New PRISM Awards categories generate strong interest

The seven Awards Categories introduced into last year's PRISM Awards are attracting growing interest from entrants. With a record number of entries expected for the 2013 PRISM Awards and the entry deadline of 25 January looming, organisers are being inundated with queries.

Three of the new categories in particular are generating interest - 'Communication Research', 'Digital Media Relations' and 'Integration of Traditional and New Media'.

Communication Research Category

"Communication research has become one of the most important elements of any campaign, as it provides the baseline and empirical evidence required to set clear objectives and goals," says Daniel Munslow, one of the chief judges of the PRISM Awards and chief strategic communication officer at Talk2Us. "Research will be evaluated on its strategic principles by understanding the reason the research was commissioned and what it sought to prove. The correct confidence index and confidence intervals will be reviewed to ensure that the sample is valid and provides a correct representation when generalised to a broader audience." Importantly, judges will also look to understand what changes as a result of the findings obtained via the research.



Lucy Balona, one of the judges in last year's PRISM Awards.

Fellow judge of last year's PRISM Awards Lucy Balona, head of Marketing and Communication at the Cancer Association of South Africa adds: "I would suggest that entrants show the different types of research used and indicate their sample sizes, otherwise it can be considered subjective." She also suggests that entrants show references and links where it can be verified. "Most importantly, show key findings or outcomes and how this influences your planning and execution," she recommends.

Digital Media Relations Category

"As digital tools continue to revolutionise the way practitioners practise public relations, the essence of communication is fundamentally changing," says Munslow. "Online public relations is fast becoming a basis of an integrated public relations strategy that includes an understanding of search engine optimisation, social media, and communicating with a growing number of bloggers."

Munslow adds that the judges look for entries that use the internet and other digital technologies, such as podcasts and online videos to communicate effectively with a variety of stakeholders in a results-driven campaign.

Integration of Traditional and New Media

In this category, judges are looking for an effective and successful integration of both traditional and new media in a public relations campaign.

"When public relations practitioners try to develop a campaign to integrate traditional and new media, they need to adopt a complimentary approach and look for ways that social media can leverage other public relations effort and vice versa," continues Munslow. He suggests that entrants need to demonstrate that they were able to achieve a more impactful and effective integrated campaign with measurable results than if they had not used social media.

More tips for entrants

For all categories, judges will look at some of the following criteria:

• Does the entry clearly identify the goals - both the business goals and the communication goals to support the business? This might seem obvious, but judges often exercise harsh penalties for lack of goal setting.
• Has the audience been clearly defined, beyond demographics? Who are they? What would make them engage? Do we understand their lifestyles?



Daniel Munslow, one of the chief judges of the PRISM Awards.

Other categories introduced into last year's PRISM Awards are:

• Community Relations
• Online Crisis Communications
• Reputation & Brand Management Online
• Social Media for PR

There are 37 Awards Categories.

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