**International Association
of Business Communicators**
Toronto

2019 OVATION Awards
Call for Entries

2019 IABC/Toronto OVATION Awards
CALL FOR ENTRIES

ABOUT THE OVATION AWARDS

For more than 30 years, IABC/Toronto's OVATION Awards have offered communication professionals in the Greater Toronto Area an opportunity to present their best work for feedback and recognition from their peers. Submissions for the 2019 program will be accepted beginning Monday, January 14, 2019. For assistance at any time, please contact toronto-info@iabc.to.

After a successful launch last year, we will once again use Award Force as our online award system for our Call for Entries. This system is aligned with IABC Canada Silver Leaf Awards, making it easier for you to submit the same entry across all IABC award programs.

- Why Enter?
- Eligibility
- Fees and Deadlines
- Divisions and Categories
- How to Enter
- Evaluation Process
- Scoring Details
- Awards of Distinction
- People's Choice Award
- Winners' Recognition
- Notification of Winners and Awards Gala

STEPS TO ENTERING

1. Choose your division and category.
2. Write your work plan.
3. Prepare your work sample.
4. Upload your entry and submit payment, using our online system (Available from January 14).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Read the FAQs
- Read previous year's OVATION Awards Winning Entries booklet (Free for members. Non-members, please call IABC/Toronto at 416-968-0264 to purchase for $40 plus HST.)

Questions?
Call: 416-968-0264 or email toronto-info@iabc.to.

WHY ENTER?

Regardless of the final award results, the OVATION Awards program offers all entrants an opportunity to:
- Gain peer recognition for excellence in communication;
- Enhance the reputation of your team and organization, both internally and externally;
- Inspire your team to produce show-stopping work and share the glory when it's complete;
- Build a portfolio of work that opens doors to new opportunities;
- Demonstrate the value of strategic communication to your organization and your clients;
- Receive evaluator feedback that will help you become more strategic.

ELIGIBILITY

The program accepts entries from all GTA communications practitioners, including non-members.

Each submission must have been planned, produced and completed within the three-year period prior to submission.

You may submit as many entries as you wish. Each entry must meet the requirements of the selected category — please note differences between Division 1 and 2. The same program/project can be entered into several categories **as long as each entry is tailored to the specific category criteria**. Each entry must be submitted separately. Entry fees apply for each submission.

Note: The same project may not be submitted more than once (i.e., by different individuals) in the same category.

All eligible work must be implemented, published or broadcast between January 2016 and the day of submission. If a long-term strategy was developed prior to January 2016 and has not previously been entered, it is eligible for entry. If you entered your work in 2017 or 2018 and did not win an award, you may revise and re-enter your project. Entries that have won in previous years may not be resubmitted.

FEES AND DEADLINES

Entrant type	Early-bird deadline: *January 31*	On-time deadline: *February 14*	Last-minute deadline: *February 28*
Member*	$115.04 + HST = $130	$146.02 + HST = $165	$176.11 + HST = $199
Non-Profit Member**	$97.35 + HST = $110	$97.35 + HST = $110	$97.35 + HST = $110
Non-Member	$141.59 + HST = $160	$172.57 + HST = $195	$203.54 + HST = $230

All deadlines are at 7 p.m. EST

*Member must be a key contributor to the project submitted. You will be asked to provide your name and Member ID for validation.

** Member must be employed by a not-for-profit, non-profit or charitable organization (excludes government agencies, public sector organizations and industry associations). Agencies or consultants entering a project implemented for a not-for-profit, non-profit or charitable organization client do not qualify for this reduced rate.

DIVISIONS AND CATEGORIES

FOUR STEPS TO ENTER

1. Choose your division and category.

2. Write your work plan (or fill in the online form for Communication Skills division entries).

3. Prepare your work sample.

4. Upload your entry and submit payment, using our online system (Available from January 14).

Review the categories carefully before making your selection. Picking the right category is important for success. Please make sure you state the correct category and division on your work plan and online entry form.

- DIVISION 1: COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT
- DIVISION 2: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

DIVISION 1: COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

The Communication Management division covers project, programs and campaigns that are guided by a communication strategy. Entries to this division can be submitted by any type of organization, from governments to retail companies to services such as utilities and health care. Entrants must demonstrate how their project applied a full range of planning and management skills, including research, analysis, strategy, tactical implementation and evaluation. Entries may include a wide range of communication materials. (A single tactical execution element that formed part of a communication program may also be entered in the Communication Skills division.)

Category 1: Internal Communication

- Programs or strategies targeted at employee or member audiences.
- Includes programs that create awareness and influence opinion or behavioural change, including those focused on ethics, morale, internal culture or change management.
- May involve improving employee understanding and alignment with business direction, improving face-to-face communication, preparing employees for change, integration of organizational cultures caused by an acquisition or downsizing, an internal brand ambassador program or a program to inspire pride in the organization.

Category 2: Employee Engagement

- Local, regional, national or international programs or strategies that profile the role of strategic communication as a driver in improving employee engagement.
- Entries must focus on the communication elements of these programs, which could include contribution to program development and promotion through various communication vehicles and channels.
- May include employee recognition and employee volunteer programs, including programs that benefit charitable or philanthropic causes or recognize employees' organizational contributions or achievements in the organization.

Category 3: Human Resources and Benefits Communication

- Programs or strategies targeted at internal audiences that relate to the communication of health and welfare, savings and pension, stocks and compensation, or recruitment and retention initiatives.

Category 4: Change Communication

- Communication strategies that support organizational change.
- May be directed at internal or external audiences, or both.

Category 5: Safety Communication

- Programs or strategies that focus on improving awareness, understanding and behaviours related to safety issues within an organization.

Category 6: Leadership Communication

- Programs or strategies that help leaders become more effective communicators, improve the quality of leadership communication within an organization, or improve leader knowledge and the ability to use communication as a business driver.

- Tactics may include tool kits with speaking notes, games or other tools that help leaders communicate a specific topic, and special publications with information and support for leadership communication.

Category 7: Media Relations

- Strategies or ongoing programs that use the news media as the primary channel to reach target audiences and seek to influence awareness, understanding and opinion, or to motivate action.

- Should demonstrate the quality of media coverage and its impact on the organization — quantity of media stories alone is not considered a valid measurement in this category.

Note: there are three sub-categories from which to choose:

> 7a. Media Relations with budget up to $50K
>
> 7b. Media Relations with budget > $50K up to $100K
>
> 7c. Media Relations with budget > $100K

IMPORTANT: Please state 7a, 7b, or 7c on the work plan and the online entry form.

Category 8: Marketing Communication

- Marketing is defined as the systematic planning, implementation and control of a variety of business activities intended to bring buyers and sellers together.

- May include various activities designed to sell products, services, destinations or ideas to external audiences, and is generally delivered through a variety of communication vehicles and channels.

- Broader than advertising campaigns, although advertising is often an element of a marketing program.

Category 9: Advertising and Brand Communication

- Strategies for new brands and the repositioning of existing brands in relationship to internal and external audiences.

- May include brand characteristics and attributes, changes to corporate identities and design solutions that address the challenges of brand communication (must be more than a logo redesign).

- Strategic advertising campaigns designed to build brand awareness, influence opinion, motivate audience behaviours, or sell products and services.

Category 10: Customer Relations

- Strategies or ongoing programs targeted at customer audiences that educate, inform, engage or otherwise connect the organization and its employees to the customer.

- Programs may influence reputation, brand awareness and loyalty, and market position.

- May include relationship management, experience standards or appreciation programs, but must be focused on communication and marketing elements.

Category 11: Community Relations

- A one-time or an ongoing program that enhances stakeholder understanding of issues affecting business operations within the community served.

- Seeks to build trust and credibility with stakeholder groups generally through consultation and other communication-based activities.

- Tactics and supporting strategies may include formal and informal meetings, town hall discussions, workshops, presentations, open houses, and electronic or printed material.

Category 12: Government Relations
- Short- or long-term programs that influence the opinion or actions of government bodies or agencies.
- May seek to create awareness or influence the attitudes and behaviours of decision-makers toward the organization or industry.

Category 13: Financial Communication
- Entails strategies, tactics and tools used to share financial data and recommendations with investors and other interested parties.
- Includes investor relations functions that integrate finance, communication, marketing and securities laws compliance to enable effective communication between a company, the financial community, and stakeholders.

Category 14: Issues Management and Crisis Communication
- Programs targeted at external and/or internal audiences that address trends, issues or attitudes that have a significant impact on an organization, such as labour relations, crises, mergers, acquisitions, public policy or environmental concerns.
- Programs may demonstrate proactive planning and preventative action during an extraordinary event, or show the actions taken to address trends, issues and interest group attitudes that have a major impact on an organization.

Category 15: Corporate Social Responsibility
- Programs or strategies that communicate social responsibility and encourage positive actions, while building awareness and reputation and positioning the organization as a good corporate citizen.
- May be targeted to multiple audiences and influence share price and customer loyalty, retention and recruitment, operational efficiency and increased sales.
- Generally long-term and focused on enhancing the well-being of communities and populations through causes such as the environment, energy sustainability, food safety, economic stability, employment, poverty reduction, literacy, education, health, cultural preservation, and indigenous and heritage protection.

Category 16: Social Media Programs
- Engages internal and external audiences in conversation through social media.
- Encompasses tools and practices that allow individuals and groups to collaborate and share knowledge and experiences online.
- May use: conversation-enabled publishing platforms such as blogs and podcasts; social networks such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook; democratized content networks such as wikis and message boards; content-sharing sites such as YouTube and Flickr; and virtual networking platforms.

Category 17: Government Communication Programs
- Programs and strategies specific to government organizations at the municipal, state, provincial, regional, federal, national or international level.
- May be targeted to one or more audiences, and include internal, external or integrated communication strategies or programs.

Category 18: Non-profit Campaigns
- Programs recognizing the particular challenges of the non-profit sector.
- May include multiple internal or external audiences.

- Promotes non-profit organizations or causes.
- May be paid projects or pro-bono projects donated to the client by an organization, agency or consultancy; entries will generally have a small budget or no budget.

DIVISION 2: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The communication skills division includes marketing and communication elements that showcase technical skills such as editing, writing, design and multimedia production. Entries in this division are generally tactical in nature. Entrants must demonstrate strategic alignment, the creative process, and measurable results.

Category 19: Special Events

- Planning and execution of a special event for an internal or external audience.
- For internal audiences, this may include employee appreciation events, or events that mark a significant occasion such as an anniversary, internal conference or meeting, or a celebration or special retirement.
- For external audiences, this may include conferences, workshops, anniversaries, official openings, product launches, road shows and customer events.

Category 20: Digital Communication

- Computer-based communication vehicles defined as the end product that are produced for internal or external audiences and rely on a digital communication channel for delivery.
- Electronic and interactive communication channels such as websites, intranets, online stores, blogs, podcasts, social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook, democratized content networks such as wikis and message boards, micro-blogging sites such as Twitter, content-sharing sites such as YouTube and Flickr, and virtual networking platforms.
- May also include electronic newsletters, electronic annual reports, special publications, CDs or DVDs, e-cards, banner ads, buttons, pop-ups and similar material.
- Generally one-way communication that offers published content online.

Category 21: Audio/Visual

- Communication vehicles produced using sound, images, video, film, slides, CDs or a combination of these elements.
- May include video, audio, PowerPoint or other presentations, and films. Does not include advertising commercials.

Category 22: Publications

- Publications produced for internal or external audiences in all formats, including hard copy and electronic.
- May include magazines, newspapers, newsletters or tabloids, annual reports, books, special publications, brochures and other advertising material, e-newsletters, and similar material.

Category 23: Writing

This category includes writing in both print and electronic formats.

JOURNALISM:

- Material in which the news media is the primary communication channel.
- May include, but is not limited to, editorials, interpretive/expository articles, news releases, and feature stories.

CORPORATE WRITING:

- Material written primarily for use by an organization to inform or educate employees or external stakeholders.
- May include recurring features or columns, magazines, newsletters, internal or special publications, stand-alone

features, speeches and presentations, executive correspondence, scripts for corporate use, writing for an intranet, internal publications, technical writing, and annual and special reports.

PROMOTIONAL WRITING:

- Material written to persuade customers, consumers, employees or stakeholders to adopt a point of view or to purchase goods or services.
- May include commercials, advertising, marketing or sales promotion material, advertorials, and writing for the web.

HOW TO ENTER

DIVISION 1: COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

There are two key elements to your entry: the work plan and the work sample.

The work plan is an executive summary of your communication strategy. It can be no more than four pages using a font size no smaller than 10-point and margins no less than 0.5 inch (1.27 cm).

A fillable template is available here. There are six required sections:

• Business need or opportunity,

• Stakeholder analysis,

• Goals and objectives,

• Solution overview,

• Implementation and challenges,

• Measurement and evaluation.

In addition to the required sections, please include the following information at the top of the work plan:

• Entrant's name — please provide one name only,

• Organization name,

• Division and category,

• Title of entry,

• Time period of project,

• Team members, if any,

• Entry summary — 100 words max.

If you are entering the same program or elements of the program in multiple categories, be sure to tailor your work plan so it fits each category.

The work sample is the supporting material that illustrates how you planned and implemented your communication program. It can include external links to video and audio files, Word documents, PDFs and website links. Your work sample should represent the full scope of your work — evaluators are looking for real examples of the work you did. Please note that evaluators have limited time to review your submission.

For more help preparing your entry, see our **resources for entering divisions 1**.

DIVISION 2: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

You do not need to complete a detailed work plan for the Communication Skills division. Instead, you will need to complete a brief entry form on the awards entry website and submit it along with your work sample. Each question has limited character counts for responses. The work sample should represent the full scope of your work.

The Communication Skills division entry form has six questions:

1. Describe your organization (maximum 800 characters, including spaces);

2. Why was this project undertaken? (Maximum 600 characters, including spaces);

3. Who was the audience(s) for this project? What do you know about the audience? (Maximum 600 characters, including spaces);

4. List up to three key measurable objectives for the project. How well did the project meet the objectives? (maximum 600 characters, including spaces);

5. List up to three key messages for the project (maximum 600 characters, including spaces);

6. Describe the resources (budget, time, others) available for the project and how effectively they were managed (maximum 600 characters, including spaces).

For more help preparing your entry, see our **resources for entering division 2**.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR WORK SAMPLES AND UPLOADS

- All work samples must be submitted in low resolution and should be in commonly used programs (e.g., Word, PowerPoint, JPEG, QuickTime, Windows Media or PDF).
- Hard copy work samples will not be accepted.
- You can submit up to 10 work samples, inclusive of URLs. The maximum file size allowed is 10 MB for each upload.
- Each work sample must be clearly labelled. Judges must be able to quickly locate each sample when reviewing an entry.
- Submit all work samples such as photos, videos, etc., in low resolution.
- Links to video/audio files are preferable to file uploads.
- For intranets or "limited, secured access" sites, provide instructions on how to register for the site, along with an account name and/or password.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- **Letter of permission from the client** (where applicable). Submitting an entry for work done on behalf of a client or organization other than the entrant's requires **written approval** from the organization or client prior to submission. If the person who did the work or played a key role on the project team is no longer with the organization or agency, the submission should include that person's written approval. Permission can be in Word or PDF format.
- Your company logo and one client logo, if applicable (up to three logos, max.).

RULES

You must upload your entry and pay the registration fee before the deadline noted. Full payment must be received for all entries you submit before or on the closing date to be eligible for evaluation.

Entries may be disqualified if:
- The work plan exceeds four (4) pages
- Any element of the project violates the IABC Code of Ethics
- It is obvious the entrant did not play a role in the project
- The entry depends mainly on syndicated, borrowed, reprinted or stock material
- The electronic files contain viruses, if they disable, or require disabling of, any part of the computer system used during evaluation, or if evaluators cannot view work samples using the instructions provided.

If you are a consultant and your work was done for a client, you must include client permission for your entry, or it may be disqualified.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Senior communications practitioners are recruited to serve as judges. A minimum of two judges use IABC Gold Quill criteria and score sheets to evaluate each entry. Winning entries must meet clearly stated objectives, show originality, and demonstrate results based on measured outcomes.

SCORING DETAILS

Judges score both your work plan/online entry form (for Communication Skills) and your work sample.
- For Communication Management entries, the work plan and work sample are each worth 50% of the score.
- For Communication Skills entries, final scores are based equally on 1) the strategic alignment, 2) professional standards of execution for the category, and 3) creativity, resourcefulness or innovation.

There are two levels of OVATION Awards: Award of Excellence and Award of Merit. The level of award depends on your total score.

- A total score of 5.25 to 5.74 is required to win an Award of Merit.
- A final score of 5.75 to 7 is required to win an Award of Excellence.

There is no limit to the number of awards that can be presented in each category. Entries do not compete against one other; rather, the individual entry is judged against an established score card.

AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

These six awards celebrate exceptional OVATION winners.
- For each Award of Excellence won, a winner receives three (3) points.
- For each Award of Merit won, the winner receives one (1) point.
- The entrant with the highest point total in its Awards of Distinction category wins the award.

In the event of a tie, the total scores of each OVATION entry will be calculated and the entrant/organization with the highest average will be the winner.

All entrants are considered for one of the following Awards of Distinction:
- 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 to 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

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

All Award of Excellence winners are eligible to win **The People's Choice Award**. There is no additional entry fee required for this award, and the winner is selected by public online voting. If you **do not want** to be considered for the People's Choice Award, please select "No" during the online submission process.

The People's Choice Award winner will be announced at the 2019 OVATION Awards Gala.

WINNERS' RECOGNITION

Winners of an Award of Excellence will receive a one-of-a-kind OVATION statue, hand-crafted in glass by a Canadian artist. Winners of an Award of Merit will receive a decorative plaque.

All OVATION winners will be recognized at the 2019 OVATION Awards Gala and have their winning entry (or entries) included in IABC/Toronto's 2019 OVATION Awards Winning Entries Booklet (with entrant's permission).

In addition, winners will be included in marketing materials (news release, etc.), acknowledged through social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) and will also have permission to use IABC Toronto's official 2019 OVATION Award logo in their print and online marketing materials.

NOTIFICATION OF WINNERS AND AWARDS GALA

- **Mid to late April 2019**: All 2019 OVATION award entrants will receive a one-page evaluation with scores and brief comments from our judges for each entry submitted. The email will be sent to the person and email address listed as the main contact on the OVATION Awards online entry system. It is the responsibility of the entrant to follow up with the IABC/Toronto office toronto-info@iabc.to if results have not been received by April 30, 2019.
- **Wednesday, May 29, 2019, Arcadian Court, Toronto**: IABC/Toronto OVATION Awards Gala. Winners of the People's Choice Award and Awards of Distinction will be announced. Winners will be posted on the website toronto.iabc.com following the gala.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What will disqualify entries?

- Entries are not submitted and paid for by the entry deadline

- Entry is submitted in wrong division or category

- Entry is incomplete or inaccurate.

- Entry is not submitted online

- Work plan exceeds the page limit, is not clear or does not follow submission guidelines

- Work plan or work sample is missing or incomplete

- Work submitted is not your own.

- Failure to acknowledge key creative contributions

- Letter of permission is missing (if applicable – i.e., agencies submitting on behalf of a client must provide a letter of permission)

We do not want our work plan made public. Is there any way to keep this information private?

YES. While entering online, you can choose the option to keep your entry private due to proprietary interests.

Do we have to disclose information regarding the budget?

YES. If you do not provide budget information, you will be penalized in the marking process. Ensure you check the confidentiality box on the online site when submitting your entry. If you cannot provide exact budgets due to proprietary reasons, please provide an approximate budget.

If I have won in another IABC award program for the same submission, does it mean I will win automatically?

NO. There is no guarantee of winning an OVATION Award. Each entry is judged against the specific category criteria.

Do the judges really pay attention to details such as the permitted margin size and the length of the work Plan?

YES. If you get these details wrong, you will be disqualified.

What happens to the entries after the competition is completed?

All submissions will be deleted by June 28, 2019 by IABC/Toronto. Only those with permission are able to access the secure online management system.

Can I submit my entry in a binder or on a CD/DVD?

NO. Submissions (work plans and work samples) will only be accepted through the online system.

I have several testimonial letters, but they mention the name of another awards program. Do I need to get authors to slightly "reword" these letters to mention OVATION Awards?

In your testimonial, you may insert ellipses (...) to acknowledge that the quote is not in full.

Must testimonial letters be signed?

Email testimonials are acceptable provided they are properly articulated and include the sender's name, the date, etc. An electronic signature is acceptable.

Are winners able to purchase additional statues and plaques for team members?

YES. Details on purchasing additional awards will be sent to winners as part of the Winner's Package in April, 2019.

How do I pay offline? I would like to pay by cheque.

Unfortunately, we can only accept online payments at the time of submission in the online award system.

I have become an IABC/Toronto member since I created my entry. Can I change my membership status to take advantage of the IABC member rate?

If you have created an entry and have not paid or submitted it, you can navigate to Entrant and update your membership information. The new rate will be reflected when you pay. Please note, a valid member ID is required for validation. If you have already paid and/or submitted your entry, please contact the IABC/Toronto office for information.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact: 416-968-0264 or toronto-info@iabc.to