

CPRS Hamilton

Pinnacle Awards Review Report

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Dated:

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Background:

CPRS Hamilton's Pinnacle Awards Program, which saw its 25th Silver Anniversary celebrated in April 2016, continues to recognize the highest standards in relationship-building and communications excellence, and communications excellence in the project-work of its members. The separate Special Awards recognize exemplary contributions of members to the field of public relations and to CPRS Hamilton through service and are hosted at the same time as the Pinnacle Awards. A third program, the Sharon Little APR Legacy Fund Scholar Award has been added and recognizes a recent graduate from a graduate level (Masters or PhD) program in communications and public relations management. This is a cash award of \$1,000 as opposed to the Pinnacles and Special Awards that have been glass works of art. In the past two years, it has been CPRS Hamilton's practice to combine those awards under the Pinnacle Awards banner and present them at the annual Pinnacles Gala.

Following that milestone, the CPRS Hamilton Board of Directors requested a review to ensure the Pinnacles Awards remains relevant and can grow.

This work involved the following steps in the review process:

- Members' survey on the program e.g. categories; judging; gala vs business event; recognition; communications programs, projects and special awards, etc.– October 2016
- Best practices – key learnings and environmental scan (CPRS Hamilton; CPRS National; IABC PRSA)
- One-on-one interviews in lieu of focus groups
- Debrief meeting from 2016 Pinnacles
- Environmental scan meeting November 20, 2016 – to consider all input, capture insights and discuss recommendations
- Pinnacles Critical Path Checklist for 2015-16

Problem/Opportunity:

Upon reaching its 25th Silver Anniversary milestone, the board recommended a review of CPRS Hamilton's entire awards program from its marketing and submitter experience, to its categories and Gala event. Specifically, an ad hoc Pinnacles Review Team was struck to examine the current offering and to **seek opportunities to enhance and evolve it for the future**. The program is on hiatus awaiting this review although presentation of this year's Special Awards and the Sharon Little APR Legacy Fund Scholar Award will take place at the Mentorship Program's Inspiring Leadership event on May 17. Once the report and its recommendations have been discussed by the CPRS Hamilton Board of Directors, the current Pinnacle Co-Chairs will take the approved recommendations forward and a Pinnacles Committee will be struck to implement them for 2018-19.

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Reflections and Insights:

Upon evaluation of the Pinnacle Awards Review, it is clear that CPRS members recognize the importance of this program and **its greatest 'value' is the recognition award winners receive** from PR peers and through CPRS Hamilton's **promotional efforts**. That being said, there are still issues that can be narrowed down to ***a lack of clarity and the need for modernization***.

Much of the feedback collected during a members' survey tied to a lack of clarity in areas such as the submission and evaluation processes, website content and navigation, and the awards themselves. These areas require simplicity and ease of use/access. There is interest in aligning our categories with the CPRS National Awards of Excellence so that members can submit easily to both e.g. same/similar categories and criteria. Additional award levels are recommended (gold, silver and bronze) as well as enhancements to other categories to better suit the current state of the PR industry e.g. growth in digital. The website and e-blasts need to provide straight-forward information on submitting to the awards programs (submissions guidelines, samples, etc.) and a link to purchase tickets to offer one-stop shopping for our members. Web copy could include tips on writing an award-worthy submission, videos, past-winner recognition, and/or webinars.

According to the survey results, lack of time is the top reason for not submitting work. If we are able to streamline the submission process and provide members with an easier and faster method to submit, there may be an increase in submissions. Another recommendation is to implement a new timeline for award submissions. Changing the submission timeline from spring to fall would allow members extra time to pull together their work over the summer when workloads and deadlines are less demanding. Incentives e.g. early-bird discount on submission could also be considered for CPRS member submissions.

Members also identified concerns with the evaluation process. Some members expressed concern that the judges were sub-par in their duties given that little/no feedback had been provided which then leads to confusion as to why a project scored low. They wondered if judges had biases or were lackadaisical in their grading duties. Greater transparency in how submissions are graded would be helpful e.g. share scores in each area of RACE score sheet and judges' comments in a follow-up letter to all submitters from the judge co-ordinator. This supports the objective that the awards can be used as a learning opportunity and it can be promoted as such. Providing more support e.g. 'Pinnacle Mentors'; webinar; video; and past winning submissions will also help submitters understand what the judges are looking for in a strong submission.

Enhancing partnerships with local colleges/universities is integral to the success of the Student Pinnacle Award. More work is required on developing criteria for the student award to reflect their experience. Asking students to demonstrate RACE in their work is likely premature and leads to their submission receiving low marks.

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Approved Recommendations:

<p>1. <u>Administration:</u></p>	<p>Recruit a committee of Pinnacle Awards volunteers (4) to help plan/organize program, event and follow-up feedback to submitters (include rubric and comments from judges). Once recommendations have been approved, set up a survey and/or focus group with CRPS members as final sign-off to the approved recommendations and then communicate changes to members.</p> <p>Consider offering discount on award night tickets for submitters and incentives for submitting.</p> <p>Consider offering either a discount or free admission to Pinnacle Awards Co-Chairs.</p> <p>Start to use Google Archive to save key files and documents so we can create an inventory and 'corporate memory' for the program.</p>
<p>2. <u>Awards:</u></p> <p>Current status:</p> <p><i>In order to be considered for an award in the current system, a submission must be graded at 85% or higher in a category. Out of the submissions that meet the requirements, one winner is selected by a panel of judges.</i></p>	<p>New Award levels</p> <p>The news system will include three award levels: Gold (85%+), Silver (76-84%) and Bronze (75%).</p> <p>If no submissions meet the 75% mark, there will be no winner. The three award levels do not mean that there will be three winners. If there are two submissions above 85%, however, the strongest project will be awarded gold and the other will receive silver. This system would increase the likelihood of success, thus increasing submissions and member satisfaction.</p> <p>Awards of Merit to be given at the discretion of judges. The Committee will assess the introduction of permanent Award of Merits in two to three years if awards gain momentum.</p> <p>CPRS Hamilton will adopt the same award categories and online application process as the CPRS National Awards, and shift the award program cycle to a late fall submission and review with a culminating event in early February. These enhancements will streamline the application process, encourage CRPS Hamilton award winners to submit to nationals, and better accommodate busy professionals to use the late summer/early fall for application preparation. In reviewing all input, it was determined that the updated National awards program was well aligned to the category changes requested by Hamilton members.</p>

	<p>Pinnacle Award winners would have at least one-month to work with a mentor and submit to Nationals following presentation of awards.</p> <p>Feedback from Pinnacle Awards RACE rubric would allow members to make enhancements to their national submission. The Awards Committee understands that submission may not be received in all categories.</p> <p>Pinnacle Awards Categories</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. External Communications Campaign of the Year (open to non-members at significantly higher fee) 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:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. 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. Community Relations Campaign of the Year Community programs (such as philanthropy, volunteerism, partnerships) that enable an organization to build and maintain positive and sustainable relationships with key individuals, groups or organizations within its communities.c. 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 and the environment.d. Media Relations Campaign of the Year (agency, government, not-for-profit/non-governmental or private sector corporation) 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
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	<p>successful media relations campaign created by a non-agency.</p> <p>e. 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.</p> <p>f. 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.</p> <p>g. Health Care Campaign of the Year In complex health care environments, effective communications initiatives can impact patient safety, quality of care and patient satisfaction. This award recognizes excellence in health communications, public relations and engagement. The Campaign must demonstrate a connection to a health care issue or communication need. The award is open to CPRS <i>Health Care Academy</i> members working in, or for, organizations that deliver direct care or health planning services across Canada.</p> <p>h. Digital Communications Campaign of the Year A digital communications program that successfully engages with target audiences to create engaged communities, launch/raise awareness of products or manage issues and/or crisis communications.</p> <p>2. Internal Communications Campaign of the Year (open to non-members at significantly higher fee) 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.</p> <p>3. Communications Projects (limited to CPRS Hamilton members only)</p> <p>Awards within this category honour excellence in the strategic development of materials and individual public relations products that</p>
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	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">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 organizations 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 Digital and Social Media Projects A communications project using digital and social media to achieve an organizations 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 digital 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.d. 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.e. Best Internal Publication (print or electronic) For audiences in-house: staff, executives, volunteers. Submit three consecutive issues of your high frequency, low cost, primarily text-oriented publication. Judges will look for clear, concise, readable copy that exhibits high editorial standards; effective use of colour or graphics; and an overall creative presentation.f. Best External Publication (print or electronic) <p>Special Awards TBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bill Cockman Memorial Award of Excellence in PR
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Award of Excellence • CPRS Hamilton PR Champion of the Year • Bob Deans, APR Mentorship Award • Dr. Louis J. Cahill Distinguished Service Award <p>Scholar Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sharon Little APR Legacy Fund Scholar Award <p>Student Award – changes required The student award needs to be revamped and tied to criteria that will fit the level of their work as they are not doing RACE yet. We recommend asking Daryl Barnhart to help on this effort.</p>
<p>1. <u>Judging/Grading:</u></p>	<p>Be explicit with members that the RACE rubric is used by the judges and share it on the Pinnacle Awards webpage. Feedback should be provided for all submissions. This corresponds to the practice of CPRS National. In the feedback to award submitters, include the marked rubric from the judges along with their comments so the process is transparent and submitters can understand how judges graded the submission.</p> <p>Implement online grading system to extend judging nation-wide. Judges will encourage those with winning submissions to submit to National awards with support of awards coach to recommend award enhancements.</p>
<p>2. <u>Submissions:</u></p>	<p>The submission process needs to be more accessible, providing easy to follow tips and guidelines. A submission checklist, organizational tools and critical path templates should all be accessible on the webpage. A short tutorial video illustrating the proper steps for submission can be created and hosted on the website. Specific information and length of submission, type size 10 pt. minimum; maximum length of attachments/appendices, and maximum number of categories one project can be submitted to must be clear and easy to find. The submission requirements e.g. number of pages; criteria should be same as National's requirements with the exception that the Pinnacles External and Internal Program are open to non-members and IABC members – albeit at a significantly higher fee.</p> <p>The same rules (as National) apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three pages + cover page • 10 pt. font minimum • Only three attachments per submission and not to exceed 50 pages • Use of Media Rating Points encouraged

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- Limit of two categories per submission
- Marks reduced if RACE formula is not used
- Communications program evaluated on RACE
- Communications projects on need/goals/execution/results/overall work plan
- Only e-submissions accepted
- Work not returned

Provide a list of members/volunteers/past winners willing to assist award submitters as “mentors” to better understand the submission questions, technical support with online process, etc. Provide these names and contact info on the webpage.

The Pinnacle Awards will be opened up to non-members as a two to three year pilot in order to measure the success of the program. As part of the evaluation process, members will be surveyed for their feedback of the streamlined Pinnacle Awards program.

Approved 2018-19 Pinnacle Awards Program Timeline

Timing confirmed at September 2017 Board Meeting

Consultation on Final Report	Fall 2017
Sub-Committee Recruitment	Fall 2017
Communications Plan and Recognition Program	Fall 2017 to beyond Pinnacle Awards event
Recognition Program	Fall 2017 to beyond Pinnacle Awards event
Education, Training & Professional Development opportunities for members on submission preparation	Winter 2017/18 to Summer 2018
Content, web, design, sponsorship, etc.	Winter/Spring 2018
Judging/Coaching Recruitment	Spring 2018
Launch Pinnacle Awards Campaign	Early September 2018
Pinnacle Awards Deadline	Early November 2018
Judging of Awards Submissions	November–December 2018
Pinnacle Awards Event	Early February, 2019
National Awards Submission Coaching	Mid-February–Early-March 2019
CPRS National Awards Deadline	Mid-March 2019

For awards submissions that follow a calendar year, members are encouraged to submit for the following year to allow for appropriate project evaluation. Per National Awards of Excellence: *Each submission must have been 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.

New Pinnacle Awards Submission Fees

A review of the current fee structure recommended the inclusion of non-member fees. A less than 50 per cent increase was recommended by the Board, but a further review suggested that increasing the submission fee to be more comparable to the membership fee could encourage non-members to become full CPRS Hamilton Chapter members.

Introduction of non-member award fees as a two to three year pilot to develop baseline and review.

Current Pinnacle Awards Submission Fee	\$50 + HST
New Member Discount Fee	\$75 + HST
New Non-Member Fee	\$150+ HST
Student Discount Fee	\$25 + HST (unchanged)
New Student Non-Member Fee	\$65 + HST

The current fee for submitting to CPRS National Awards of Excellence is \$250 + HST.

Member-only incentives for submitting to Pinnacle Awards

The opportunity to be entered into random draw to attend CPRS National professional development events at no cost will be offered as an incentive to members. A \$50 discount code is already provided to members who have entered a submission to a local CPRS Society Award.

As part of building value for members, include a recognition component to the communications strategy to recognize them widely e.g. send congratulatory letter to their employer from the board president; issue a media release; include an article in CPRS Hamilton e-newsletter. Provide opportunities for winners to share their success and be seen as ‘experts’. Invite them to give a webinar based on their program or project and ask them to mentor future submitters and possibly to join the mentorship program as a mentor.

It is recommended that the practice of restricting Pinnacle Co-Chairs from submitting continue while they are serving in those roles.

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<p>3. <u>Gala:</u></p>	<p>In the survey, 37 out of 46 (80 per cent) respondents were not in support of a formal Gala with a dinner, MC and keynote speaker. The majority indicated their preference for a business-casual style event in either a conventional or non-conventional setting. Fun and accessible is preferable to a posh gala.</p> <p>Ticket prices should match the venue based on the type of event that is chosen (winery/brewery could be more/less expensive than a formal hall). If a speaker or Emcee is used in future, survey respondents shared that a relevant and engaging speaker with an obvious connection to PR should be retained. It was also recommended that a \$10 discount be offered to Pinnacle Awards submitters and Special Award winners for their event tickets.</p> <p>With a new November submission deadline, the Gala date would be changed to November and renamed (not a Gala). TBD based on event survey.</p>
<p>4. <u>Marketing:</u></p>	<p>The Pinnacle Awards brand requires refreshing. It is recommended that the Pinnacle Awards Co-Chairs work with Communications Co-chairs to create a communications strategy for the awards submission process and the awards event. Enhancements include a unique Gmail account, updated awards program, save the date in CPRS National’s e-newsletter, produce a save the date card for submissions and event, and post-gala communications to members and to employers e.g. send congratulations to organizations to communicate the ‘win’).</p> <p>It is recommended that the pinnacleshamilton@gmail.com account be promoted as a support and inquiry line. Local channels should be used to raise awareness e.g. Hamilton HIVE, Hamilton HYPO. Strong communications showcasing the ranking/grading and value of the award levels should be enhanced/developed including feedback letters. Digital communications and social media should be enhanced such as creating a Facebook page, video, and/or live tweeting. A program enhancement would see increased profile for Pinnacle Awards winners e.g. on our website, through social media, recognition corporately.</p> <p>Developing a strong sponsorships strategy with increased promotion to local businesses is recommended.</p> <p>Engage in more outreach including soliciting private sector/agencies, beyond Hamilton borders to Waterloo, Halton,</p>

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	<p>and Niagara to submit to the Pinnacle Awards (members and non-members) and to sponsor, as well.</p> <p>Advise winners (top 3) to attend ahead of time so they can invite family and friends.</p>
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In closing, by testing e.g. survey and/or focus group and implementing these recommendations, the Pinnacle Awards Program (programs and projects, Special Awards, Scholar Award, and renamed Gala event) will continue to provide members with opportunities to challenge themselves, to showcase their talents and skills, and to gain recognition for excellence among their peers.

Addendum

- A. Members' Survey Notes & Results**
- B. Best Practices – Key Learnings and Environment Scan**
- C. One on one interviews – M. Gregory and C. Janzen**
- D. Debrief meeting from 2016 Pinnacles**
- E. Environmental scan meeting Nov. 20, 2016**
- F. Pinnacles Critical Path Checklist**

A. Members' Survey Notes & Results

1. Have you ever submitted a public relations or communications campaign/project to an awards program other than CPRS Hamilton?

Yes 26 or 63%; No 13 or 31%; - Note: high submission # for other awards programs

2. Have you ever submitted a public relations or communications campaign/project for consideration of a CPRS Hamilton Pinnacles Award?

Yes 26 or 63%; No 14 or 34% - Note: good cross section of respondents

3. For which year(s) did you submit an application for award consideration?

- **2016 – 4 or 14%**
- **2015 – 8 or 29%**
- **2014 – 3 or 11%**
- **2013 – 4 or 14%**
- **Other - 18 or 66% (2011; 2010; 2008; between 2003 – 2012; 2012; 1995; 2010; 2008)**

Note: good cross section of respondents

4. What was your level of satisfaction of the Pinnacles' online submission process?

Very satisfied – 3 or 12%; Satisfied – 7 or 28%; Neutral: 4 or 16%; Dissatisfied – 0; Very Dissatisfied – 0; N/A – submitted in binder form before online: 11 or 44%

Note: 40% satisfied or very satisfied with online process

Comments:

- Online submissions are appropriate for some categories but not all - in fact, it is detrimental to many submissions as it limits content and provides nothing but a paper submission without context.
- I may be confusing this with the national awards, but as I recall, the file size for appendices was limited which made submission of supporting material difficult.

5. What was your level of satisfaction with the Pinnacle's website copy?

Very satisfied – 2 or 8%; Satisfied – 9 or 36%; Neutral: 9 or 36%; Dissatisfied – 2 or 8%; Very Dissatisfied – 2 or 8%; Don't remember – 1 or 4%

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Note: Satisfied or very satisfied = 11 or 44% and dissatisfied or very dissatisfied is 4 or 16%

Comments:

- Content is helpful; layout of website is too complex for the amount of content the society has to share with members. That's more a comment on the website than the Pinnacle Awards.
- There isn't enough guidance or information on the website to help members considering applying; perhaps a webinar would help.
- I would have appreciated more step-by-step instructions, clearly identifying what to include and what not to include.
- As I recall, it was quite wordy, and not well labeled. I would rather open a pdf that laid it all out more logically. In addition, (as I recall) there was no link to buy tickets to the event -- I had to go back to an old e-mail.

6. What was your overall level of satisfaction with the CPRS Hamilton Pinnacles Awards program?

Very satisfied – 7 or 28%; Satisfied – 10 or 40%; Neutral: 5 or 20%; Dissatisfied – 2 or 8%; Very Dissatisfied –1 or 4%

Note: Satisfied or very satisfied = 17 or 68% and dissatisfied or very dissatisfied is 3 or 12%

Comments:

- It varied. Sometimes I felt the judges had not carefully read the submission. Of course if I won I thought the judges did a great job
- Awards programs are fantastic as long as they have a purpose - professional development, peer recognition and the opportunity to showcase your best work. What is really galling is that an award submission can win an award at National awards and not locally. I have found graders for the Pinnacles to be biased and there is a certain clique or organization that will win. Restricting to one award per category also diminishes the ability for peer recognition and show casing best work.
- Did not receive detailed feedback about things that could have been improved.
- Consider opening up to non-members for submission. How do you grow awareness of the awards? Is goal to increase attendance and submissions? Online submissions great first step to help. Send out media release will call for nominations? Loop in groups like Hamilton HYP, Hamilton HIVE etc. for further exposure....
- Not encouraged. We regularly receive awards for our work at the national and international associations for our industry, and it's a big industry with lots of competition. When we've pointed that out re: CPRS Pinnacles, we were told "Well, CPRS is very choosy." Our industry is rated more on the national and international level rather than local, so local acclaim is not so important.
- Generally, the awards have been a good program. This year's 25th anniversary awards was the absolute worst event I've attended in all my years. It lacked everything a good event should have - no significant recognition of past special award winners, former Pinnacle chairs or past presidents, etc. The speaker was so inappropriate for such an event and worse, longwinded. No energy or effort was made to connect to key CPRS players - it looked haphazardly put together. Quite pathetic actually.
- I'm not sure what you mean by program. The awards process was neither here nor there. The event itself was truly unspectacular - as in, I'm sorry to say, really, really bad.

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7. Have you ever won a CPRS Hamilton Pinnacles Award? If yes, please write the award level in the comments.

Yes – 20 or 48%; No – 8 or 19%; No response – 13 or 31%

Note: Mix of experience/no experience with the program.

List categories in which you won:

- Internal Communications, External Communications – Initiative Campaign and Corporate Identity
- All the above
- Creative, External Communications, Special events
- At the time it was called an Award of Merit. Have also received special awards.
- Award of Merit
- Student project award winner (2007 or 2008 I can't recall) and 2015 audio visual projects award winner (gold, I think?) I was the only recipient in this category.
- Pinnacle and Award of Merit
- Silver & Gold (client work) ; Silver - writing award ; Award of Merit
- Award of Merit

8. If you answered “no” to question 2, please share why you have never submitted your work to the Pinnacle Awards Program (check all that apply).

- **I don't have anything I feel comfortable submitting – 5**
- **I don't follow the RACE formula in my work – 1**
- **I don't feel confident that I will be successful – 3**
- **I don't understand what is involved in the submission process – 2**
- **I'm not interested in awards – 0**
- **I didn't know who to contact for guidance in completing the process – 0**
- **Other: Client material; difficult to find the time to put together the awards submission; no time; lack of awareness; missed deadline**

Note: Need to help people to submit

Comments:

- Because most of my work is on the behalf of clients, and having submitted previously to the IABC unsuccessfully, it would have to be something I work on in coordination with my client who has not expressed any interest (but always willing to try again and this might be the year)
- We are interested but it is a matter of time and staff resources.
- With very limited time and resources, I have never taken the time to investigate the program. My understanding is the application process is time-consuming. As a suggestion, running some type of learning opportunity for members to learn more about how to submit a successful application might be a consideration.
- I was generally unaware of PR awards when I entered the field from journalism. But at a quick glance, the process of entering seemed like an onerous process to undertake, especially with client demands taking up so much time as it is.
- As a student I did not submit work because I did not feel I had anything practical to submit. However, I am also aware that having no student award winners in the past two years has been a deterrent.
- Maybe start an earlier campaign of SAVE THE DATE - Get your submissions ready with easy share button to forward to our colleagues...

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- Sometimes hard to get measurement from client
Expensive to take the time to submit – using billable hours.
- While having won once, I wanted to make a point that I do not enter every year. You really have to have a great project to win. Oftentimes what we do is routine, and no big budgets to help make the project "go above and beyond."

9. Pinnacle judges now only select one winner in each category, with a score of 85% or above. Which is your preference?

- **One winner at 85% or above – 0**
- **3 Award levels - Gold (85%+), Silver (76-84%), Bronze (75%). No winner if not 75% or above (CPRS National Awards) – 20 or 48%**
- **2 Award levels - Award of Excellence (85%+), Award of Merit (65-84%) – 13 or 31%**
- **Other – 1 or 2% - suggested: Award of Excellence (85%+) Award of Merit (75-84%)**
- **No responses – 7**

Note: Further discussion – preference is for 3 award levels

10. Please review the current award categories offered through the Pinnacle's Communications Programs section.

Existing list:

- **External Communications – 29 or 85%**
- **Communications Management – 27 or 79%**
- **Product or Initiative Campaign – 26 or 76%**
- **Community Relations – 30 or 88%**
- **Corporate Identity – 24 or 70%**
- **Media Relations – 29 or 85%**
- **Issues/Crisis Management – 32 or 94%**
- **Government Relations – 28 or 82%**
- **Internal Communications – 31 or 91%**
- **Student Award – 30 or 88%**

Note: Much support for current listings but need to consider social media & others listed below.



Other categories suggested:

- **Social Media/Digital Communications Campaign**
- **Online/Digital/Social Media Campaigns**
- **Social Media**
- **Engagement and Communications**
- **Resources (hydro, mining, etc.)**
- **Digital or Social Media; Not-for-Profit; Special Events**
- **Social Media Campaign**
- **Research**

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Comments:

- External versus community can seem like an odd distinction, although I don't know how it is explained in the entry instructions. Corporate identity could be recalibrate do as branding.
- Video is a must considering the current state of media
- Far, far too much focus on students... which is easier than building an engaged community of working professionals
- I'm not clear on the definition of communications management. Would assume this implicitly falls into all other categories?
- I don't understand what produce or initiative campaign means so didn't identify that one.
- Distinguish budget (agency versus in-house). Under \$25k and over \$25k.
- Could Communications Management and external communications be merged into one? They seem similar.
- Make it same as National's Awards of Excellence
- Communication Management is a vague term. "Strategic Communications?"
- should also be categories for: Social Media Strategy; "corporate identity should include branding" reinstate the "writing" category to include op-eds, feature articles, speeches, blogs;

11. Communications Projects: Please check only the categories you feel belong in future Pinnacle Awards.

- **Special events – 33 or 97%**
- **Audio Visual Projects – 29 or 85%**
- **Print Projects – 28 or 82%**
- **Electronic/Interactive Projects – 28 or 82%**
- **Writing – 29 or 85%**
- **Creative – 22 or 64%**

Other categories suggested:

- **Digital campaigns – 1**



Note: much support for current listings but need to consider others listed below

Comments:

- Special events
- I would rename electronic/interactive to "digital"
- Public relations needs these categories, I would also Is Audio Visual - video production? I.e. You Tube?
- Perhaps a more modern term consider cultural and social initiatives
- Audio visual is very outdated - also electronic/interactive - perhaps best social media campaign, best digital marketing campaign. What does "creative" mean - is it most creative video, is it most creative cover of a magazine - it needs to be better defined. Definitely writing is important - it's the core of what we do but perhaps better define - writing as in speech writing, editorial writing, magazine writing and how do these get evaluated as it's apples to oranges.
- A/V and Electronic/Interactive are awkwardly titled.
- Could creation and print projects be one category?
- Make it same as National's Awards of Excellence
- Perhaps the electronic should be expanded to include subsections like design communications twitter, Facebook etc.
- Electronic/interactive should be simply digital communications

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12. If you were to win a Pinnacle Award, would you prefer to be informed in advance of the awards ceremony?

Yes – 25 or 60%; No – 4 or 9%; Unsure – 4; No responses – 8

Note: More members are interested in be informed in advance.

No comments provided.

13. If you were to win a Pinnacle Award, how would you prefer to be recognized? Please select all that apply.

- **Media release to promote winners locally – 27 or 81%**
- **Media release to promote winners nationally – 15 or 45%**
- **Local chapter event to recognize winners e.g. luncheon – 12 or 36%**
- **Invitation to present winning submission at an event or conference – 19 or 57%**

Other – 7 or 21%:

- **Ontario**
- **Ontario**
- **Social media blasts**
- **Ontario**
- **Ontario**
- **Ontario**
- **LinkedIn Post**

14. Are you aware that CPRS Hamilton has a Special Awards program in which members can nominate peers who have demonstrated exemplary leadership and service?

Yes – 29 or 70%; No – 3 or 7%; No response – 9 or 21%

Comments:

- The special awards program needs more profile - and it needs to be more varied in terms of who wins. It's almost always the same circle of people being rotated through the various awards.
- Only because was involved previously with awards. Not sure this is well known?

15. Have you ever nominated someone to receive a Special Award?

Yes – 12 or 29%; No – 19 or 46%; No response – 9 or 21%

Comments:

16. How would you like to celebrate our members' achievements in the Pinnacle Awards program?

- **Formal Gala with dinner, MC and keynote speaker – 9 or 28%**
- **A business-casual style event with keynote and dinner – 11 or 34%**
- **A business-casual style event with awards MC and hors d'oeuvres (no dinner) – 13 or 40%**
- **Informal Celebration at non-traditional venue (i.e., harbour cruise, winery/brewery etc.) – 13 or 40%**

Other:

- It has to be engaging and relevant
- Make it super fun, or make it glamorous – don't just make it meh.

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17. How have you heard of the CPRS Hamilton Pinnacle Awards program in the past? Select all that apply.

- **Colleague – 17 or 53%**
- **E-Newsletter – 23 or 71%**
- **CPRS Hamilton website – 16 or 50%**
- **Email from CPRS Hamilton – 27 or 84%**
- **Brochure/poster – 9 or 28%**
- **Social Media – 12 or 37%**

Other:

- **Oakville**
- **Waterdown**
- **Burlington**
- **Stoney Creek**
- **Mail out**
- **Hamilton**
- **I like getting a mailer on the awards program categories**
- **I feel a direct email is important**
- **Mail piece sent to my home**

18. What do you feel is the value offered by the CPRS Hamilton Pinnacle Awards program?

Comments:

- The recognition of the work by my peers helps to convince senior leadership within my organization of the merits of the initiative, which helps to secure future budget
- Chance to test yourself against best practices. It is also valuable to use the occasion to describe what you did and why, something that doesn't always get done in the normal ebb and flow of things.
- Professional development. Recognition of communications excellence
- Peer/industry recognition; celebration of communications excellence
- Raises the calibre of one's work (to adhere to RACE formula) and helps raise the bar through sharing and recognition - local society should hold PD sessions/webinars hosted by award winners to help with this.
- professional recognition
- Peer/Industry recognition that can contribute to your personal brand and potential career advancement - or it should.
- Recognition by industry peers
- Sharing recognition with your organization as a ROI
- Recognition of quality work by Communications Professionals.
Increase awareness of the Communications profession in business and the community.
- Having local chapter awards helps to draw attention to local achievement in public relations.
- It is a way to honour communications excellence at our local level and the achievements of our colleagues.
- Peer (industry and workplace) recognition and personal achievement/satisfaction.
- Opportunity to showcase award winning work and to demonstrate to your peers and employers the value that good strategic communications can bring to an organization.
- It is always nice to see your work recognized.

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- We're one of the few PR/CM awards programs in Canada. It is a great society-building event.
- It's an honour to win but it's a lot of work to submit. Streamline the process to encourage more nominations. Share past winner entries. Assess fee to submit. Sometimes feels like you're paying to win.
- Best local awards program in the country with strong history and legacy which adds to its cache.
- Recognition important for employers and community
- The attendance at the galas tends to be quite small with many familiar faces. It is great to connect with colleagues and some opportunities for networking would be great too.
- Recognizes great projects in the industry. Would like to see more of what the projects looked like i.e. if it was a video, run it during the ceremony. Could post any visuals from projects up too.
- Pride; learning (especially when submitter gets good feedback and a webinar is provided for creating the submission - can be posted on website afterwards); recognized by peers; can share it with clients (profile company brand); nice to get beautiful artful awards; brings our PR community together
- Recognition for the members who do good work
- Recognizes excellence at the local lever, promotes quality in developing submissions, encourages people to track their entry through implementation of the actual campaign.
- Clients are honoured when I suggest I want to submit their project for a Pinnacle Award. The client relationship is strengthened and enhanced when they are invited to the dinner. Clients love to receive a duplicate award that they can showcase in their office.
- I feel that recognition of excellent work is very valuable for CPRS members, both in their own 'shop' and industry as well as locally among peers in the public relations fields.
- The presentation of these award-winning projects is also a learning opportunity for CPRS members to learn how to improve their own work.
- Recognition amongst/from peers, good for career, showcases the type of work PR people do in their communities
- Peer review and resume
- Celebration of commitment to excellence and diversity of strategic and tactical communications options available to public relations practitioners. I think the awards should reflect best-in-class of what PR can offer clients.

Note: Recognition and showcasing excellent work were the two top reasons given as the value of the Pinnacles.

19. What changes, if any, would you like to see made to the CPRS Hamilton Pinnacle Awards program that would increase the likelihood of you submitting your work?

- Multiple winners at the excellence and merit levels
- Can the pinnacle awards committee give me a lighter workload? Seriously, it is a situation where it seems only students enter therefore senior practitioners begin to feel that we should back away. The lack of participation becomes contagious. It has really seemed like a student and early practitioner event in the last decade.
- I realize it would be a logistical issue but it would be nice to present the submission in person or by video.
- I was a journalist in a former life. I rather liked the format of the Ontario Newspaper Awards. They picked three nominees in each category, announced a couple of months in advance of the banquet. The winner was announced at the banquet, awarded a trophy and \$100, the runners up got a trophy noting as such. It was a semi-formal event (suits, not tuxedos), dinner and guest speaker. It was/is a very anticipated event on the media calendar.
- 3 tiers of awards; -New approach to student awards
- Streamline the process to encourage more nominations. Provide more tools on how to submit, project ideas, etc.

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- Web portal is great. Simple entry process
- Could add a category whereby companies can nominate themselves as Best Communications by a company i.e. Marketing awards 'Marketer of the Year'. It recognizes the firm for its overall work throughout a year. This may encourage companies to look at their work overall not only one project.
- Use National's line up and rubric and providing comments back to submitters
- Keep the fees reasonable
- I'm not a CPRS member so that would I suppose be one thing.
- It would be really helpful to have a workshop where we can learn how to create a winning submission. It could be led by people who have won awards. It would be helpful to know exactly what to put into the submission and what to leave out. It would include what the judges are looking for.
- This kind of hand holding, while it take energy and time would increase the number of applications to the judging process.
- Lack of resources means the RACE doesn't get followed much. That makes it difficult to find submissions that check all the boxes, even if they were very successful. However, I also don't think CPRS should drop RACE as the ideal.
- Ensure there is transparency and ethical behaviour in evaluation, i.e., no CPRS Hamilton members on evolution - rather CPRS Toronto members as in the past
- Bring the event back to downtown Hamilton at least every second year and have it other places on the off-year. Improve the promotion, keynote speakers and make it an event. Price is getting a bit high for independent consultants, small businesses and not-for-profits who don't have big budgets like private/public sector organizations
- These are comments, not necessarily changes.
I think the awards categories are right.
I think it should be a competition - not an award for "showing up".
I think everyone should get their judges' comments emailed as a matter of course, not just on request.
I think the most important thing is confidence in the judging process:
- judges who are APRs, or minimum of being CPRS members; not members of CPRS Hamilton, or minimum of not having entered or anyone in their organization. If the marks are widely apart, they should be resolved by the judging co-ordinator on the spot, with the judges. Its marks like two 90s and a 60 that piss people off.
- 1. Clarify the award classes.
 2. Modernize the award classes.
 3. Videos of success stories and how these changed practice, recognition or promotional/marketing

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Final comments:

- Thank you to the volunteers that are working on the awards - although I have had issues with the Pinnacle process, the group has always been very open to suggestions
- In the question that asks if you have ever won a Pinnacle Award I answered no as it implied at the Gold, Silver or Bronze level. When I won it was for a score over 85 per cent. So really, I have won in the past.
- As a member in London Ontario, making connections are difficult due to distance, even though everyone I have ever spoken with or met is wonderful but the issue of the catchment basin should be addressed; including the opportunities members in smaller communities may or may not be exposed to. Whatever it does, it should reflect professionalism and competence in the sector with a secondary objective of gaining recognition and an active membership, including growth.
- Try to align with national categories and requirements; consider opening up to non-members even if it is just in one category for agency campaign of the year - you would have more entries and more people at the gala if you hold one; offer to bring award winning presentations to the community as a community relations exercise for CPRS Hamilton -could build membership and at least build relationships. Above all, this is a small organization - it will continue to cannibalize itself if you don't broaden to others and if you don't ensure that more people win than one or two organizations or individuals. And no matter what, the board needs to commit to the program and the president's need to show up to the events.

B. Best Practices – Key Learnings and Environment Scan

a) Key Learnings

Cost

- Price should not be an issue. At \$50 per award, CPRS Hamilton has the lowest cost for submission than CPRS Toronto, CPRS National, IABC and PRSA, all of whom have pricing over \$100+ depending on deadlines.
- Everyone but CPRS Hamilton and CPRS National have early bird and deadline pricing.
- Everyone but CPRS Hamilton and CPRS National allow non-members and non-member students to submit awards; the pricing for non-members is higher – but does not necessarily incent people to become members.
- CPRS national offers a \$50 discount for submissions that are also sent to a local society's award program. This really doesn't mitigate the high cost to submit an award: CPRS national submission is \$250 minus \$50 discount = \$200 for national submission + \$50 for CPRS Hamilton = \$250 total. What this does help with is the "prepare one submission, send to national and CPRS Hamilton" without extra work – if the requirements are the same.

Award levels

- There are multiple levels of awards. For CPRS National and CPRS Toronto there are gold, silver and bronze awards.
- For IABC and PRSA there is a combination of award of excellence and award of merit.

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- In past, CPRS Hamilton has used award of excellence and award of merit as well as gold, silver and bronze.
- Currently, CPRS Hamilton has one award for a submission over 85%; this discourages the number of submissions given the difficulty to win the one award.

Categories

- CPRS National has limited to two the number of categories to which one project can be submitted; this was in response to an awards gala where one project won almost every award causing much consternation – the decision to limit the number to two was arrived at via a member survey
- Given the limited number of submissions to CPRS Hamilton, it would likely not be a good idea to limit submissions at this time unless the membership asked for it
- CPRS Hamilton and CPRS National have the approximately the same number of categories (15 and 16 respectively); others have many more categories but in a volunteer organization with the need to obtain judging panels this level of categories is appropriate at this time
- Toronto ACE Awards, IABC and PRSA have financial communications awards; CPRS National and Hamilton does not. CPRS National made the decision a few years ago to eliminate that category due to lack of submissions.

Information

- CPRS National and IABC have the easiest web sites to navigate on their award sections as well as the most comprehensive information.
- It is difficult to find complete information on the CPRS Hamilton website – particularly in terms of submission (number of pages, font sizes, how much supporting documentation is permissible)
- IABC is most supportive- providing a 1-800 number to call to ensure a submission is going into the correct category (rather than being rejected outright which is the practice at CPRS National)

Special Awards

- Each society's special or major awards are unique to themselves.
- Every society and/or organization requires nominations for the special awards, they are judged independently from the regular awards, and the organization can choose not to issue an award if no merits the award.
- Many awards are based on historical legacy and are named for individuals who significantly contributed to the organization.
- Recipients of special awards must belong to the association- this holds true for CPRS, IABC and PRSA. This can result in the perception that it is the same people always winning a special award.

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- A greater education/marketing thrust on the special awards should be undertaken to ensure more individuals are nominated and not the same cast of characters year over year.

b) Environmental Scan (in-depth)

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

	PINNA CLES	CPRS NATIONAL	TORONT O ACE	IABC GOLD QUILL¹	IABC SILVER LEAF	PRSA SILVER ANVIL	PRSA BRONZ E ANVIL
# CATEG ORIES²	Comms Programs – 9 ³ Comms Projects - 6	Comms Programs – 9 Comms Projects - 7	12 ⁴	4 Divisions 1. Comms management – 18 2. Comms research management – 23 3. Comms training & education – 2 4. Comms skills - 7	4 Divisions 1. Comms management – 23 2. Comms research management – 6 3. Comms training & education – 5 4. Comms skills - 12	13	26
COST TO ENTER	\$50 per award \$25 student	\$250 per award \$50 discount if work also submitted to local society	Early bird: Member \$100 Non-member \$130 Student \$25	Early bird: ⁵ Member \$275 Non-member \$375 Student \$25	Early bird: Member \$125 Non-member \$175 Student \$25	Member \$325 Non-member \$425 Additional \$200 if late	Member \$225 Non-member \$325 Additional \$100 if late

¹ IABC offers assistance to ensure submissions go to right category therefore no submissions are dismissed

² Full list of categories in Appendix A

³ Includes one student award

⁴ Multiple divisions between agency awards and non-agency awards

⁵ All US dollars

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			<p>Student non-member \$40</p> <p>Deadline: Member \$130 Non-member \$155 Student \$40 Student non-member \$55</p>	<p>Student non-member \$60</p> <p>Deadline Member \$350 Non-member \$450 Student \$40 Student non-member \$75</p> <p>Late: Member \$450 Non-member \$550 Student \$50 Student non-member \$90</p>	<p>Deadline : Member \$150 Non-member \$200 Student \$35</p>		
# PAGES/ FONT	Not on web site	3 pages + cover page 10 pt. font minimum Only 3 attachments per submission and not to exceed 50 pages	2 pages 10"font minimum No limit on supporting documentation Maximum of 4 pdfs in supporting documentation	Divisions 1-3: 4pages 10" font minimum Division 4 Entry Form No more than 100 pages in supporting documentation	Divisions 1-3: 4pages 10" font minimum Division 4 Entry Form No more than 100 pages in supporting documentation	100 word description + 2 page summary No more than 225 pages in supporting documentation 10" font	100 word description + 1 page summary 10" font
JUDGING & AWARDS	One winner - 85%	Gold- 85% Silver – 75% - 85% Bronze 75%	Gold – 90-100 Silver – 80-89%	Scale of 7 Award of merit –	Scale of 7 Award of merit –	Select one silver anvil	Select one bronze anvil per

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	or above	No winner if not above 75	Bronze – 75-79%	5.25-5.74 Award of excellence 5.75+ Multiple awards given	5.12-5.49 Award of excellence 5.5+ Multiple awards given	and 3 awards of excellence per category (subjective)	category plus up to 3 possible runners up who receive a Bronze Anvil award of commendation
OTHER RULES	Only open to members No limit to # categories Must follow RACE Work returned	Use of Media Rating Points encouraged Limit of two categories per submission Marks reduced if don't use RACE formula Comms program evaluated on RACE Comms projects on need/goals/execution /results/overall work plan Only e-submissions accepted Work not returned	Open to everyone Must refer to RACE No limit to # categories Only e-submissions accepted Work not returned	No restrictions on categories but each submission must be tailored to specific category Consultants must receive permission from client to enter Open to everyone No specific reference to RACE Only e-submissions accepted Work not returned Book of winning submissions	No restrictions on categories but each submission must be tailored to specific category Consultants must receive permission from client to enter Open to everyone No specific reference to RACE Only e-submissions accepted Work not returned	No restrictions on number of categories Based on RACE Only e-submissions accepted Work not returned	Based on tactical excellence No restrictions on number of categories Only e-submissions accepted Work not returned

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Appendix A

List of Categories

	PINNACLE S	CPRS NATIONAL	TORONTO ACE AWARDS	IABC GOLD QUILL	IABC SILVER LEAF (CANADA)	PRSA SILVER ANVIL	PRSA BRONZE ANVIL
	Communication Programs 1. External Communications a. Communications Management b. Product or Initiative Campaign c. Community Relations d. Corporate Identity e. Media Relations f. Issues/Crisis Management g. Government Relations 2. Internal Communications 3. Student Award	Communications Programs 1. External Communications a. Marketing Communications Campaign of the Year b. Community Relations c. Canadian Advocacy and Social Marketing Campaign d. Media Relations i. Agency ii. Non-Agency e. Issues Management/Crisis f. Government Relations g. Health Care Campaign	Marketing Communications Campaign of the Year Brand Development Campaign of the Year Employee Engagement/Internal Communications Campaign of the Year Community Relations Campaign of the Year Government Relations Campaign of the Year Investor/Financial Relations Campaign of the Year Crisis or Issues Management Campaign of the Year	1. Communications Management a. Internal communications b. Employee Engagement c. HR + benefits d. Change e. Safety f. Leadership g. Marketing, advertising + brand comm	1. Communications Management a. Internal Communications b. Employee Engagement c. HR + benefits d. Change e. Safety f. Leadership g. Marketing h. Customer relations i. Media relations j. Community Relations k. Government Relations l. Financial m. Issues/Crisis	Community Relations Crisis Communications Events + Observances Global Communications Integrated Communications Internal Communications Investor Relations Issues Management Marketing Multicultural Public Relations Public Affairs	Advertisorials Annual Reports Blogger Blogs Brochures Creative Tactics Direct Mail/Direct Response Editorial/op-ed Feature Stories Magazine Media Relations

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<p>Communication Projects</p> <p>a. Special Events b. Audio Visual Projects c. Print Projects d. Electronic/Interactive Projects e. Writing f. Creative</p>	<p>2. Internal Communications</p> <p>Communications Projects</p> <p>a. Special Events b. Multi media c. Electronic + Social Media d. Writing e. Internal Publication (print or electronic) f. Annual Report (print or electronic) g. External Publication (print or electronic)</p>	<p>Best use of Media Relations</p> <p>≥50k</p> <p>≤50k</p> <p>Best use of Special Events</p> <p>Best Digital Communications Campaign of the Year</p> <p>Student PR Comms Plan of the Year</p>	<p>unications</p> <p>h. Customer relations</p> <p>i. Media relations</p> <p>j. Community Relations</p> <p>k. Government Relations</p> <p>l. Financial communications</p> <p>m. Issues/Crisis</p> <p>n. Corporate Social Responsibility</p> <p>o. Social media</p> <p>p. Communications Management – Student entry</p> <p>q. Government communications programs</p> <p>r. Non-profit campaigns</p>	<p>n. Corporate Social Responsibility</p> <p>o. Social media</p> <p>p. Communications Management – Student entry</p> <p>q. Government communications programs</p> <p>r. Non-profit campaigns</p> <p>s. Advertising</p> <p>t. Brand</p> <p>u. Advocacy</p> <p>v. International</p> <p>w. Multi-audience</p> <p>2 Communications Research Management</p> <p>a. Internal Communication Research</p> <p>b. Internal Communications Measurement</p> <p>c. External Communication Research</p> <p>d. External Communication Measurement</p> <p>e. Research Innovation</p>	<p>Public Service</p> <p>Reputation brand management</p>	<p>Newsletters</p> <p>On-line video</p> <p>Press Conference</p> <p>Press kits</p> <p>PSA</p> <p>Publications</p> <p>Research + Evaluation</p> <p>Satellite media tours</p> <p>Smart phone tablet applications</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>Speeches</p> <p>Video programs</p> <p>Webcasts</p> <p>Websites</p>
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				<p>2. Communications Research Management</p> <p>a. Communications Research</p> <p>b. Communications Research Student Entry</p> <p>3. Communications Training + Education</p> <p>a. Communications Training + Education program</p> <p>b. Communications Training + Education Student Entry</p> <p>4. Communication Skills</p> <p>a. Special Events</p> <p>b. Digital</p> <p>c. Audio Visual</p> <p>d. Publications</p> <p>e. Writing</p>	<p>f. Communication Research Student Entry</p> <p>3 Communications Training + Education</p> <p>a. Internal Communications Training</p> <p>b. External Communications Training</p> <p>c. Institutional Communications</p> <p>d. Communications Education Tool</p> <p>e. Communications Training + Education Student Entry</p> <p>4. Communication Skills</p> <p>a. Digital Communication Vehicles</p> <p>b. Digital Commu</p>	<p>Word of Mouth</p>
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Communication Skills Student Entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> nication Channels c. Audio Visual d. Publications e. Publication Design f. Other Graphic Design g. Special Events Internal h. Special Events External i. Photography in a Communication Vehicle j. Marketing, Advertising, Sales Vehicles k. Public Service Announcements l. Writing 		

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

CPRS HAMILTON – SPECIAL AWARDS

The CPRS Hamilton Special Awards are coveted public relations honours. Special Awards are nominated by peers. These awards recognize exceptional involvement in the profession. Both the nominee and the nominator must be CPRS Hamilton members in good standing unless otherwise specified. Due the stringent criteria, some Special Awards may not be awarded annually.

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- Five special awards including student award, award of excellence, mentor award
- Three special awards are in honour of legacy figures from CPRS Hamilton – Bill Cockman, Bob Deans, Louis J Cahill
- Evaluated by Board based on submission

CPRS NATIONAL – MAJOR AWARDS

The CPRS Major Awards are Canada's most coveted public relations honours for individuals and Member Societies. Unlike the National Awards of Excellence, where you submit your own work, Major Awards candidates are nominated by peers. These awards recognize exceptional involvement in the profession. Both nominee and nominator must be CPRS members in good standing. Note: Due to the stringent criteria, some Major Awards may not be awarded annually. No entry fees are required.

- 11 Major Awards – including Local Society Recognition
- Principally nomination based
- Nomination for Student Award of Excellence must include proof of enrollment
- Philip Novikoff & Don Rennie – cash awards
- Nominations are judged by the Presiding Officer, Awards Committee in consultation with the National President

TORONTO LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The CPRS Toronto Leadership Awards recognizes individuals in Public Relations who have achieved excellence in their careers or made significant contributions to the field of public relations. The Leadership Awards are presented at the ACE Awards Gala. Nominations are free of charge.

- There are four Leadership Awards: PR Student of the Year (self-nominated or nominated with resume and endorsement) Young Professional of the Year (under 30 years old, nominated or self-nominated), PR Professional of the Year (nominated or self-nominated, needs two references from clients or employees), Mentor of the Year (testimonials needed from mentees, must be nominated)
- There is also a CPRS Toronto Volunteer of the Year Award (must be nominated and list CPRS committees involved with)
- CPRS Toronto holds a separate CEO of the Year Award

Other CPRS Society Awards:

Manitoba – Communicator of the Year

Nova Scotia – Communicator of the Year

IABC BEST OF THE BEST AWARDS

Recommended by evaluators and reviewed by the Gold Quill Awards chair, vice chair and past chair, the Best of the Best winners represented the very best entries seen across the globe. Best of the Best winners receive special recognition and a special trophy at the IABC Gold Quill Gala. Specific Awards are:

Jake Whittmer Award : Presented to the entry that shows outstanding research that was commissioned or developed by a communicator and was instrumental in ensuring the success of a communication program.

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Business Issue Award: Presented to an entry that addresses a critical business issue that threatened the well-being or viability of an organization and shows strategic involvement while presenting and effective, innovative resolution with measureable results.

Sharon Berzok Student Award: Presented to the student achieving the highest standard of communication excellence in the student categories. The winning entrant will receive a US\$500 scholarship to use for professional development, education or training.

IABC Gold Quill Team or Agency of the Year Awards: The “of the Year” special awards, first introduced in 2015, highlight the highest-scored entries in the program submitted by an agency or organization. The awards are evaluated based on the number of winning submissions from a particular entrant. These include: Boutique Agency of the Year (five or fewer employees); Small Agency of the Year (six to 20 employees); Mid-Size Agency of the Year (21-50 employees); Large Agency of the Year (51 or more employees); Corporate Communication Department of the Year; Not-for-Profit Communication Department of the Year

IABC CANADA

The IABC Canada Master Communicator Award (MC) is a lifetime achievement award and is the highest honor IABC Canada can bestow on an individual member. The Award recognizes outstanding Canadian communicators whose work has brought credit to IABC, the profession, their organization or clients, and whose contributions have raised the standards of organizational communication in Canada. To be considered for selection, a nominee must be a member of IABC, a resident of Canada, and either accredited or certified by IABC. The following are not eligible for nomination:

- Current members of a regional board
- Members of the IABC international board within the past two years, and
- Current IABC staff members (local, regional or international)

The selection committee consists of six Master Communicators, including the past chair, the chair and two representatives from each region.

PRSA

PRSA has six individual awards, the most prestigious being the Gold Anvil. Individual awards are based on nominations. Nominees must be members of PRSA.

The Gold Anvil is the Society’s highest Individual Award. It is considered to be PRSA’s lifetime achievement award and is presented to a public relations practitioner who is a PRSA member and whose accomplishments have made a major contribution to the profession.

The remaining individual awards include public relations Professional of the Year; Outstanding Educator of the Year; the Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA; the Paul M. Lund Public Service Award (for volunteerism) and the Atlas Award for Lifetime Achievement in International Public Relations.

PRSA also has section awards. PRSA recognizes practitioners not only for their outstanding contributions to the public relations profession, but also for the expertise they provide to the specific industries in which they work. There are four section awards. Two are presented by the Educators Academy: 1) the David Ferguson Award for Outstanding Contributions to Public Relations Education by a Practitioner and the Betsy Plank Graduate Research Competition and PRSA Top Faculty Paper Awards. One is presented by the Public Affairs & Government Section: the Lloyd B. Dennis Distinguished Leadership Award for individuals who have used their public affairs skills to promote

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truth, demonstrated high standards of integrity and honesty in business dealings and helped affect positive change within an organization. The last section award is presented by the Technology Section for the Technology PR Professional of the Year Award.

C. One-on-one interviews – M. Gregory and C. Janzen

Interview in lieu of Focus Group – with Mark Gregory November 17, 2016

General thoughts on the program

- I've been co-chair of Pinnacles and have worked on the program-side with a partner who did the Gala – also been a judge on IABC program
- I'm convinced that awards programs that value excellence is a great way to learn – need to ID – what was the problem? How did you address it?
- It's important that CPRS Hamilton offer an awards program – I've heard colleagues express support for Pinnacles
- Does the process need to evolve? Does the program reflect current reality? Today, PR practitioners engage, persuade and build trust
- The role of the PR practitioner has changed – need to now engage others in building trust and reputations – traditionally we did print brochures – but today we do experiential marketing – and select preferred channels thru which people want to experience things
- Program needs to reflect those changing – more contemporary roles
- I've asked myself why I haven't applied and it's because I sign confidentiality agreements with my clients and clients wouldn't agree to let me share info that the program needs to be confidential
- Maybe a small focus group could look at ways that make it possible to have submissions that don't require confidential info or it's not attributed
- CPRS Hamilton board is looking how to increase value to members – Pinnacles can be one of the vehicles for increasing value of membership

Changes to program

- Digital – social media is only one aspect of digital; important to think of categories that are more concise e.g. website – how you use it now; use of new technologies like augmented reality; use of mobile to communicate and engage which is different than traditional channels
- Need better operations of program – clear and easy to complete submission that is compelling
- Provide resources to support members e.g. what's needed for success; do a better job of reaching out to submitters and give them constructive feedback on their submissions so even if they lose, they still get value
- Communicate early – need to give time to think about Pinnacles – here are the tools and give them lots of time to prepare
- For winners, recognize excellence – do more on this e.g. ask National to share the story with other chapters of our members who are doing excellent communications work
- Can also do more locally and in Ontario e.g. profile our winners and case studies on our website

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- Also reach out to winners' organizations e.g. send out a thoughtful letter to the more senior members of the organization – you have a winner – congratulate them on supporting communications excellence

Interview in lieu of Focus Group – with Cynthia Jansen October 28, 2016

Hellingman years

- I was on the original Pinnacles Committee with Trisha Hellingman and Erin
- Used to enter every year – liked the process of doing entries – not only was it a good exercise of 'taking stock' and understanding what you did, it also gave us the discipline to archive the work so we could access it later for our submission
- In the early days, I also liked the competition – but over time organization won most of the categories and we lost interest – our friends also stopped entering so that also made it less fun
- The challenge there was that clients didn't want to pay for evaluation so it was difficult to enter with the RACE formula being so prominent – we didn't fit as well sometimes – we thought there was too much focus on RACE – we had a few projects that were super successful that Trish led that positively impacted important issues and improved communications affecting aboriginal land claims and yet because we didn't have an opinion survey at the end, it didn't convince the judges – we stopped entering when we felt that the judges hadn't read the submission properly
- We felt it was too much emphasis on theory – for us when I was part of an agency
- Also clients didn't want us sharing all those details – weren't comfortable
- We also had one time when the client refused to set a budget and we had to create it as we went, spending money with the client's okay along the way – the project was rejected for no budget yet this was a huge project with amazing results

Current Experience at HHS

- I've been here 2 years - I oversee a team and we could enter this year but we were so busy – I wanted to enter something but we ran out of time and people to prepare the submission
- Now it seems to be mostly a student competition – I figure "let the younger ones compete now" – it doesn't matter to me at this point in my career – I don't need to win awards
- We got out of the habit of it but maybe amongst friends people need to commit to applying – "we're all going to do it this year"

Categories

- I checked off the categories I thought made sense to me and my team – the graphics design related ones don't relate

Image and Marketing

- Time for a rebrand – maybe a new name? Whole new identity?
- First, **you need to identify what the board wants the program to "do"** – focus on purpose here
- I was on the original Pinnacles committee that launched the program 25 years ago – could you divide it up – senior awards; junior awards; category for independents? Category for agencies?
- We need to go after businesses – we need to look like the utmost professionals – there was a typo on the Pinnacles brochure a few years ago – not acceptable – we can't send that – why don't they apply?

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- CPRS Hamilton does a good job of getting the word out about the Pinnacles and sending lots of reminders
- Do board members enter? Maybe give them a challenge to enter themselves for the next time. “We’re entering – how about you?” – egg each other on

Gala

- would prefer a business rather than gala event
- Would like to see it change – it’s awkward – your name is in the program and you don’t win – you’re kind of a loser -- too much win/loose – if I knew I was a winner, I would invite people to come – to join a sort of “winners’ circle” – maybe the losers wouldn’t come though

Timing of program

- Change timing for the program – offer it in the fall – everyone is too busy in the spring – it’s brutal at HHS

D. Debrief meeting from 2016 Pinnacles

July 2016
Daryl, Michelle & Ginny
Debrief on 2016 Pinnacles Program

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1. **Revamp the web content, top to bottom** - There is a lack of information, and what is there can be tough to find. We recommend creating a few PDFs that guide applicants through the process. Get rid of the weird drop down menus, make things easier to find and provide a FAQ (style, format, word count, etc.)
2. **Supply winning samples online** - Provide a few example submission of winning entries
3. **Model the Pinnacles after the national awards more closely** - Use the National Awards of Excellence as a template and follow it more closely e.g. same # of pages for submission; consider same categories, etc.. It may help raise the number of entries if we market the Pinnacles as a “testing” ground for the more senior awards. The consistency will also make it easier for members to apply for both. You can then market the fact that you can prepare 1 submission and submit to 2 awards (Pinnacles & National)
4. **Bring back awards of merit, or consider a gold, silver and bronze, similar to the national program.** There is a certain amount of subjectivity in public relations and a project that earns a 75% or above should get something. It will also help boost attendance.
5. **Revamp student awards program to make it winnable** - As it stands right now, we don’t believe a student is capable of winning a Pinnacle. The post-grad PR programs

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focus too much on tactics and not enough theory, which leads to only a rudimentary understanding of RACE and therefore poor submissions. There's a poor application of the RACE formula – especially Sheridan (research & evaluation) – Mohawk's submissions were stronger. Note: some missing the budget. Need education on how to submit a winning project. *(Note from Daryl: I would be happy to sit on a subcommittee that helps to develop this.)*

6. **Cost of dinner ticket** – not everyone can afford between \$90 and \$120 for a dinner ticket. Or perhaps we let winners know in advance they have won. We were asked this and it may have changed the outcome of who attended. More winners = more attendees. Maybe consider a cocktail event with cruising tables at a cheaper price or a name speaker for \$90.
7. **While there needs to be two co-chairs, there should have been a committee to help plan the actual event** - Maybe volunteers from the general membership? They could have helped write speaking notes, promote the event? etc. Or ask the Co-Presidents to prepare their sections of the script.
8. **Get the call for submissions out earlier in the year** – Michelle and I fell down on this – need to begin marketing earlier. Need a critical path of key dates.
9. **Get started early** - Planning needs to begin early in the fall (venue booked, judges lined up, web page ready to go by January, etc.). Michelle is working on a checklist that will help whoever is taking on the role. I will put it together with a copy of all the files needed.
10. **More direct outreach to the private sector** - Ginny commented, and I agree with her, that the private sector consulting firms we have in our membership are not terribly sophisticated with it comes to PR excellence (as CPRS would define it). We may need to create some categories that they *can* win (but the submission can't be a sales pitch)
11. **Working with the communication's co-chairs** – Need a Communications Strategy with plan of what vehicles & what messages need to go and when. Pinnacle Co-chairs need to work closely with Communications team to develop a promo plan (scheduled tweets, email reminders, mailed brochure, and web update). This didn't happen this year and so the promotion of the awards was all over the map and often times reactive. There also needs to be a plan to promote ticket sales for the awards gala.
12. **Coordination of finances** - Needs to be better coordination for payment of trophies and other materials. What happened this year with credit card not working, and almost not having the cheque book for the event was very stressful.
13. **Gmail account** - Pinnacle Gmail account needs to be checked daily and timely responses given (We have the login and password and will be able to share with the new Co-chairs).
14. **Purpose of the awards** - We think the board needs to have discussion regarding the purpose of the awards. Is it just to mark the best projects that bothered to submit

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samples? Is to make money? Is it to try and build bridges with students and the private sector? This may help guide the 2017 program – Consider doing research – understand ‘ what would it take to get you to submit’?

15. **Co-chairs having to purchase tickets** - Pinnacle Co-chairs should not have to pay for attending gala as attendance is required as part of the volunteer role; at the very least, they only need to pay for the cost of the dinner. To our knowledge, there is no other board position that requires its co-chairs to spend money out of pocket. **Note: All** board members need to attend – shows leadership & support for Pinnacle Co-Chairs.
16. **Advance notice:** Consider telling winners in advance so they attend.
17. **Judging day:** Ensure Pinnacle Co-Chair (at least one) attends the judging day – very helpful to understand the process & comments from the judges & judge co-ordinator.
18. **Limit # of submissions** – 3 tops.
19. **Paid and earned coverage** - Either purchase an ad to promote the program & the gala in the Spectator or ask for space – consider other paid ads, too – need budget for this

E. Environmental scan meeting November 20, 2016

CPRS PINNACLE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION POINTS – DEBRIEF Nov 20, 2016
Carleen Carroll, Janine Ivings, Deborah McIvor, Ginny Jones

Program & Categories		Comment initiated by:
Award Categories	Update relevance of categories (similar National or Toronto ACE - agencies, independents, relating to budget)	Survey, Janine
	Revamp student award - only learning RACE, need to create criteria that will fit the level of their work	Ginny
	Could offer 'PR Campaign of the Year" or another but only 1 non-member award if at all	Carleen
	Digital marketing category needs to be added, comprehensive, social, web, video, blogs - <i>Janine to conduct environmental scan on this category</i> Ask Daryl to work at Student Awards	Mark
Award Levels	Consider multiple levels per category: Gold, Silver, Bronze (could name "Gold Pinnacle Award of Excellence") vs. Award of Excellence and Award of Merit	Group
	Could do an overall Award of Excellence in addition	Janine

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	<p>Gold: 85%+ Silver: 80%+ Bronze: 75%+ (state a minimum, % for consideration, not a restriction on the top of range)</p> <p>Gold Pinnacle Awards of Excellence</p> <p>Silver Pinnacle</p> <p>Bronze Pinnacle</p>	Group
Checklist	<p>Organizational tools including critical path, templates, etc.</p> <p>Include submission checklist</p> <p>Same number of Pages as Nat'l</p> <p>3 pages and coverage; 10 pt. min, only 3 attachments, not exceed 50 pages</p>	Michelle/Daryl
Finances	<p>Work with treasurer to coordinate payments for planning expense</p>	Ginny
Google Archive	<p>Save key files in Google Drive for pinnacleshamilton@gmail.com (pswd: pinnacles2017)</p>	Carleen
Judging/Grading	<p>Use RACE in rubric</p> <p>If a submission wins national, how can it not qualify to win locally?</p> <p>Where the judges are from, is that impacting?</p> <p>Recommend: Hamilton members not eligible to judge</p> <p>Ensure judges are thorough in application reviews, reading whole document, use rubric</p>	<p>Group</p> <p>Carleen</p> <p>Carleen</p> <p>Carleen</p>
Mentors	<p>Pinnacles co-chair (at least one) could attend judging day</p> <p>Volunteers to help applicants understand categories, submission questions, technical support with online process etc. (<i>i.e. Carleen willing to participate</i>)</p> <p>Have awards support mentor - can call / send awards to ensure it's in correct category - Do I have got everything in here.</p>	<p>Michelle/Daryl</p> <p>Carleen, Janine</p>
Recruit volunteers	<p>Sub-committee to help plan/organize program and event</p>	Michelle/Daryl
Research & Plan	<p>Focus group with members as a sign off to what we finally decide to do</p>	Ginny
Revamp Website	<p>Clear description of application process, instructional video, tip sheets, samples</p>	Janine
Submission	<p>Limit to 2 applications per project, incentive could be reduced cost of ticket for those who have paid/submitted</p> <p>Clear process, easy to submit, provide feedback to submitters (as a benefit of participation)</p> <p>Create a checklist in application process: 10 pt min font, 3 pages + cover, 3</p>	<p>Key Learnings</p> <p>Mark</p> <p>Ginny, Carleen</p>

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	attachments/appendices which do not exceed 50 pages total	
	Keep rate @ \$50 per award, \$35 early-bird rate, \$25 for student/recent graduate entry (to one category)	See Key Learnings from Environmental Scan Carleen
Cost to submit	If submit locally, \$50 rebate off applying to national awards, if non-member category then charge higher fee to apply (\$75)	
Winners	Encourage winners to submit to national, encourage and empower to give back Ask winners to do webinars, coach future applicants	Janine
Marketing		
Advertising	Social media, Facebook ads, free ads,	Carleen, Deborah Ginny
	Provide URL to 'gala' info web page on submission form	
Branding	Refreshing after 25 years	
Communications	Work with comms co-chairs, Gmail account, national e-newsletter, save the date, Send out Save the Date for Gala / early bird Post gala - send congratulations to organizations communicating the win Promote pinnacleshamilton@gmail.com as support and inquiry line Use local channels to raise awareness (i.e. Hamilton HIVE, Hamilton HYP0 Develop strong communications around the ranking/grading and the value of the award levels per category (including feedback letters) National - Save the date e-newsletter Provide Gala link on submission page Use local channels to raise awareness (i.e. Hamilton HIVE, Hamilton HYP0	Mark Deborah Survey Carleen
Outreach	Private sector/agencies, beyond Hamilton borders to Waterloo, Halton, Niagara, IABC groups - \$75 nonmember fee per submission	Deborah, Janine
Social Strategy	New Pinnacles FB group, tweet live, FB live, Sheridan students could do video as a project	Deborah, Janine
Timeline	Adjust cycle to fall awards submission, winter event (recommend mid to late-Sept 'early bird', Oct deadline, late Jan/early Feb awards event) Keep rate at \$35 (September 21st), \$50 (Sept. 30) New student rate \$25 includes grads current and recent.	Group
	Include IABC members eligible Pay \$75	
Winners	Inform if one of top three to encourage attendance	

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	Give more profile to winners on website/social	Ginny, Mark
Gala		
Cost	Ticket cost, is it reasonable amount for event? Do those who have applied get a reduced ticket?	Michelle/Daryl
	CPRS board members who are required to be there - will set precedent for event planners running all events - clear with board	Michelle/Daryl, Deborah/Janine
	Sponsorship opportunities, In-kind prizes donated secure Sponsorship	Ginny, Janine
	Are their possible incentives for submitting e.g. \$50 off conference	
	Consider business rather than formal event	Cynthia
	Reduced for submitters and Special Award winners e.g. \$10 off	
	Consider free tickets for co-chairs	
	Advise winners to attend (top 3) So they can invite family and friends.	
	Consider Jan 2017 event	
Exciting features	Twitter wall, Facebook LIVE, etc.	Group
MC/Keynote	Relevant speaker (to PR industry), engaging Select MC/Speaker with Connection to PR.	Survey
Venue	TBD, fun and accessible vs. posh gala, consider keynote vs. MC,	Group
Judging		
	No Hamilton judges	
	Co-chairs to attend Judging Meeting	
	Ask judges to read thoroughly	
	Continue practice of co-chairs not allowed to submit.	
<u>NOTES</u>	<i>In all decision-making, keep in mind the scope of the awards program is based on CPRS Hamilton membership size (100 est.) Comments in the above list are loosely attributed to provide an overview.</i>	

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F. Pinnacle Awards Checklist

Important: This suggested timeline is based on the activities required for a mid-November submission deadline and an early-February event.

October-February

- Set strategic goal
- Recruit volunteers to assist in planning and event logistics
- Develop Sponsorship Package
- Review and enhance website
- Review awards categories and criteria
- Launch Special Awards

March

- Develop draft budget
- Draft board report (include draft budget)
- Recommend a venue location(s) and select event date at the April board meeting
- Begin to consider Pinnacle Awards event theme (will influence design of promotional materials and venue set up (colour choices))
- Send out sponsorship package
- Source possible guest speaker, master of ceremonies, and photographer for Pinnacle Awards event
- Source and compile a spreadsheet outlining venue options (information and pricing) and possible event dates for Pinnacle Awards event

April

- Draft board report
- Finalize venue for Pinnacle Awards event (sign contract and provide deposit); recommend site visit
- Follow up on sponsorship package
- Recommend a guest speaker and master of ceremonies at the April board meeting

May

- Draft board report
- Connect with designer and printer about brochure, poster, gala posters, and gala program timelines
- Develop brochure and poster content
- Education sessions
- Host AGM and Special Awards evening

June

- Draft board report

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- Meet with communications to develop communications plan to promote Pinnacle Awards (submissions) and awards event
- Send Pinnacle Awards brochure and poster content to designer
- Send artwork files to printer
- Discuss online submission function; ensure online entry system is ready for September 1
- Update web content, award categories, etc.
- Discuss Pinnacle Awards event ticket prices at January board meeting
- Work with communications to mail out Pinnacle Awards brochure to all members; at February board meeting provide posters and extra brochures to Board members to hand deliver to businesses/post-secondary institutions
- Work with communications to implement communication plan (print and electronic promotions/social media campaign)

July-August Summer Break

September-November

- Draft board report
- Call for entries: online portal opens September; deadline for entries mid-November
- Online ticket sales being (work with communications); choose an end date based on caterer requirements
- Communications plan implementation well underway (schedule eblasts and social media messages)
- Work with communications to promote event ticket sales
- Source Pinnacle Awards (trophy) vendor (pricing and design)
- Send out notice to CPRS Hamilton president about speaking remarks for Pinnacle Awards gala program
- Develop Winner Recognition Program
- Develop draft content, sponsor ads, etc. for event program

December-January

- Draft board report
- Finalize content for event program; source sponsor logos; send content to designer (allow time for proofing); send artwork to printer (allow time for printing and delivery)
- Order awards (physical trophy) for Pinnacle Awards including Special Awards
- Develop speaking notes for event master of ceremonies
- Finalize dinner numbers (meal type) with caterer
- Finalize guest list – print table cards

February

- Draft board report
- Pinnacle Awards event

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- Draft media release announcing Pinnacle Awards winners; issue approved media release
- Send Pinnacle Awards gala photos to communications for posting on web
- Coaching for National awards
- Draft report for CPRS Hamilton Annual Report
- Launch winner recognition program

March

- Draft board report
- Finalize budget actuals
- Post-mortem and evaluation