



PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter 2026 Excalibur Judging Instructions

Welcome:

The Buffalo Niagara Chapter of PRSA sincerely thanks you for being a member of our Excalibur judging team! Please review the instructions carefully before you begin. Do not hesitate to contact us on any point which may be unclear.

Elimination:

If a judge feels that an entry does not adequately meet the guidelines below, then that entry may be immediately disqualified before being judged. Please email awards@prsabuffaloniagara.org if this happens.

Guidelines for Entering Work – (Entries not meeting these requirements may be disqualified by the judges):

- Any communication professional may enter work. PRSA membership is not required. • Be sure that at least part of the campaign or tactic was completed between April 2025 and July 2026.
- For campaigns, each entry must be no longer than two typewritten pages; one page for tactics. If an entry is longer, it **must be disqualified** from the judging process. Criteria/considerations should be addressed in order: RESEARCH & PLANNING, EXECUTION, and RESULTS & EVALUATION for Campaigns; PLANNING/CONTENT, EXECUTION/CREATIVITY/QUALITY, RESULTS & EVALUATION for Tactics, and TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE for both.

Judging:

Judges will carefully review and score each entry based on how well it meets the required criteria (below). A minimum of two judges must review each entry using a 31-point sum total scoring system. Each entry's sum totals are then averaged into one final total. Only the averaged final totals of the judges' scores are used to determine a subcategory's winners. If no entries in a particular category meet the minimum scoring requirements, then no awards will be given.

Judging Criteria: Campaigns

Research and Planning

Describe the research used to determine the scope of the problem or opportunity. Was the research carried out in response to a problem or to examine a potential problem? Was the research relevant to overall planning or audience identification? Did the research reflect a clear need? Was a process defined by which to gauge the program's success?

In general terms, what was the plan (what were the objectives)? Who were the target audiences? What was the overall strategy employed? What was the projected budget?

Execution

Show how the plan was implemented, materials used, techniques utilized to win support and how effectively resources were used. How were the plans executed? Were there any difficulties encountered? If so, how were they handled? Were non-traditional public relations tactics employed?

Results & Evaluation

Show to what degree a program met its objectives and utilized its budget. How were results tied to the strategic objectives? What were the quantifiable outcomes? Were any results unexpected? What efforts were made to identify, analyze and quantify those results? (Note: media circulation figures are not acceptable as the only means of quantitative measurement.)

Judging Criteria: Tactics

Planning/Content

Describe the planning and content used to determine the scope of the project. 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

Show how the project is unique to the organization. Do messages tie to objectives? Is content substantive, understandable, consistent and appropriate for the stated audience? How is the tool used imaginatively to achieve program goals? What were some difficulties encountered and how did you overcome them?

Results & Evaluation

Show to what degree the tactic met its objectives and utilized its budget. 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 did the entry impact the success of a broader or ongoing campaign?

Technical Compliance

For both campaigns and tactics: Is the entry well-prepared with proper grammar, supporting materials? Is it well-written? Given as an “extra” point to those entries deemed fitting.

Scoring:

For each of the sections, assign a score of 0 to 15 (depending on point value) to calculate the points awarded. Tally the points for a grand total (not to exceed 31).

Awards:

Entries will not be considered for an award unless they meet a minimum numerical level of 22 points (out of 30), even if the entry is the only submission for a specific category.

Awards will be presented in as many as 27 categories to the highest scoring entries meeting the specified point requirements. A **Gold Award** requires a minimum score of 28 points (out of 30); a **Silver Award** requires a minimum score of 25 points (out of 30); and a **Bronze Award** requires a minimum score of 22 points (out of 30).