

We know what it's like to spend weeks on a project, only for it to be buried in a pile of your professor's papers and never seen again. That's why PRSA Buffalo Niagara created the Student Excalibur Awards – so you finally have a place to showcase your hard work and PR prowess outside of the classroom. But the Student Excaliburs is more than just an opportunity to upload old schoolwork.

Winning an award helps you:

- Build your resume
- Get recognized within the PR community
- Make professional connections before you graduate
- Lead to a job opportunity

Bronze, silver and gold award winners will be honored Wednesday, June 27 at the Tralf Music Hall downtown. So, uncover your best work and send it our way.

HOW TO ENTER

Entries are accepted as either a campaign or tactic from **February 27, 2018 – May 18, 2018**. They should include a one- or two-page summary as indicated by the category plus any additional supporting material to strengthen and validate the summary. All entries must be submitted online prsabuffaloniagara.org/awards. If you have any questions about the Student Excaliburs, reach out to your professors, PRSSA leaders or awards@prsabuffaloniagara.org.

Please note: if you submit an entry as a professional, you may not submit an entry in the student category. All projects submitted for entry should have been at least partially completed during the Fall 2017/Spring 2018 semesters.

Steps:

1. Complete your one- or two-page summary by the criteria below
2. Gather materials to support your entry
3. Visit prsabuffaloniagara.org/awards to submit
4. Enter all personal, entry and payment information

Guidelines:

- Acceptable file formats: .pdf, .wmv, .wav, .mp4
- File size limit: 10 MB
- Consolidate as many documents as possible into a PDF
- You can submit up to three URLs

Images: Upload an image that represents your entry. This image may be featured in a presentation should your entry win. Acceptable file formats include: jpg, tif, eps, native Illustrator, Photoshop or hi-res PDF files. As a general rule of thumb, the artwork should be at least 1,000 pixels or more in either width or height.

Judging

Don't worry, we won't ask your teachers here. Entries will be judged by a group of local PR practitioners. Judges' decisions are final. Every entry will be judged on its own merit and not in comparison to others.

FEES & DEADLINES

Friday, May 18, 2018 at 5 p.m.

PRSSA Member Campaign Submissions: \$15

PRSSA Member Tactic Submissions: \$10

Non-member Campaigns Submissions: \$20

Non-member Tactics Submissions: \$15

Checks and credit cards are accepted.

CATEGORIES & JUDGING CRITERIA

Campaigns

You may submit a campaign you helped complete as part of a group. But you will want to condense the campaign as a two-page summary, which is the single most important component of your entry. Judges will evaluate the campaign on the merit of the four criteria — research, planning, execution and evaluation — that you detail in the two-page summary.

Results — qualitative, quantitative or both — should provide evidence of how you plan to measure your objectives. The two-page summary should have no smaller than a 10-point typeface and one-inch margins.

A GOLD Award requires a minimum of 28 points (out of 31); a SILVER Award requires a minimum of 25 points (out of 31); and a BRONZE AWARD requires a minimum score of 22 points (out of 31).

Use the following questions to help you prepare a strong entry:

Research & Planning– 15 possible points

- What prompted the campaign? Was it in response to an existing problem, or does it examine a potential problem?
- What type of research did you use — primary, secondary or both? Primary research involves original research, including focus groups, interviews and surveys. Secondary research involves searching existing resources for information or data related to a particular need, strategy or goal (e.g., online computer database searches, Web-based research, library searches, industry reports and internal market analyses).
- How was the research relevant to shaping the planning process?
- How did the research help define or redefine the audience(s) or the situation?
- How did the plan correlate to the research findings?
- What was the plan in general terms?
- What were the specific, measurable objectives of the plan?
- Who were the target audiences?
- What was the overall strategy used?
- Do you have a proposed budget?

Execution – 10 possible points

- How will your plan be executed?
- How will the activities flow in general terms? Is there a timeline?
- What were the key tactics?
- Were nontraditional public relations tactics used, such as advertising?
- Were there any difficulties encountered? If so, how were they handled?
- Were other organizations involved?

Results & Evaluation – 5 possible points

- What methods of evaluation were used or what methods do you plan to use?
- Are there any results to show?
- How was the budget used effectively?

Technical Compliance – 1 possible point

- Entry is well written, includes proper documentation and is no more than two pages.

Tactics

Examples include:

- Media Relations: ex. press releases, media advisories, pitch letters, requests for coverage, etc.
- Online Communications: ex. websites, blogs, online videos, Social Media
- Public Service Announcements
- Press Conference
- Press/Media Kits
- Newsletters or Magazines
- Promotional Materials and Publications: ex. brochures, leaflets, flyers, posters, etc.,
- Direct Mail/Direct Response
- Creative/Nontraditional Tactic

To explain how you arrived at your tactic, you will also write a one-page summary, which is the single most important component for entry. Judges evaluate the tactic on five key areas —planning/content, execution, creativity/quality, results/evaluation and technical compliance. Within these areas, the summary should include measurable objectives, target audiences and budget.

Results — qualitative, quantitative or both — should provide evidence of how the stated measurable objectives were met or how you plan to meet them. The one-page summary should have no smaller than a 10-point typeface and one-inch margins.

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Use the following questions to help you prepare a strong entry:

Planning/Content – 10 possible points

- Was the object or goal of the entry thoughtfully considered, clearly stated and attainable?
- Was the audience identified?
- Was a clear strategy stated or implied?

Execution, Creativity & Quality – 15 possible points

- Do messages tie to objectives?
- Is content substantive, understandable, consistent and appropriate for the stated audience?
- How is your entry unique?
 - Is the tactic used in an innovative way to achieve goals?
 - Do graphic or communications elements set your entry apart?
- How were resources used effectively?
- Any difficulties encountered?

Results & Evaluation – 5 possible points

- What methods of evaluation were used or what methods do you plan to use to assess whether the goal was met?
- Did the tactic implementation meet its stated intent?
- How was the budget used effectively?

Technical Compliance – 1 possible point

- Entry is well written, includes proper documentation and is no more than one page.