

Outstanding in your field?



2010 Competition Entry Instructions

Please read and follow these rules carefully.



Eligibility

Strategic library communication campaigns may be submitted by any library, Friends group, consulting agency or service provider, excluding libraries represented by the JCD Committee members. All sizes and types of libraries—and all budget levels—are encouraged to enter.

International entries are welcome, and must include English narrative and descriptions of the strategic contents of campaign materials.

2010 entries must be completed during one of the following time frames:

- Any segment of the calendar year 2009 (January - December)
- 2008-2009 Academic year (Fall 2008 - Spring 2009)
- Long-term project completed in 2010

Entry Description

Each entry must include:

Two (2) copies of the following items:

1. An official Application Form, signed by the Library Director
2. A concise descriptive summary of the project (100 words or less)
3. A concise narrative description of how you conducted the four project phases: Needs Assessment; Strategic Planning; Implementation; and Evaluation.
(Four [4] pages total, minimum 11-point type.)

One copy of the above items should be stapled together and tucked into the entry for easy access by the judges. The other copy can be incorporated in the presentation book described below.

One (1) presentation book or binder to showcase your project to the jurors.

Make it clear, concise and easy to follow.

Use a sturdy presentation book or binder (maximum: 13" wide x 19" high x 2" thick).

Note: *experienced jurors recommend using presentation books without rings, because they open flat, are easy to use, and withstand the rigors of shipping and multiple reviews. Be sure the book has enough pages for your project. Extra pages are okay—just leave them blank. Several manufacturers produce appropriate, readily available products, including (but not limited to) Acco, Itoya, Pratt. One good example is the Itoya Profolio Storage/Display Book, 13 x 19" Mfr# IA1213, 24 pages = 48 views or 12 spreads*

Entry forms are available online from the American Library Association and H.W. Wilson (click to download). Incomplete or late entries will be disqualified.



Additional Materials?

If you used additional materials in your strategic communication program, you may include them in your entry (There's no need to create added items just for the award competition):

- Copies of any digital media (CD, DVD, Website URLs) with brief written summaries and clear operating instructions. Include in your evaluation any documentation citing any effect the materials had and what happened as a result.
- Samples of promotional items. If oversize, fragile, valuable or perishable items were part of your campaign, just show images in your presentation book.

Entry Structure

Organize your entry with tabbed sections supporting each step of your strategic communication campaign:

- Needs Assessment
- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation

For each section, include selected samples of your processes, research, media releases, media coverage or other results received, your evaluation of the results, and other documentation and supporting materials to clearly show the scope and effectiveness of your strategic communication effort. Use your finest editing skills, too.

Copyright and Publication Permissions

The John Cotton Dana Awards encourage creativity in library communications. However, if you plan to use trademarked or copyrighted material for any portion of your communication project, you must obtain permission before use, and include documentation with your entry. Entries including copyrighted material without legal written permission from the owner will be disqualified.

By submitting an entry, all applicants agree to have their programs considered for publication and grant the American Library Association and H.W. Wilson full rights to publicize entries selected for publication, including reproduction of selected sample illustrations and video clips.

Announcing the Awards

Awards for entries selected will be announced during the ALA Midwinter Conference, 4 p.m. Saturday. All entrants are welcome to attend. Watch for the location in the Midwinter program.

All entrants will be invited to attend a special John Cotton Dana Awards Tea sponsored by H.W. Wilson at the American Library Association Annual Conference, where award-winning campaigns will be honored.



Evaluation Criteria

The John Cotton Dana Award Committee members will evaluate the scope, relevance and effectiveness of your strategic communication campaign based on the following criteria:

Needs Assessment

How did you determine the need for your strategic communication program in the first place? Include a brief description of the community served.

- Community profile/demographics/social, cultural, economic or learning focus
- What need did your assessment identify? Why is it needed? What's the benefit?
- What result will your communication be designed to achieve?
- Will your communication bring you closer to the result? Will the result meet the need?
- Any other research-formal or informal-that illustrates or documents the need.

Judges look for an organized focus, and research that provides the foundation for an effective strategic communication program.

Strategic Communication Planning

Your Strategic Communication plan will unite and focus all your efforts-PR, marketing, advocacy-to achieving the results that meet the identified need:

- Specify all your target audience(s), including community partners
- List your communication goals
- Set clear, relevant, meaningful, measurable objectives
- Determine communication strategies and appropriate tools
- Show your project budget

Judges look for careful planning and organization of your communication campaign, with a focus on results: Will your plan lead to reaching your measurable objectives? They also look for how your planning process involved other parts of the library and other segments of the organization or community.

Implementation

How did you implement your plan?

- What tools, techniques, activities, materials and resources did you use to reach your goals?
- What print, digital and Web media did you use, if any?
- How did outside organizations and individuals participate?
- What graphics did you use?
- Did everything include your library's identity/brand?

Judges review your implementation and relate it to your plan. How well did you carry out your plans? Did you create unified and consistent graphics and effective, appropriate media? Too often, enthusiasm for one element of a project leads away from the purpose of the plan. No matter how great the graphic design, it still needs your logo. No matter how great the idea, it still needs to lead your audience to the desired outcome. Everything is part of your message, and all parts must work together to reach your goal, which, in turn, addresses the need you identified at the start.



Evaluation

The evaluation phase is the most overlooked element in any public relations program, and depends on setting measurable objectives in the planning stage. Did you measure results? Increased participation? Reaching a set goal? What did you change along the way, and why? The judges consider evaluation very carefully. They look for a purposeful review of the program in the light of the following questions:

- Did the program meet its goals and measurable objectives? (List measurements that support the achievement of the program, or show areas for future improvement.)
- What were the successful elements of the plan and the results?
- What change, if any, took place in the target audience?
- What, if any, difficulties were encountered and how were they handled?
- Did the program point out any changes that could be made to improve the library's public relations?
- What did you learn from this project that you will use in your NEXT strategic communication effort?

Overall creativity

Originality and creativity of the public relations program are important. Did you do a great job communicating about a traditional library program? Did your communication program break new ground—something the judges haven't seen before? Imagination, out-of-the-box thinking, and working wonders with a one-person staff and no money all count here.

Presentation

Use your best professional skills to make your entry presentation the best possible representation of your work. Support your crisp narrative with an equally brilliant display summarizing the highlights of your communication effort. Judges look for all the required elements presented in a clear, easy-to-follow, attractive display book.

Caution: Follow instructions carefully!

Entries that do not follow the guidelines may be disqualified. Decisions of the judges are final. All applicants will receive feedback on their entry, and have an opportunity to ask for a review of their entry by contacting the Chair of the JCD Committee to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

Deadline

Entries must be received by the first Friday in December
Send all materials in one sturdy package to:

John Cotton Dana Library PR Awards
ALA/LAMA
50 E. Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611
Tel: 800-545-2433, x5036

Label each separate item in the package. Keep copies of all printed materials, clippings and duplicates of all materials for your records. Neither the JCD Committee nor the American Library Association is responsible for materials lost or damaged in transit and/or during the judging process. Do not submit irreplaceable items.