

*How to:* **EVALUATE THE  
SUCCESS OF YOUR  
AWARDS PROGRAM**



*Part I: Entrants*

# CONGRATULATIONS

## You have successfully executed your awards program!

So now what do you do?

### A program-wide assessment.

A program-wide assessment consists of careful reviews of the multiple aspects of your awards program, from your categories to the sponsor benefits. Whether your awards program is fairly new or has been around for decades, a program wide assessment is always needed. No program will ever be perfect; and every year, there will always be something that you and your team can improve on.

To gain a comprehensive assessment of your awards program, there are six groups of stakeholders from which you need to receive feedback: your entrants, finalists, winners, judges, sponsors, and team.

In this paper, we will first discuss receiving feedback from your entrants.



## WHY DO YOU NEED FEEDBACK FROM YOUR ENTRANTS?

Some key metrics in determining whether or not an awards program is a success are:

- *The number of new entrants who entered,*
- *The number of past entrants who entered again this year, &*
- *The number of past entrants who did not return.*

These are great numbers to know and have. However, these numbers do not tell the full story of:

- *Why you have new entrants,*
- *Why some of your past entrants entered again this year, &*
- *Why some of your past entrants did not return.*

Getting this valuable data from your entrants will provide you with information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of your awards program. For example, you will determine things like what entrants value about your awards programs. It can also reveal whether or not there is a gap in information/knowledge about your program between you and your entrants.

With this information, you can create and execute a strategy that ensures your strengths remain strengths and that your weaknesses are improved.



## HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT RECEIVING FEEDBACK FROM YOUR ENTRANTS?

There are three types of entrants:

- 1. Past entrant — Participants who entered your awards program in the past and have stopped entering.*
- 2. Returning entrant — Participants who entered your awards program in the past and have entered the most recent cycle of your awards again.*
- 3. New entrant — Participants who have entered the most recent cycle of your awards program.*

To gain perspective into your three different types of entrants, it is best, at minimum, to send a targeted survey to each of these groups. The information that you are aiming to obtain from each type of entrant is different; thus, the questions you will be asking each group will be different as well.

Lucky for you, we have created survey templates for each entrant type (which you can find in the document that came with this guide). These survey templates are exactly just that, templates. You can tailor these survey templates according to your needs and goals and then upload them onto a survey platform to easily obtain, compile, and analyze the data.

If you and your team have time after things have settled down, conduct interviews with a handful of individuals from each entrant type. A survey is a great tool to obtain data; but nothing beats a well-conducted interview. In an interview, you are able to have an engaging conversation with your entrants and oftentimes, you come across information that you would normally miss by simply asking for feedback via survey.



## WHEN SHOULD YOU RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM YOUR ENTRANTS?

The optimal time to send out the survey is right after the Call for Entry deadline. This is a good time to send out the survey because the entrants have their experience entering your awards program fresh in their minds.

You may be thinking to yourself that you are too busy to put together a survey and send it out to your entrants; you're going through a mental checklist that's a thousand items long, especially with judging looming on the horizon. You also reason that you will not be reviewing and analyzing the survey results until weeks after the awards ceremony when you have had the chance to catch your breath. I have been in your shoes and have said the very same things.

However, these are the reasons why you shouldn't talk yourself out of it:

- 1. It's more than okay to let the survey results sit for a while! You do not have to do anything with the survey results until you are ready.*
- 2. What matters most is that you have quality data and a sizeable amount of it to help guide you in prepping for next year's awards program.*
- 3. We did the hard work for you! We've already created the templates and all you have to do now is plug in your awards name and make any additions according to your specific wants and needs.*

By sending out the surveys at this point during your awards cycle, you are optimizing the quality and quantity of the data that you will be receiving and that will make all the difference when it comes time to analyze!

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Be on the lookout for the next part of **How to Evaluate the Success of Your Awards Program!** Next up: Judging.



# LOOKING TO TAKE YOUR AWARDS PROGRAM TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

## LEARN HOW OPENWATER CAN HELP

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Comprehensive dashboards give your complete oversight of all aspects of your awards program.



Create a custom-branded upload portal that matches your existing website and brand.



Display and promote your entrants with a custom gallery on your website.

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