FPRA's Golden Image & Image Awards Judging Process & Rubric

Overview

Award-winning public relations programs require sound planning and measurable objectives, which are grounded in research and are evaluated for return on investment. The scoring matrix for the Golden Image Awards, a statewide competition, and the Image Awards, local chapter-based competitions, follow these fundamental principles of public relations programming.

The judging method employed in these prestigious competitions allows the judges to concentrate on the following criteria required in each Golden Image Award and Image Award entry:

Two-page Summary:

Research/Situation Analysis	**10 points**	
Planning	**20 points**	
Implementation	**15 points**	**Two-page Summary = 70 points**
Evaluation	**10 points**	
Budget	**12 points**	
Entry Clarity	**3 points**	
Support Material:	**30 points**	
Total	**100 points**	

The following pages are a breakdown of the judging rubric used to score these noted sections.

IMPORTANT UPDATE

FPRA revamped its Image and Golden Image judge scoring process in 2020 to provide more specificity. This revised judging instrument requires specific criteria to be met to earn an increasing level of points.

Because additional information is required, the one-inch margin requirement was changed to a .75 margin and the double-spacing requirement was changed to 1.5 spacing. These changes provide entrants with additional space to cover the criteria outlined. New requirements implemented in 2020 include the following:

- Goals should be identified.
- Strategies and tactics should be provided and identified.
- Audience identification should address psychographic and demographic information.
- Communication channels used to reach target audience should be included.
- Sequencing of events (or timeline) should be addressed within implementation section.
- Assigned responsibilities for plan execution should be addressed within implementation phase.
- Communication messages used to reach identified target audiences should be included.

For specifics related to these new judging metrics, please consult the following judging rubric.

The rubric is grounded in our profession's established body of knowledge. Sources used to develop the rubric include *Cutlip & Center's Effective Public Relations, Eleventh Edition*, the "APR Study Guide from the Universal Accreditation Board" and *Public Relations and the Power of Creativity: Strategic Opportunities, Innovation and Critical Challenges*.

JUDGING TEAMS

Each entry will be scored by a team of three judges. Judging teams will be assigned to the same set of entries within any given Division and Category to ensure consistency and fairness. Judges will score each entry independently and then work as a team for final award selection/confirmation.

Judges are to be selected based on experience and expertise. For Golden Image, all appointed judges must be Accredited in Public Relations (APR) and have won an award in the Golden Image Awards competition or similar awards program. For Image, judges must have won an Image and/or Golden Image award, and it is strongly encouraged that they be Accredited.

JUDGING SCORING PROCESS

All Image entries must be submitted via FPRA's online Image Awards platform to be considered as an official Image Award entry. Through this platform, judges will score entries by answering a series of questions that correspond with the provided rubric. Based on their answers, the system will assign a score to each section being answered. These scores and award assignments, based on the judge's answers, will then be provided to the judging teams to review and verify.

Research/Situation Analysis Section (10 Pts.)

Research is the primary and/or secondary gathering of information to understand a situation, check assumptions and perceptions, define the problem and publics and determine the appropriate course of action.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM (5 points)

Poor	The purpose of the program/project was not stated. (0 points)
Fair	The purpose was stated, but it was not well defined and background information was insufficient to fully understand the scope of the situation. (2 points)
Good	The purpose was stated, and it was either defined with a value judgement that something was wrong or could be better, or sufficient background information was included to understand the situation, but not both. (3 points)
Very Good	The purpose was stated and well defined with a value judgement that something was wrong or could be made better, and sufficient background information to understand the situation was provided. This includes all that is known about the situation, its history and forces operating on the matter. (4 points)
Outstanding	The purpose of the project was concise, clearly stated and well-defined. A collection of all that is known about the situation, its history, operating forces, and those involved or affected internally and externally were provided. (5 points)

EMPLOYED RESEARCH METHODS (5 points)

Primary Research is an investigation or the collection of data firsthand, or by a third party contracted specifically for the firsthand party. It is research you do yourself that has not been done before.
Secondary Research uses the research findings of others or collects information secondhand. It is the examination of research previously conducted by others.

Poor	No research methods were noted as used. (0 points)
Fair	Research was conducted, but methods were either not provided or were incorrectly identified. (2 points)
Very Good	Primary and/or secondary research was employed and correctly identified for data/information collection. (4 points)
Outstanding	Primary and/or secondary research was employed and correctly identified for data/information collection, and the results gleaned from the research presented useful information for the planning process. (5 points)

Planning Section (20 Points)

The planning section should distinguish goals, objectives, strategies, tactics and audiences based on research findings. The stated goals and objectives should address the identified problem or issue and align with the organizational mission and goals. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time specific. Strategies and tactics should be distinguished, and target audiences and their characteristics identified.

GOAL-DIRECTED STRATEGIC THINKING (5 points)

Goals are longer-term, broad, global and future statements of "being."

Poor　　　　No goal(s) was provided. (0 points)

Fair　　　　Goal(s) was provided but did not provide a clearly defined outcome. (2 points)

Good　　　　Goal(s) was stated and provided a clearly defined outcome. (3 points)

Very Good　Stated goal(s) provided a clearly defined outcome and was appropriate for addressing the identified problem/issue. (4 points)

Outstanding　Stated goal(s) provided a clearly defined outcome, was appropriate for addressing the identified problem/issue and aligns with the organization's mission and goals. (5 points)

S.M.A.R.T. OBJECTIVES PROVIDED (5 points)

S.M.A.R.T. objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Attainable, Relevant and Time Specific.

Poor　　　　All objectives contain only one or no elements outlined above. (0 points)

Fair　　　　All objectives contain at least two elements outlined above. (2 points)

Good　　　　All objectives contain at least three elements outlined above. (3 points)

Very Good　All objectives contain at least four elements outlined above. (4 points)

Outstanding　All objectives contain all the elements outlined above. (5 points)

STRATEGIES & TACTICS DISTINGUISHED (5 points)

Strategy – The approach or general plan for the program designed to achieve an objective.
Tactic – The actual events, media, methods used to implement the strategy.

Poor   Neither strategies nor tactics were distinguished for accomplishing the
                 stated objectives. (0 points)

Fair   Either strategies or tactics were distinguished for accomplishing the
                 stated objectives, but not both. (2 points)

Good   Both strategies and tactics were distinguished for accomplishing the stated
                 objectives. (3 points)

Very Good   Both strategies and tactics were correctly distinguished for accomplishing the
                 stated objectives, and a clear understanding of the difference between
                 strategies and tactics was demonstrated. (4 points)

Outstanding Both strategies and tactics were correctly distinguished for accomplishing the
                 stated objectives, a clear understanding of the difference between strategies
                 and tactics was demonstrated and the identified strategies worked to support
                 the achievement of the stated objectives. (5 points)

AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION (5 Points)

Psychographics – opinions, beliefs, attitudes, values, etc.
Demographics – gender, age, income, etc.

Poor   Audience identification was not addressed. (0 points)

Fair   Audience(s) was identified, but NO psychographic *or* demographic information
                 was provided. (1 points)

Good   Audience(s) was identified, and either psychographic *or* demographic
                 information was provided, but not both. (2 points)

Very Good   Audience(s) was identified and *both* psychographic *and* demographic
                 information were given. (3 points)

Outstanding Audience(s) was identified, both psychographic and demographic information
                 were given and appropriate communication channels/vehicles for reaching the
                 target audience(s) were identified. (5 points)

Implementation Section (15 Points)

The implementation section outlines the action and communication employed for achieving the stated goal(s) and objectives. How and when the plan's key message(s) was communicated should be addressed. The message(s) should work to motivate the target audience's interest, as determined by research, and cause a goal-directed response. Within this section, judges should be given enough information to understand the sequence of events (timeline), assigned responsibilities for plan execution. The use of creativity will also be assessed.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS/TIMELINE (5 points)

Poor   Sequencing of events, a timeline of activities, employed during the implementation phase was *not* identified. (0 points)

Good   Plan addressed the sequence of events, a timeline of the activities, employed during the implementation phase. (3 points)

Outstanding Plan addressed the sequence of events (a timeline of the activities) employed during the implementation phase *and* outlined assigned responsibilities for plan execution. (5 points)

EFFECTIVENESS OF PLAN MESSAGING (5 points)

Poor   No communication message(s) was provided for the targeted audience(s). (0 points)

Fair   Communication message(s) for *some* of the identified target audience(s), not all, was provided. (2 points)

Good   Communication message(s) for *all* identified target audiences was provided. (3 points)

Very Good Communication message(s) for *all* identified target audiences was provided, and the entry demonstrated that the message(s) was disseminated via channels used by the target audiences. (4 points)

Outstanding Communication message(s) for *all* identified target audiences was provided, and the entry demonstrated that the message(s) was disseminated via channels used by the target audiences *and* that the message(s) motivated the target audience(s) to act/respond to the message(s). (5 points)

PROGRAM/PLAN CREATIVITY (5 points)

Demonstration of creativity in public relations may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Program/project messaging is original and adaptive, new and functional
- Demonstration of originality and effectiveness
- Innovative ways of sending messages whose content is unconventional yet adaptable
- Sensitivity to problems (recognizing that several problems exist where it may appear to some that only one problem exits)
- Succeeded in earning trust, adding value, changing the attitude, behavior and/or beliefs of the company's/organization's publics
- Use of visual storytelling vehicles
- Use of unexpected and unconventional strategies, tactics and/or tools
- Making everyday life more meaningful, simple, joyful and/or easier
- Conceptual blending – a campaign that aims to create a new space where the target group is very much aware of the fact that the campaign is for the good of the company/organization, but still aims to create a difference for the target group as well.

Did the project demonstrate creativity?

No. (0 points)

Yes, there was demonstration of some level of creativity. (2 points).

Yes, I was impressed with the demonstrated level of creativity. (3 points).

Yes, I was very impressed with the demonstrated level of creativity (5 points).

Note: Creativity is still a vague concept for the public relations field. However, findings show that creative campaigns send messages that are original and adaptive, new and functional and potentially useful. The list above attempts to identify some, but not all, of the characteristics that help to define creativity in the public relations profession.

Evaluation Section (10 Points)

The evaluation section determines if the program/project met the stated goals and objectives and the extent to which the planned results or outcomes were accomplished. This section is meant to answer the question "How well did the entrant do?"

OBJECTIVES MET (5 points)

Poor The entry did *not* meet any of the stated objectives, or no objectives were provided to evaluate against. (0 points)

Good The entry met *some* of the stated objectives. (3 points)

Very Good The entry met or exceeded *all* the stated objectives. (4 points)

Outstanding The entry met or exceeded *all* the stated objectives *and* the objectives work to effectively support the states goals. (5 points)

GOALS MET (5 points)

Poor The entry did *not* meet any of the stated goals, or goals were not provided (0 points)

Good The entry demonstrated that inroads were made to meeting the stated goals. (3 points)

Outstanding The entry met *all* the stated goals. (5 points)

Budget Section (12 Points)

To properly assess an award-winning program, all costs associated with the program/project must be identified, either in dollar figures or the percentage/ratio of cost to the department's or organization's overall budget. This includes staff time and in-kind contributions, if applicable. The primary purpose for budget documentation is to demonstrate through ROI why the submitted program/project equates to a worthwhile investment.

BUDGET DOCUMENTATION (5 points)

Poor   No budget information was included. (0 points)

Fair   Budget numbers (dollar figures or percentages/ratios) were included but no additional information or explanation of how budget was utilized was provided. (2 points)

Good   Budget numbers (dollar figures or percentages/ratios) included itemized utilization *or* staff time, but not both. (3 points)

Very Good   Budget numbers (dollar figures or percentages/ratios) included *both* itemized utilization *and* staff time. (4 points)

Outstanding Budget numbers (dollar figures or percentages/ratios) included *both* itemized utilization *and* staff time, *and* the program/project came in at or under budget. (5 points)

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (7 points)

Return on Investment (ROI) is demonstrated by comparing the program's/project's overall cost to the return received as a result of implementing the program/project.

ROI demonstration methods may include, but are not limited to:

- Increased sales or usage of service achieved
- Comparing baseline analytics (web and social media) with analytics following program/project completion
- Increase in social media engagement and following increase
- Sentiment analysis of media mentions, before, during and after program program/project completion
- Survey result comparisons (benchmark data vs. follow-up survey data)
- Donated services quantified (if applicable)
- Costs comparisons to industry standards were made (if able and appropriate)
- Higher ranking for keywords achieved through comparison of benchmark data
- Increased website traffic using baseline data for comparison
- Increase in subscriptions (newsletters, email signups, etc.)
- Industry or local award given to business or professional associated with project

Did the project demonstrate an impressive ROI?

No. (0 points)

I believe the noted ROI was reasonable and justified the cost (time, money and other resources) employed to achieve the end outcome(s). (3 points)

I was impressed with the demonstrated ROI. (4 points)

I was very impressed with the demonstrated ROI. (7 points)*

*Triggers Judges' Award Consideration

"Reasonable" is defined as what should be considered an expected gain for resources exchanged to achieve a desired goal/outcome.

"Impressive" is defined by answering the following question. "Did the entry's ROI have the 'wow factor'?" Only entries that exceed their stated objectives by what the judge considers to be a wide margin should be considered for a "yes" level response. Judges have the latitude to determine what they believe to be considered an "impressive" ROI.

Entry Clarity (3 Points)

These points are awarded based on the overall professionalism presented in the summary and supporting materials.

Was the entry professionally written, i.e., clear, concise and overall possessed good grammar usage?

No. (0 points)

Somewhat. (2 points)

Yes. (3 points)

Support Material Section (30 Points)

This section should contain the materials that support or substantiate information provided in the two-page Summary. An effective support material section works to quickly summarize the program/project entry for the reviewing judges.

Three points are earned for each "yes" response in Questions 2-11.

1. No support material was provided. (0 points)
2. The support material section included a table of contents. (3 points)
3. The support material was presented in an easy-to-follow format. (3 points)
4. Research documentation (i.e., findings) were included with support material. (3 points)
5. Support material reflected the implementation of the program's/project's strategies. (3 points)
6. Support material reflected the implementation of the program's/project's tactics. (3 points)
7. Representations of the program's/project's printed and/or digital content (tools) was included with the support material. (3 points)
8. The support material reflected noted budgetary items. (3 points)
9. The support material was professional looking. (3 points)
10. The support material's graphics supported the program's/project's key messaging. OR, if graphics are not applicable, the support material's tools supported the program's/project's key messaging. (3 points)
11. The support material was creative and/or innovative. (3 points)