

How to Win a Big Apple Award

2018 UPDATE

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Prepare

- ▶ Read the entire entry kit before you begin.
 - ▶ Utilize the [NEED TO KNOW FOR 2018](#) page on the entry website for key points and a summary of all that's new for this year.
- ▶ Review all the category descriptions carefully.
 - ▶ The scopes of several categories have been expanded and may provide new opportunities for entry.
 - ▶ Make strategic choices about where your entry may be strongest.
- ▶ If a tactic or tool used to support one of your campaigns was especially strong, consider submitting that work independently as an entrant in the **Spotlight Awards**.



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Prepare

- ▶ Understand the “Four Pillars” criteria for a winning entry.
- ▶ Read the technical requirements so that you can gather all the necessary information before you begin your online submission.
- ▶ Leave yourself enough time for edits and revisions.
- ▶ If the summary information you provide is not compelling, it’s unlikely judges will look at the support material.
 - ▶ Support materials are tie-breakers.

TIP: If you’ve also entered the PRSA Silver Anvil Awards, the Big Apple Awards entry process is closely aligned. You may already have everything you need for a Big Apple entry.



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Writing The Entry

- ▶ Imagine you are a judge.
- ▶ Tell a good story! Avoid jargon.
 - ▶ Not all judges are from the *agency* world.
- ▶ How did the work help the client achieve his / her objectives?
- ▶ Contextualize information. Make sure gaps of understanding are filled. Don't leave the judges wondering!
- ▶ Media impressions are not the **ONLY** indication of success.
Your 400 million impressions may not trump a competitor's 500 million impressions, but the quality and achievements of your program will.



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Writing The Entry (continued)

- ▶ Write in the active voice with relevant adjectives:
“We worked tirelessly to secure top-tier media coverage.”
NOT: “Top-tier media coverage was secured through our tireless efforts.”
- ▶ Try to use “coverage” or “awareness” instead of “hits” and “placements” (You can’t “place” something in *The New York Times*).
- ▶ Proofread! Be consistent in language and word usage.
 - ▶ EXAMPLE: kick off (verb), kick-off (compound adjective) and kickoff (noun).



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Awards: Sections to Develop

- ▶ Overview
- ▶ Research / Situation Analysis
- ▶ Planning
- ▶ Execution
- ▶ Results / Evaluation



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Overview

- ▶ Engage the readers' attention.
- ▶ Tell a good story from the start.
- ▶ Help readers understand the overall goals and what the campaign or project was to accomplish.
- ▶ Make it easy to see why this entry deserves an award.
- ▶ Be concise.

TIP: The Big Apple Overview section provides for a 100-word synopsis of key objectives, tactics and results. Think of this as the 'elevator speech' where you convince the judges of your winning entry.



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Research / Situation Analysis

- ▶ Introduce the problem or opportunity, impacting factors, and how your research and analysis were integrated into the program.
 - ▶ Was any original research undertaken to achieve desired results?
 - ▶ If research was secondary, how did you go about analyzing and aggregating it to enhance program strategy?
 - ▶ How thorough and relevant was the research to overall, planning, audience identification?
 - ▶ Did the research uncover a unique insight, clear need or opportunity?
 - ▶ What role did research play in creating a process by which to gauge the program's success?



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Planning

- ▶ Did your plan clearly define goals and objectives?
- ▶ Was your plan thorough?
- ▶ How well did the objectives for this campaign or project support the organization's overall goals?
- ▶ Did the strategy reflect research findings and support objectives?
- ▶ How original was the strategy?
- ▶ What was the innovative thinking involved?
- ▶ What evaluation criteria did you establish?



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Execution

- ▶ How appropriate were the tactics to achieving objectives and executing strategy?
- ▶ How creative were the tactics?
- ▶ How well were the tactics implemented?
- ▶ How integrated were the tools with one another?
- ▶ How efficient was the execution of the tactics in relation to resources (personnel and budget)?

TIP: Be sure to define the campaign/program market and confirm that the New York Metro area geographic criteria (development and/or execution) is met for your entry.



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Results / Evaluation

- ▶ How successful was the program in achieving its objectives?
- ▶ Describe how you measured and evaluated results against objectives.
- ▶ Be sure to look beyond media impressions.
- ▶ If awareness was the objective, contextualize media coverage in terms of audiences and messages.
- ▶ Did the results clearly reflect original strategy and planning?

TIP: Be sure to highlight direct business outcomes such as helping secure new customer or business leads, increasing sales, or other broad goals that were met.



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Budgets

- ▶ The Big Apple Awards do require budget information in the online form.
 - ▶ Though entries are not confidential overall, requests for budget confidentiality are absolutely respected.
 - ▶ Remember, elements contained in the budget must be indicated in the online form
- ▶ Each of the campaign award categories includes a subcategory for smaller budgets (\$150K or less).
 - ▶ Judges will recognize the creative use of a limited budget.
- ▶ In support materials, you may want to add a one-page budget statement with relevant costs broken out.



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Tips from Big Apple Judges (e.g., Mistakes to Avoid)



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MISTAKE #1

It's the Weight that Counts

TIPS

- ▶ Engage the judges with your summary. Paint the forest, not the trees. Don't sell them on comprehensiveness in the overview section ... make them want to read further to learn more about your award-worthy work.
- ▶ Focus on your strategy and how it related to research and achieved objectives.



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MISTAKE #2

It's Disjointed. Nothing Works Together

TIPS

- ▶ Tell a good story, have a great narrative, not a list of tasks.
- ▶ Describe the extraordinary or unique challenges overcome.
- ▶ Show how research identified a need and how you addressed that need.
- ▶ Illustrate why and how your tactics supported the strategy.
- ▶ Demonstrate how your results connect to research and objectives.



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MISTAKE #3

PR is not Just Impressions

TIPS

- ▶ Judges are looking for the program's impact, not just tactics.
- ▶ Judges want to understand how the work helped accomplish the client's objectives; they want to evaluate what all the work achieved.
- ▶ Publicity is a tactic, not a result.
- ▶ Judges consider SMTs, ANRs, mat releases, etc. as “paid” not “earned” media.



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MISTAKE #4

Don't Make Extravagant Claims

TIPS

- ▶ If there was a small ad budget and it did not play a factor, say so.
- ▶ If the ad budget was large, don't rely on sales or earnings to demonstrate the PR program success.



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MISTAKE #5

Don't Challenge/Confuse Judges

TIPS

- ▶ In the overview, briefly touch on each section of your entry.
- ▶ Support every major point in your summary with more detail in the subsequent sections.
- ▶ In the two-page summary document you upload with your entry, put the sections in the same order as your online submittal.



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MISTAKE #6

Don't Ignore the Rules

TIPS

- ▶ Carefully review the [NEED TO KNOW FOR 2018](#) guidance.
- ▶ Follow rules assiduously.
- ▶ If you have a question or need advise, don't hesitate to [contact the PRSA-NY staff or the 2018 Big Apple Awards Team.](#)



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Winning Thoughts

TIPS

- ▶ Study examples of previous award winners
 - ▶ **2017 Best of the Best**
[Padilla and Niagara Conservation for “#What the Flush: Disrupting the Water Conservation Conversation.”](#)
 - ▶ **2017 Best Business/Campaign Outcomes**
[The TASC Group and Life Sci Advisors for “Not an Exact Science: Advancing Gender Diversity in Biotech.”](#)
 - ▶ **2017 Best Use of Research, Measurement and Evaluation**
[Burson-Marsteller and Bank of America for “Bank of America: Research, Relationships and Resources for Small Businesses”](#)
- [The New York Institute of Technology for “NYIT: The Future Is Ours.”](#)



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Winning Thoughts

- ▶ Make a human connection.
- ▶ Be passionate about your entry.
- ▶ Submit textbook quality work.
- ▶ Show public relations process at work.
 - ▶ Winning campaigns must be rooted in sound PR methodologies.
- ▶ Package for easy reading; think about the individuals who will evaluate and judge your submission.
 - ▶ All judges are experienced public relations professionals who represent the broad spectrum of our industry across NYC. Not everyone will have an agency background.



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How to Win a Big Apple Award

- ▶ Questions? Feel free to contact me by e-mail:
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