



## 2018 IABC GOLD QUILL AWARDS: CALL FOR ENTRIES

Dear Communicator,

You've worked hard on your communication program by researching, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating. Now, it's time for you to be recognized for your best efforts.

For more than 40 years, the IABC Gold Quill Awards have recognized communication work from around the world that soars above the average, taking communication to new heights. Award-winning work is innovative, strategic and delivers significant results. By entering the 2018 Gold Quill Awards program, you validate your best work against a global standard—a measure that elevates groundbreaking work to identify “the best of the best” communication efforts in the world.



The Gold Quill Awards program features 28 categories in four divisions. Guides to preparing your entry allow you to organize it with the best descriptions of your work. Two experienced communicators evaluate your entry after they attend training to apply evaluation criteria based on IABC's Global Standard for the communication profession. All entrants receive constructive feedback, making for an excellent professional development opportunity that results in improving your communication program.

When you submit your entries by the January 2018 deadlines, you'll receive your scores and feedback in early April, giving you time to plan to attend the IABC Excellence Gala on 5 June 2018.

I look forward to recognizing and celebrating your communication work that soars to new heights.

Cindy Schmieg, ABC, IABC Fellow  
2018 IABC Awards Chair

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## ABOUT THE AWARDS

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### WHY ENTER?

Regardless of the final award results, the Gold Quill Awards program offers all entrants an array of benefits:

- Gain international peer recognition for excellence in communication.
- Profile industry innovation and best practices.
- Open up speaking and publishing opportunities.
- Build your personal reputation as a thought leader.
- Enhance the reputation of your team and organization, both internally and externally.
- Build a business case to fund a key initiative.
- Inspire your team. Bring them together to produce show-stopping work and share the glory when it's complete.
- Challenge yourself to new heights of innovation, creativity and strategic thinking.
- Build a portfolio of work that opens doors to new opportunities.
- Get your submissions assessed and validated by highly qualified communicators from around the world.



### TIME FRAME

All eligible work must be implemented, published or broadcast between January 2015 and the day of submission. If a long-term strategy was developed prior to January 2015 and hasn't previously been entered, it is eligible for entry. If you entered your work in 2016 or 2017 and didn't win an award, you may revise and re-enter your project. Entries that have won in previous years may not be resubmitted.

### ENTRY FEES AND DEADLINES

Early-bird deadline: 15 November		Final deadline: 10 January		Late deadline: 30 January	
IABC members	US\$275	IABC members	US\$350	IABC members	US\$450
Non-members	US\$375	Non-members	US\$450	Non-members	US\$550
Student members	US\$25	Student members	US\$40	Student members	US\$50
Non-member students	US\$60	Non-member students	US\$75	Non-member students	US\$90

Not an IABC member? [Join now](#) to get the discounted entry rate, plus other [benefits of IABC membership](#).

## QUICK FACTS

- Choose from four divisions and 28 streamlined categories.
- Trained evaluators will review your entry and provide you with solid feedback.
- You may enter multiple categories within one division or across divisions.
- Evaluation is based on IABC's Global Seven-point Scale of Excellence for strategic planning and execution.
- Scores for Communication Management, Communication Research, and Communication Training and Education entries are based equally on the work plan and the work sample.
- Entries in the Communication Skills division are scored on the work sample's creativity, professional execution and alignment.
- For student entries, 35 percent of the score is based on the work plan and 65 percent on the work sample.

## THE EVALUATION PROCESS

All IABC Gold Quill Award entries are evaluated by international professional communicators with more than 10 years of experience. The majority of evaluators have earned Gold Quill Awards. Many are either IABC accredited or certified by the Global Communication Certification Council. And, all are trained to evaluate entries against established criteria aligned to IABC's Global Standard of the communication profession.

Your entry is scored independently by two evaluators, who reconcile scores together at Blue Ribbon Panels held face-to-face in multiple locations around the world or virtually.

There are two categories of awards:

- Awards of Merit, for entries with a score 5.25 to 5.74 out of 7
- Awards of Excellence, for entries with scores above 5.75

## IF YOUR ENTRY WINS

- Each winning entry receives a Gold Quill Award trophy.
- Awards are presented to winners at the annual IABC Excellence Gala held during the IABC World Conference. This evening of celebration and recognition includes a networking reception, ceremony, dinner and dancing.
- Select entrants with the highest-scoring entries are invited to present their program at the IABC World Conference.
- Case studies of select winning entries are prepared and shared through IABC channels.
- IABC announces winners with a news release, on [iabc.com](#), and through social media.
- IABC chapters and regions recognize Gold Quill Award winners in their areas.

## THE 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.

Work plans for Divisions 1, 2 and 3 are limited to four pages using a font size no smaller than 10-point and margins no less than 0.5 inch (1.27 cm). A template is available on the [Gold Quill Awards website](#).



For Division 4, Communication Skills, you will need to submit a brief entry form on the awards entry website.

Languages accepted include English, Spanish, and French.

Work done for IABC at the international level is not eligible for this program.

Entries may be disqualified if:

- The work plan exceeds four 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.
- If 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.

## STUDENT ENTRIES

A student or a group of students may submit entries. At the time the work was created, the student must have been attending school full time or part time, working toward a degree at a college, university or other educational institution. Entrants who were enrolled as students but have professional communication experience or are employed in the communication profession must submit their entry as an IABC professional member or non-member.

Work produced for educational courses, a club or volunteer association, an internship, or commercial and non-commercial activities, including work for an IABC chapter or region, is eligible for submission.

If the assignment was not fully implemented, please make note of this to the evaluators. It will not disadvantage your entry; however, you must show how the program would have been evaluated, had it been implemented in practice.

Professors, lecturers or advisers may not enter on behalf of a student.

## HOW TO ENTER

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### ONLY 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.



### HOW TO ENTER DIVISIONS 1, 2 AND 3

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. Edit your plan to ensure it's clear and concise. Bullets, tables and lists might help you with saving space.

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

Your work plan should:

- Describe the context for your program or project
- Clearly state the communication challenge or opportunity.
- Provide an analysis of your target audiences.
- Demonstrate high-level goals and measurable objectives stated as outputs or outcomes.
- Provide insight into your strategic approach.
- Highlight the efficient use of resources.
- Provide an abbreviated tactical execution plan.
- Discuss any challenges that you faced during planning and execution, and demonstrate collaboration with stakeholders, if appropriate.
- Provide measurable, meaningful results that are aligned with your stated objectives and audience and business needs.
- Ensure your work plan references your work sample and assists the evaluators to navigate through your entry and find the examples that best illustrate your work.

**The work sample** is the supporting material that illustrates how you planned and implemented your communication program. It can include video and audio files, Word documents, PDFs, magazines, brochures and website links. Your work sample should represent the full scope of

your work—evaluators are looking for actual, real examples of the work you did. However, bear in mind that evaluators have limited time to review your submission. A well-organized work sample that demonstrates the best of your efforts will score higher than an overwhelming number of items that evaluators can't sort through.

Organize and condense your work sample to showcase a representative overview of your project. Pick examples (clips, photos, etc.) that best support your work plan and represent your

strategy. Be creative in demonstrating how the elements of your work sample are aligned with the business needs and audience preferences.

Please also keep in mind that large files are difficult to upload and download, so please condense the file size as much as possible. The maximum file size is 2 GB.

However you present your work sample, please ensure it is readable!

#### HOW TO ENTER DIVISION 4

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)
4. List up to three key measurable objectives for the project. How well did the project meet the objectives? (maximum 600 characters)
5. List up to three key messages for the project. (maximum 600 characters)
6. Describe the resources (budget, time, others) available for the project and how effectively they were managed. (maximum 600 characters)

Questions? Email us at: [recognition@iabc.com](mailto:recognition@iabc.com).



## ADVICE ON ENTERING

The [Gold Quill Awards website](#) has many [resources](#) to assist entrants with their entries, including:

- The “Midas Touch Guide” for each division—a detailed guide on how to craft your entry to best showcase your work.
- Score sheets for each division, so you can see exactly what the evaluators will be looking for.
- A preview of the online form for the Communication Skills division entries, so that you can have all your answers ready for submission.
- A Word document template for divisions 1, 2 and 3 work plans to help you set up your entry correctly.



When preparing your work plan, ask yourself:

- Does this work plan show how the project or program was strategically planned and implemented?
- Does it provide enough information that an evaluator (who may be from another country and/or not familiar with the campaign) can understand what took place?
- Does it show how the project or program helped the organization?
- Does it contain SMART objectives—specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound?
- Does it cover all of the important points and does it tell a compelling story?
- Could your plan be used to show others what works?

## SPECIAL AWARDS

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The IABC awards committee selects from the highest scoring entries to bestow these special awards.

### **Best of the Best**

Recommended by evaluators and reviewed by the Gold Quill Awards chair, vice-chair and past chair, the Best of the Best winners represent the very best entries seen across the globe. Best of the Best winners receive special recognition and a special trophy at the IABC Gold Quill Gala at the IABC 2018 World Conference in Montreal. *Best of the Best* awards are announced on the night of the IABC Excellence Gala.

### **Jake Wittmer Award**

Presented to the entry that shows outstanding research that was commissioned or developed by a communicator and was instrumental in ensuring the success of a communication program.

### **Business Issue Award**

Presented to an entry that addresses a critical business issue that threatened the well-being or viability of an organization, and shows strategic involvement while presenting an effective, innovative resolution with measureable results.

### **Sharon Berzok Student Award**

Presented to the student achieving the highest standard of communication excellence in the student categories. The winning entrant will receive a US\$500 scholarship to use for professional development, education or training.

Winners of the Jake Wittmer, Business Issue and Sharon Berzok awards are advised in mid-April so they can make plans to attend the IABC Excellence Gala where they will receive special recognition.

### **IABC Gold Quill Team or Agency of the Year Awards**

Imagine your team or organization being named the IABC Gold Quill Award Team or Agency of the Year! The “of the Year” special awards, first introduced in 2015, highlight the highest-scored entries in the program submitted by an agency or organization. The awards are given based on the number of winning submissions from a particular entrant.

The winners of these awards are announced at the IABC Excellence Gala held in conjunction with the World Conference.

- Boutique Agency of the Year (five or fewer employees)
- Small Agency of the Year (six to 20 employees)

- Mid-Size Agency of the Year (21–50 employees)
- Large Agency of the Year (51 or more employees)
- Corporate Communication Department of the Year
- Not-for-Profit Communication Department of the Year

## DIVISIONS AND CATEGORIES

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### 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 behavioral 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 that 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 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 behaviors 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: MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND BRAND COMMUNICATION**

- May include various activities designed to sell products, services, destinations, organizations or ideas to external audiences, and is generally delivered through a variety of communication vehicles and channels
- Strategic advertising campaigns designed to build brand awareness, influence opinion, motivate audience behaviors, or sell products and services
- 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)

**Category 8: 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 9: 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 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

**Category 10: 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 11: 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 behaviors of decision-makers toward the organization or industry

#### **Category 12: 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 two-way communication between a company, the financial community, and stakeholders

#### **Category 13: 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 labor 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 14: 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 15: 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 16: 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 17: NONPROFIT CAMPAIGNS**

- Programs recognizing the particular challenges of the nonprofit sector
- May include multiple internal or external audiences
- Promotes nonprofit 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 none at all.

**Category 18: COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT, STUDENT ENTRY**

Entries to any category in this division submitted by a student.

**DIVISION 2: COMMUNICATION RESEARCH**

Entries in this division recognize the importance of research and measurement as a foundation for strategic communication work and a competency that's integral to success throughout the career of a communication professional. A clear understanding of why the research was needed demonstrates its strategic value to an organization.

**Category 19: COMMUNICATION RESEARCH**

- Formative research conducted during the initial stages of the strategic communication planning process that benchmarks audience opinions or behaviors, profiles the marketplace or communication environment in which the organization operates, aligns best practices against organizational needs or informs strategic direction for communication programs
- Entries may include any research that informs actions or decision making within the communication field. This could be audience analysis, competitive benchmarking, program or product test markets, reputation or brand studies, communication and content audits, usability studies, readership or effectiveness studies

**Category 20: COMMUNICATION RESEARCH, STUDENT ENTRY**

- Entries to any category in this division submitted by a student.

## DIVISION 3: COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND EDUCATION

This division recognizes the mentorship and education role of consultants and communicators in developing and delivering workshops, classes, seminars or training that educates an audience about any aspect of the communication profession. This division includes all communication disciplines and professional competencies.

### **Category 21: COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

- Training or educational programs delivered to an internal or external audience that help to improve their communication competencies
- For internal audiences, this may include supervisor/manager/leader training in communication skills, presentation skills and employee ambassador development, in addition to media training, speaker's bureau training, and other communication disciplines
- For external audiences, this may include presentations for conferences, university classes, seminars or workshops, as well as media and executive coaching

### **Category 22: COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND EDUCATION, STUDENT ENTRY**

Entries to any category in this division submitted by a student.

## DIVISION 4: 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 23: 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 24: 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 25: 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 26: 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 27: 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

NONPROFIT WRITING:

- Material written to promote nonprofit organizations, including IABC regional and chapter events

WRITING – SPECIAL PROJECTS:

- Books (fiction and nonfiction), educational material, scripts for theatrical use, and other writing projects not covered above

**Category 28: COMMUNICATION SKILLS, STUDENT ENTRY**

- Entries to any category in this division submitted by a student

## IABC EXCELLENCE GALA

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The IABC Excellence Gala recognizes Gold Quill Award winners, IABC Fellows, and other IABC awards. It's a night of celebration with professional communicators whose work and contributions to the profession have *soared*. The evening includes a champagne networking reception and formal awards ceremony, followed by dinner and dancing.

Soar with the IABC Gold Quill Award winners on Tuesday, 5 June 2018, in Montréal.

IABC World Conference  
Montréal, Canada  
3–6 June 2018  
The Communication Crossroads

Learn more: [wc.iabc.com](http://wc.iabc.com)