

Custom Reports: Sustainable Quality Awards (SQAs)

AT A GLANCE:

Organization:
Sustainable Quality
Awards (SQAs)

Website:
sustainablem.org

Headquarters:
Santa Monica, C.A.

Description:
Four award programs
that recognize corporate
sustainability leadership
in Santa Monica

How a custom report saves time -- and environmental resources, too

Oscars, Emmys, Grammys and more... Los Angeles is known for award programs as much as it is for palm trees and sunny streets.

Whom would the iconic palm trees and streets award? The **Sustainable Quality Awards (SQAs)**. The SQAs recognize the intersection of environmental stewardship and Santa Monica, California entrepreneurs. SQA nominees and winners demonstrate how businesses add vitality to the streets while also protecting natural resources.

The awards program, established in 1995, is jointly sponsored by the City of Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce, and Sustainable Works, an educationally-focused nonprofit. There are four awards: Excellence in Economic Development, Excellence in Social Responsibility, Excellence in Stewardship of the Environment, and a Grand Prize.

SQA selected OpenWater Awards to manage all four categories.

Custom Forms for Paper Based Evaluation

Wait, paper?

By selecting OpenWater Awards (a digital software platform), SQA significantly reduced the use of paper required to manage their awards programs. Yet, like most organizations, a need for paper remained.



Specifically: a final round of judging on paper.

In this regard, SQA's situation was not unique. Nor was the amount of time required to compile, print, and distribute the SQA's "Judges Report" on paper.

"Last year, I spent a decent amount of time cutting and pasting judges' scores and comments into a Word document, so the results would be presentable on Judging Day," explains Amanda Grossman, award administrator. Grossman is Sustainability Analyst for the City of Santa Monica Office of Sustainability and Environment.

"Some judges submitted scores up until midnight the night before judging, so I came into the office extra early to cut/paste new scores and comments into that report."

"Something had to change," said SQA's account manager, Findlay Hilchie.

"OpenWater has many out-of-the-box reporting options. If they didn't work, I didn't want our client to spend so much additional time preparing reports."

SQA requested that OpenWater create a custom report framework that quickly compiled preferred data. SQA wanted a specific mix of comments, scores, and judges' averages. Each paper summary would retain the same formatting.

OpenWater Builds Custom Forms

"We started by breaking down the client's sample of what they wanted the template to look like," explains developer Daniel Lakin.

Lakin worked with SQA to create wireframe mockups. The goals were clear: first, the form needed to compile the appropriate data. Secondly, the resulting pages had to be clear and concise. There are environmental implications: a shift in typography selection or size directly impacts the amount of ink and paper required to print.

"Next, we figured out how to build it in HTML, leaving placeholders for where judges' feedback would go. Then, it was time to build the code that would process SQA's data and produce a finished product."

He continues:

"The process began in OpenWater's IronPython report engine, pulling the data out of SQA's program. The data was sent to our Flask app for further processing, rearranging, and slotting it into the template. Once the code had constructed as many fully filled-in templates as needed, the resulting HTML was sent off to our HTML-to-PDF engine, returned, and downloaded to the browser."



Why Formatting Matters

"There are environmental implications: a shift in typography selection or size directly impacts the amount of ink and paper required to print."

Results

SQA's custom form is easy to read and arranged for efficient judging. Additionally, the san serif, narrow font yields more characters per page. This design decision requires less paper and ink when printing paper copies, an added environmental bonus.

Amanda had rave reviews:

"Yesterday, all I had to do was hit "Custom Report" and the system generated this magical report for me," she reported to her colleagues by email.

"It was such a relief and such a HUGE difference from last year. So I just wanted to call attention to it and acknowledge with a great deal of gratitude my experience. I have already expressed this gratitude to OpenWater, but I thought I would share internally."

The Sustainable Quality Award program continues to benefit by working with OpenWater:

A comprehensive, digital awards software platform. OpenWater Awards is accessible to anyone with an internet connection and appropriate credentials. By being "digital first," SQA significantly reduces environmental resource demands. More immediately, they also benefit from a more nimble award program process.

Paper when needed. Paper hasn't disappeared. SQA developed a custom report template that saves time, ink, and paper when printed.

Simplified data collection. Occasionally, only a custom solution suffices. SQA had access to OpenWater's in-house development team. Working together they developed a custom form solution that can be used again and again.



About OpenWater

Based in Washington D.C., OpenWater is a cloud-based solution to manage awards, abstracts, grants, fellowships, scholarships, and prizes 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 build-out to the industry's only Truly Unlimited Customer Support pledge. The result? Customized software solutions that enable staff to focus on core competencies, delivering greater value to their organization.