



**Excalibur Awards
2026 Call for Entries**

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Have a question about the submission process? Email awards@prsabuffaloniagara.org

Award Co-Chairs: Joe Martone and Shantel Coleman

The Public Relations Society of America’s Buffalo Niagara chapter invites you to participate in this year’s Excalibur Awards. For the 36th year, we welcome Western New York’s best in public relations from top area professionals and companies that strengthen our profession and each other. Winners will be honored at our annual event to be held **October 15, 2026**.

How to Enter

All entries must be submitted using our online entry system that can be found [here](#) or by visiting prsabuffaloniagara.org/awards. Binders will not be accepted. Additional information regarding the entry preparation process can be found on the PRSA Buffalo Niagara website, or you can contact awards@prsabuffaloniagara.org.

Criteria

You may submit an unlimited number of entries. A single entry may be submitted in more than one category, provided it meets all criteria specified. To decide which category/categories are most appropriate, you should examine the campaign or tactic's objectives and target audience. Judges will not move an entry to a better-suited category.

At least part of the work and results must have been completed between April 2025 and July 2026.

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 up to three graphic images that represent your program. This image may be featured in a PRSA Buffalo Niagara publication should the program be selected as a winner. We ask that the image meet the following requirements: 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.

ONCE AN ENTRY HAS BEEN SUBMITTED, IT IS FINAL. YOU CANNOT ALTER YOUR ENTRY OR ADD ADDITIONAL MATERIALS.

Judging

Entries will be judged by experienced public relations professionals from the PRSA Orange County chapter. Some categories may not receive awards if the judges determine the entries do not merit recognition. Judges' decisions are final. Every entry will be judged on its own merit and not in comparison to others.

By entering the Excalibur Awards program, all entrants confirm that their programs and entries comply with the ethical standards of the profession, as embodied in the PRSA Code of Ethics. If at any point PRSA Buffalo Niagara becomes aware of any aspect of a submission that may not be in compliance with the Code, it may, at its sole discretion, take appropriate action.

Fees & Deadlines

- **Early Bird Deadline:** Friday, July 10 at 5 p.m.*
- **Final Deadline:** Friday, August 14 at 5 p.m.*
- **Special Honors Nominations:** Friday, August 14 at 5 p.m.*
- **Student Deadline:** Friday, August 14 at 5 p.m.*
- **2026 Awards Ceremony:** October 15, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

*Dates/times are firm. Submissions will not be accepted after the deadline has passed.

Early Bird Pricing - Campaigns Submissions:

- \$65 per entry for PRSA members
- \$55 per entry for PRSA members at registered 501(c)3 organizations*
- \$90 per entry for non-members
- \$80 per entry for PRSA non-members at registered 501(c)3 organizations*

Early Bird Pricing - Tactics Submissions:

- \$55 per entry for PRSA members
- \$45 per entry for PRSA members at registered 501(c)3 organizations*
- \$80 per entry for non-members
- \$70 per entry for PRSA non-members at registered 501(c)3 organizations*

Regular Pricing - Campaigns Submissions:

- \$80 per entry for PRSA members
- \$70 per entry for PRSA members at registered 501(c)3 organizations*
- \$115 per entry for non-members
- \$105 per entry for PRSA non-members at registered 501(c)3 organizations*

Regular Pricing - Tactics Submissions:

- \$70 per entry for PRSA members
- \$60 per entry for PRSA members at registered 501(c)3 organizations*
- \$100 per entry for non-members
- \$90 per entry for PRSA non-members at registered 501(c)3 organizations*

**You must upload a copy of your organization's W-9 form indicating tax exempt status in order to receive this rate.*

Student Submissions:

- Campaign & Tactic Submissions: \$15

Checks and credit cards are accepted.

Categories & Judging Criteria

Campaigns

1. **Public Service/ Public Affairs Communications**

Campaign designed to advance the understanding of societal issues, problems or concerns through activities that work to influence public policy, affect legislation, regulations, political activities or candidacies at the local, state or federal government levels.

2. **Marketing Products or Services**

Campaign designed to introduce new products/services, or promote existing products/services to a particular audience.

3. **Integrated Communications**

Any campaign that demonstrates leadership of public relations strategies and tactics in a creative and effective integrated campaign, along with other marketing or communications. The campaign must demonstrate the clear leadership of public relations, along with its integration with other disciplines.

4. **Special Events and Observances**

A campaign or event, such as a commemoration, observance, opening, year-long anniversary, celebration or other special activity to promote an organization, or its products, services or causes.

5. **Reputation/Brand Management**

Campaign designed to enhance, promote or improve the reputation of an organization with its publics or key elements of its publics, either proactively or in response to an issue, event or market occurrence.

6. **Community Relations**

A campaign that aims to improve relations with, or seeks to win the support or cooperation of, people or organizations in communities in which the sponsoring organization has an interest, need or opportunity.

7. **Internal Communications**

Campaigns targeted to special publics directly allied with an organization, such as employees, members, affiliated dealers, franchisees

8. **Multicultural Communications**

Any type of campaign specifically targeted to a cultural group.

9. **Crisis Communications**

Campaigns undertaken to deal with an unplanned event that required an immediate response.

10. Global Communications

Campaigns that demonstrate effective communications implemented in more than one country.

11. Investor Relations

Campaigns directed to shareholders, other investors and the investment community.

12. Social Media Strategy

Any campaign based on a thorough strategy of research, planning and evaluation that is executed via one or more social media channels.

Judging Criteria for Campaigns

The two-page summary is the single most important component of the entry. Judges will evaluate the campaign on the merit of the four criteria — research and planning, execution, results and evaluation, and technical compliance — that you detail in the two-page summary. Your entry should begin with a brief situation analysis for your campaign.

Results — qualitative, quantitative or both — should provide evidence of how the stated measurable objectives were met, and how the entry impacted the success of a broader or ongoing program. 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). A PLATINUM AWARD will be presented to the entry chosen as “best of show” in the campaigns division.

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

Research & Planning– 10 possible points

- What prompted the research? 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?
- What was your budget?

Execution – 10 possible points

- How was the plan executed, and what was the outcome?
- How did the activities flow in general terms?
- What were the key tactics?
- Were there any difficulties encountered? If so, how were they handled?
- Were other organizations involved?
- Were nontraditional public relations tactics used, such as advertising?

Results & Evaluation – 10 possible points

- What methods of evaluation were used?
- What were your results?
- 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

1. Media Relations

Tactics, programs and events driven entirely by media relations. Submit press releases, media advisories, pitch letters, requests for coverage, etc., along with the one-page summary that includes measurable objectives and results, such as evidence of the resulting media coverage. Upload or provide links to any television or radio coverage.

2. Published Articles

Feature stories, opinion articles written as editorials, guest columns or letters to the editor that have been written by a practitioner, and submitted and published through his/her efforts. Submit text of the article, as well as documentation of publication and placement. The one-page summary should include target audience, measurable objectives and any documented results.

3. Advertorials

Paid advertising written as editorial matter to gain support for a product, issue, program or organization. Upload text of editorial matter and documentation of publication. The one-page summary should include target audience, measurable objectives and budget.

4. Online Communications

Use of websites, webcasts, blogs, blogger campaigns, smartphone/tablet applications, online videos and/or social media as part of a public relations program. When appropriate, include screen grabs or copies of key pages to support your one-page summary. Additionally, include the website URL for external sites.

- Websites – includes external, internal/intranets and online media rooms.
- Webcasts – media files distributed over the Internet using streaming media technology. Maybe live or recorded.
- Blogs – Web-based journals, or blogs, that communicated either a corporate, public service or industry position. The one-page summary should include rationale for blogging strategy, target audiences and statistics, or other means of quantifiable measurement to support stated objectives.
- Blogger campaigns – A proactive outreach to the blogger community on behalf of a product, service or organization. The one page summary should include rationale for

blogger outreach strategy, statistics or other means of quantifiable measurement to support stated objectives, as well as a copy of (a) the outgoing messages and (b) the resulting blog entries either as uploads and/or the actual site URLs.

- Smartphone/tablet applications – Use of smartphone and/or tablet applications as part of a public relations program. Include brief instructions on how to download the application.
- Online videos – Pre-produced videos distributed online to inform target audiences of an event, product, service, issue or organization. Entries may consist of an edited video and one of any sound bites. The one-page summary should include usage statistics or other means of quantified measurement to support stated objectives.
- Social Media – use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, etc. as part of a public relations program.

5. Video or Audio Programs

Video or audio programs targeted either toward internal audiences such as employees, members, etc. or directed primarily at external audiences. Entrants should upload programs as a reasonable representation. The summary should include documentation of results that support stated objectives.

6. Public Service Announcements

Productions of one minute or less distributed as unpaid public service announcements. Single productions or a series addressing the same issue. Video, audio and print PSAs may be uploaded. For print PSAs, single ads or a series of ads addressing the same issue may be submitted but copies of the actual print PSA must be included in the entry. The summary should include documentation of results.

7. Creative Tactics

Unconventional, creative tactic or approach used as part of a public relations program. Documentation of how the tactic contributed to the measurable results of the campaign should be included in the one-page summary. Entries should exhibit creativity in planning and execution of the PR strategy, program or initiative. Illustrate how your organization leveraged creative forms of media to communicate and strengthen relationships with target markets. (Photographic and/or video representation of any physical objects should be uploaded.)

8. Press Conferences

One-time events held specifically to announce news to target media about a product, service, issue or organization. A series of events or a multi-day effort does not belong in this category. The one-page summary should address logistics, execution and quantifiable measures that demonstrate how the press conference achieved its stated objectives.

9. Press/Media Kits

News releases, photographs and other background information compiled for an organization, product or issue. Submit photographic and/or video representation of the press kit or media kit along with the one-page summary.

10. Newsletters or Magazines

Publications designed to provide timely information about an organization or topic on a regular basis while supporting an organization's overall objectives. Magazines are typically differentiated from newsletters by the number of pages, length of articles and frequency of

publication. Submit three consecutive electronic and/or print issues along with the one-page summary.

11. Promotional Materials and Publications

Print or digital promotional materials and publications, including brochures, leaflets, flyers, posters, etc., designed to inform a target audience about an organization, product, service or issue. Single-issue communication or a series can be entered. Upload a sample of one copy of the publication along with the one-page summary.

12. Direct Mail/Direct Response

Communications designed to solicit a specific, immediate response by the target audience. This can be a single communication or a series. Quantifiable, specific actions by the target audience recipients resulting solely from the sponsor's communication should be detailed in the summary. Upload a sample of one copy of the publication along with a one-page summary.

13. Annual Reports

Electronic and/or print publications that report on an organization's annual performance. Upload a sample of one copy of the publication, along with a one-page summary.

14. Speeches

Upload text of speech along with a one-page summary. Summary should include information about the audience, purpose of speech and any documented results against the stated objectives

15. Articles, Presentations or Workshops on Public Relations

Articles should be written for a scholarly or professional publication and published externally. Submit text of article, along with documentation of publication and placement. Presentations or workshops should be presented to scholarly or professional groups.

**Entries in categories 2 – Published Articles, 3 – Advertorials and 14 – Speeches must be written in their entirety or substantively by the entrant, and not merely “pitched.”*

Judging Criteria for Tactics

The one-page summary is the single most important component for entry. Judges evaluate the tactic in four key areas —planning/content, execution/creativity/quality, results/evaluation, and technical compliance. Within these areas, the summary should include measurable objectives, target audiences, budget and any other specific information requested in the individual category.

Results — qualitative, quantitative or both — should provide evidence of how the stated measurable objectives were met, and how the entry impacted the success of a broader or ongoing program. The one-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). A BEST OF TACTICS will be presented to the entry chosen as “best of show” in the tactics division.

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 the entry unique?
 - Was there a tool used imaginatively to achieve goals?
 - Do graphic or communications elements set the entry apart?
- How were resources used effectively?
 - Is production quality superior, based on budget and scope of the project?
- What sort of difficulties were encountered?

Results/ Evaluation – 5 possible points

- What effort was made to assess whether the measurable objective or goal was met?
- Did the entry meet its stated intent?
- Are there indicators of success, quantitative or qualitative, in meeting objectives?
- 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.

Student Category

We are now accepting student entries as either a campaign or tactic. 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 Spring 2025, Fall 2025 or Spring 2026. View the full student call for entries at [https://prsabuffaloniagara.org/Excalibur Student Awards](https://prsabuffaloniagara.org/Excalibur_Student_Awards).

Deadline: Friday, August 14, 5 p.m.

Entry Fees:

All Student Submission (Campaign & Tactics): \$15

Special Honors Nominations

In addition to recognizing outstanding public relations projects, the Board of Directors will recognize and reward individuals who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in the practice and support of the field.

To nominate a friend, colleague or superior, fill out a nomination form online [here](#). The deadline is Friday, August 14 at 5 p.m. There is no entry fee to submit a special nomination.

May C. Randazzo Outstanding Practitioner Award

Named in honor of May Randazzo, APR – a respected practitioner who died after a brief illness at the age of 57 – this award is given to a Western New York public relations professional who, like May, has achieved exceptional success, displays the highest ethics and is dedicated to serving the community and our profession. The recipient must demonstrate excellence in achievement, application, reputation, ethics, service to PRSA and community service. Nominees must be a member of the Buffalo Niagara Chapter.

Outstanding Executive Award

This award honors a Western New York business executive (CEO, Senior Director or Executive) who recognizes and supports the role of public relations within their organization and throughout the community. Nominees must be from outside of the communications industry. They must show a dedicated commitment to the value of public relations and have a proven track record of the advancement of strategic communications as part of a business' overall operating philosophy. Members and non-members of PRSA are eligible.

Ann R. Carden Rising Star Award

This award honors an outstanding newcomer to public relations who has demonstrated leadership potential in their initial years in the profession. To be eligible, nominees must have five or fewer years of experience in the field. Nominees must be a member of the Buffalo Niagara Chapter.