectives. Screen downloads of the medium being entered as well as the URL must be submitted as part of the entry. One award each for internal and external audiences.

e) Best Writing Projects

This category encompasses original material written for a communications project including: personality profiles, speeches, recurring features or columns, other features such as magazine articles, editorials, advertorials, news articles or news releases. Each award will be judged based on the quality of writing as well as creativity and strategic alignment with their organization's business goals.