

# 10



## Steps to Your **Perfect** Awards Website

Creating an awards website is the first step an organization must take in order to prepare for the launch of its awards program. Even before you start planning your awards ceremony, ordering your awards, or even announcing your call for entry. Your website must be ready for the launch of the program because it is the face and source of all information that applicants will need to access.

Making sure you have included all the information necessary may seem daunting and even impossible, but as the experts of your organization, your team already knows everything that the applicants need to know in order to submit. To aid in this process we have compiled a comprehensive checklist of crucial elements to include on your website. If you follow these tips, your awards website will be more than prepared for launch.

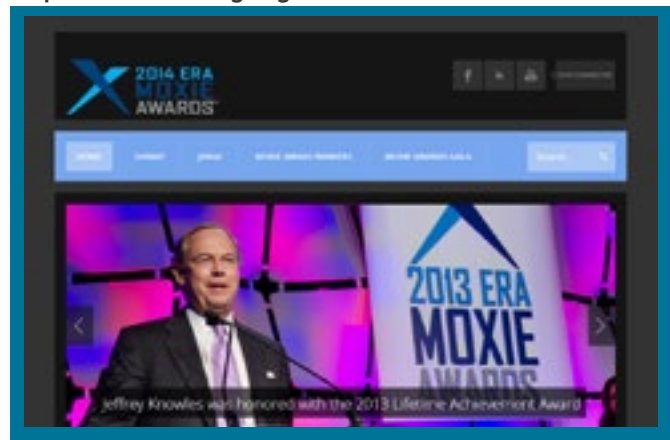
# 1 Location of your website

The first thing you need to consider about your awards website is whether to make it a separate site or a micro-site within your organization's website. We recommend keeping your awards website within your website's brand.

**Separate Site:**  
<https://www.reggieawards.org/>



**Micro-Site:**  
<http://www.retailing.org/moxies/>



Regardless of its location, your awards website should have a similar look and feel as that of your organization's, allowing people to easily identify the program with your organization. Having your reliable, recognized brand increases trust with people who are familiar with your organization. This is an asset you don't want to jeopardize by deviating too far from your brand. Keep in mind the huge marketing potential your awards program can have for your organization!

# 2 Branding





# 3

## Overview Page

It may seem obvious and unnecessary to mention the need for an overview page, (of course you know you need one) but it's not. An overview page gives value to your program by touching on the important facets including: what the program is, its history, and importance to applicants. Let's look at each of these in depth.



### What the award is

The first thing you should provide on the overview page is an introduction to the awards program. Give a brief explanation of the program and a list of the different categories for which people can apply. This section serves to provide some general information in order to pique the interest of visitors to explore further and hopefully submit.



### History

Including a brief summary of the history of the awards program serves to provide a little more in depth information for the interested applicant. How and when did the program get started, how has it developed over the years, why did your organization decide to found this program? These are all questions to consider for this section. Do not forget to also include a link to your archives page (which will be addressed later).



### Importance of entering

This answers the "What's in it for me?" question for applicants. Address why people should be interested in submitting to this awards program – is it the prestige of the award, the kind of award (monetary, an appointed position, etc.), does it provide them with a valuable experience, are the judges going to give them feedback on their work?



### Visuals

Visuals: last, but certainly not least. Everyone with access to the internet knows that having strong visuals of all kinds on your website is essential to keeping up with the fast-paced internet environment. Visuals greatly impact the likelihood of someone staying to read your content or not. Luckily, a barrage of gifs and memes are not necessary; one well executed graphic is more than sufficient for your overview page. For instance, you can include a photo of a previous winner with which people from your membership can identify, or a group shot of last year's awards ceremony. Other ideas: a cool graphic, the logo of this year's program, or a photo of the award itself.





## Call for Entry Page

# 4

Considering the amount of traffic your call for entry page will get over the course of the awards program, it is vital to make sure you have all important information listed.

An important tip: though lots of information needs to be covered here, do not forget that white space is your friend. When drafting the information for the page try to avoid making it look overly cluttered. You want visitors to be able to locate and review the information without difficulty and they may miss out on something vital if it's too cluttered.

## Dates

Important dates to include in this section are: the start and end dates for submissions, early bird submissions (if applicable), announcement of winners, and when the awards gala or event will take place.

## Category breakdown

While this is briefly addressed in the overview page, your call for entry page should provide a more comprehensive breakdown of all the different awards for which applicants may apply and on what each is focused.

## Eligibility requirements

If your program has eligibility requirements or restrictions they should be included on this page. Some such requirements may be: no previously submitted work, date submissions material was created, or industry specific submissions.

## Fees

Whether you include submission fees is up to you, but if you do, be sure to provide applicants with sufficient information here. This includes: what is the difference in cost between early bird, normal, and late entries? Are fees refundable if an application is withdrawn? If one applicant can submit more than one entry is the cost per entry or a one-time fee?

## How to enter

You may think it goes without saying, but don't forget to explain how to enter your awards program. This will let applicants know what information or additional documents/photos/data they need to have on hand before completing their application. Also briefly cover how your submission system works (i.e. downloadable PDF, mail-in, or online system).

## Link to submission tool

After the "How to Enter" section a link to whatever kind of tool is being used for your submissions should be provided, whether it's a PDF to email or full-fledged online system.

## Sample application

If you have a complex application process providing a sample application would be a helpful resource, though not a necessary one.

## Contact Information

Include applicable information for the primary point of contact for questions concerning submissions and the program in general.

# 5

## Archive of Previous Winners

It is important to have a space on your website devoted to previous awards seasons, highlighting the past winners. This allows your organization to continue showcasing each year's winners – recognizable faces for returning and new applicants.

An archive page also gives your awards program an added degree of legitimacy. The archives show visitors a visual representation of the history of your program – the approximate time it has been running and the success and popularity of each year's program.

This page can simply be gallery of each year's winners, or it can go more in depth and be a mini-presentation of the program year to year: the highlights of the gala, the winners, the judges, etc.

# 6

## Judging

This page gives applicants further information on the procedures of the program and also builds hype around the awards by illustrating its judges.

### Who are they?

If the judges for this year's awards have already been selected (if not, that's ok) tell who they are; include a photo and a small bio. Don't forget to include what qualifies them to be a judge. Having a judge with extensive experience within your industry goes far to add to the importance of the program.

### What criteria are they using to score submissions?

Let people know what they should prepare for their submission. It will allow them to submit a better application and helps you out by answering some general FAQs applicants might have!

# 7

## Official Rules

A portion of your awards website should be set aside for the program's official rules, for legal reasons and for the benefit of the applicant. This information should be easy for applicants to find on the site; include a link to the rules on your call for entry page too.



Having a FAQ page is useful, but not critical. If you do choose to include one, comb through your site with the eyes of someone who has never seen it (or have someone in your organization unfamiliar with the program walk through it). Try to find and eliminate any possible hitches or confusing language.

Another resource when crafting your FAQ is last years' applicants – what questions and problems do you remember them having? If it's appropriate, you can craft a survey to send out to them. Take charge and make this year's applicants (and your support team) happy by addressing these questions now.

## 8 FAQ

## 9 Link to Awards Gala

Provide a link to the event page on your website. If the awards gala has not been fully planned, don't worry. Just giving applicants a framework to keep in mind is helpful – date, time, and location. The details can be provided at a later date.



## 10 Contact Page

I'm serious here, everyone. You cannot put contact information on your website too often. Definitely include it on your call for entry page, but don't forget to make a page specifically with the appropriate contact information. Include all the relevant persons or departments for different questions (submissions, event, support, etc.)



### **About OpenWater**

*Based in Washington D.C., OpenWater creates and deploys holistic, cloud-based solutions that streamline awards, abstract and conference management for associations of all sizes. We pride ourselves on offering clients more than software. We guide them every step of the way, from planning and initial system buildout to the industry's only Truly Unlimited Customer Support pledge. The result? Customized online solutions that allow staff to focus on core competencies, increase non-dues revenue and improve membership value.*

# Want to take your awards program to the next level?

## See how OpenWater can help!

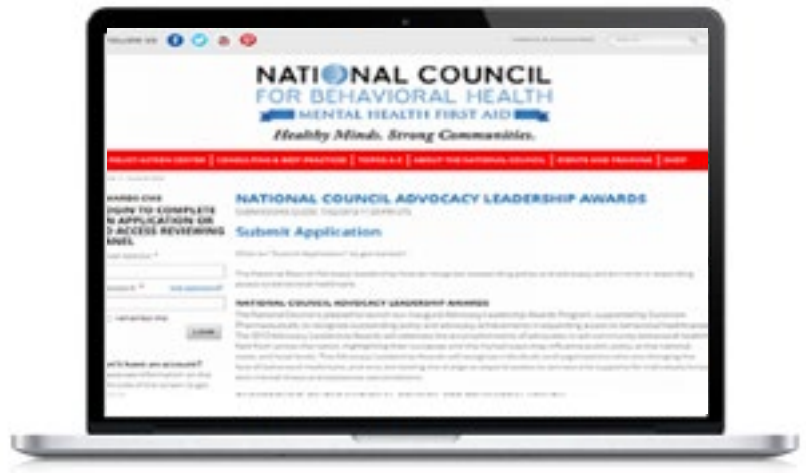
### How OpenWater Awards works:

#### Entries and Judging In One System:

Keep it all in one place. OpenWater Awards gives you quick access to both online entries and online judging. No juggling act required.

**Branded Site:** With OpenWater Awards the awards website looks like your site... no templates, no confusion.

**Keep Informed:** Confused about confirmation emails, reminder emails and winner emails? We have you covered. OpenWater Awards was designed to keep everyone informed.



Just click the button below and fill out the proceeding form to request a demo.

**REQUEST A DEMO TODAY!**