

THE POWER OF WINNING AN INDUSTRY AWARD

PR AWARDS AND THE VALUE THEY
BRING TO YOUR TEAM



Summary

What value can winning an industry award bring to a PR agency, and can they lead to an increase in new business?

This white paper takes a look at the awards PR and comms agencies feature most in, asks what worth they bring – whether it's enhancing recognition or boosting team morale – analyses the most important parts of an awards submission, and identifies campaigns that did exceptionally well at awards ceremonies in 2016.

Contents

• PR awards & highlights of 2016	02
• Winning an industry award: it's "awesome, awesome, awesome" - Three things to think about before you enter an award.	04
• Campaign results: Bringing credibility to the forefront of your award entry	06
• The five "Ps" of award-entry success	08
• Case Study: Engine / MHP – Missing Type	11
• Case Study: Unity – Spark Something Good	13
• Something a little bit different – The Creative Shootout	15
• Conclusion	

PR awards & highlights of 2016

Every day, Gorkana News reveals the latest news and moves in consumer, corporate and financial PR at gorkana.com/news. Below are the awards Gorkana News hears about most often from UK PR agencies wanting to shout about what they've won:

AMEC Awards (May)

Cannes Lions (June)

CIPR Excellence Awards (June)

CIPR PRide Awards (September - December)

Communique awards (July)

Creative Shootout (January)

Fresh PR Awards (February)

In2 SABRE (EMEA) Awards (May)

Marketing and PR Brilliance Awards (December)

PRCA Awards (November)

PRCA City & Financial Awards (February)

PRCA DARE Awards (June / July)

PRmoment Awards (March)

PRWeek (UK) Awards (October)

PRWeek Global Awards (May)

SABRE (EMEA) Awards (May)

Social Buzz Awards (November)

Suzy Spirit Awards (March)

The Drum Marketing Awards (May)

Out of these 19 separate awards, below are some PR agency highlights from four awards ceremonies Gorkana News heard most about in 2016:

PRWEEK (UK) AWARDS

Key sector winners

Public sector:

Tech:

Financial Services:

Healthcare:

B2B:

City & Corporate:

MHP Communications / Engine

Brands2Life

Unity

Premier

3 Monkeys Zeno

The Romans

Large Consultancy of the Year:

Mid-sized Consultancy of the Year:

Small Consultancy of the Year:

New Consultancy of the Year:

Specialist Consultancy of the Year:

Consultancy of the Year:

Golin

Unity

Taylor Herring

The Romans

Pegasus

Unity

CIPR EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Key sector winners

Automotive:	Taylor Herring
Consumer Relations:	Tin Man
CSR:	Ketchum
Public Affairs:	MHP Communications
STEM:	Brands2Life
Arts, Culture or Sport:	Pitch

Outstanding Large PR Consultancy:	Hotwire
Outstanding Mid-Sized PR Consultancy:	Stripe Communications
Outstanding Small PR Consultancy:	Holistic

PRCA AWARDS

Key sector winners

Consumer Award - High Budget:	MHP Communications / Engine
Consumer Award - Low Budget:	Pegasus
Corporate, Financial and Investor Relations:	Golin
Crisis & Issues Management:	Powerscourt
Health & Wellbeing:	Pegasus
Public Sector, Value for Money:	MHP Communications / Engine
Tech:	Cow

Large Consultancy of the Year:	Instinctif Partners
Medium Consultancy of the Year:	Hope&Glory
Small Consultancy of the Year:	The Romans
New Consultancy of the Year:	Another Word Communications
Specialist Consultancy of the Year:	Pegasus

PRMOMENT AWARDS

North:

Key sector winners

B2B PR Agency of the Year:	Iseep
Public Affairs Agency of the Year:	Social Communications
Consumer PR Agency of the Year:	Wire Media
Tech Agency of the Year:	Iseep

Large Agency of the Year:	Citypress
Small Agency of the Year:	Wire Media

South

Key sector winners

B2B PR Agency of the Year:	Circle
Public Affairs Agency of the Year:	Westminster Advisers
Consumer PR Agency of the Year:	Mischief PR
Tech Agency of the Year:	Dynamo

Large Agency of the Year:	Frank PR
Small Agency of the Year:	Hope&Glory
New Agency of the Year:	The Romans



Joe Sinclair and The Romans team
at the 2016 PRmoment Awards

Winning an industry award: it's "awesome, awesome, awesome"

Joe Sinclair, co-founder and creative director of The Romans, is unapologetic about wanting to win industry awards. They recognise creative and hard work, he says. Having been a judge for several big awards, including the Cannes Lions in 2012, and after picking up a fair few gongs in 2016, he gives his take on the worth awards bring to an agency and what PRs should first consider before picking up their entry forms...think awesome.

A couple of years ago an agency CEO announced with some fanfare, "I've decided we're not going to enter awards anymore".

And the entire industry collectively thought: "LOL."

But it also genuinely made me feel really sad for the team at the agency (sad enough to tap them up on LinkedIn). Because who doesn't want their hard work to get the recognition it deserves?

I'm unapologetic about really really wanting to win awards. Partly because I'm really competitive and partly because I need the constant validation. In fact, one of my favourite working weeks of the year is the second week of January when I write our PRmoment entries – the first awards show of the year – which subsequently forms the basis of the rest of the year's entries.

And of course I love the awards parties. Who wouldn't want to push some lamb shank and potato dauphinoise around a plate before watching a succession of inebriated former colleagues pick up their trophies while you nervously wait for the category you're shortlisted in?

So, what's your 2017 awards plan? Stay at home with your Netflix boxsets and regrets? Spend five nights of the year consumed with envy? Or, pick up loads of trophies and line up the Jägerbombs?

Three things you need to think about before you enter:

Before you even begin to consider which awards to go for, here are three things to remember:

1- Only pitch awesome ideas

Here's a situation that might feel familiar. It's the day before your ideas meeting. You've got nothing. Someone pipes up with an idea that involves making a giant client logo out of 10,000 smaller logos on Potter's Fields, of course. Someone else mentions doing a bus tour. You begin to mentally evaluate the buoyancy of your client's products and whether they would, in fact, float.

Winners ignore these voices. Winners beg their manager for more creative resource. Winners beg their client for more time. Winners are really good at begging.

2- Only pitch awesome clients

Award-winning work can be made for any brand, but not any client. If bossman only wants to bang out data stories then absolutely no Jägerbombs for you. But don't despair. Focus your powers of persuasion and demonstrate how much further a research and data story can go when interpreted through a creative lens.

3- Awesome entries entertain

Re-read your award entry and ask yourself, "Would anyone actually enjoy reading this?" Or is it just the word "engagement" written forty-seven times, punctuated by a bunch of numbers? Awards jurors read dozens of entries and 98% of them are seriously dull. If you can make your Global Toolkit entry fun to read, then maybe you'll be shaking hands with [insert Channel 4 panel comedian's name here] on awards night.

Any award is awesome. An award is an award. Who cares if it's in the 'Best Use Of A TOWIE Talent In A Regional Roadshow' category? Turbocharge your odds by going after the categories that no one expects you to enter (we won a Best City and Corporate award last year).

If all else fails, become headline sponsor of the awards. Does this actually work? I'm asking for a friend...

Joe Sinclair

Campaign Results: Bringing credibility to the forefront of your award entry



Last year, AMEC, the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, linked up with Cannes Lions to launch an advisory service to help PR firms improve their entries for one of the world's most prestigious creativity awards.

A part of the measurement body's team of specialist research advisors, **Paul Hender**, head of insight at Gorkana (and a member of AMEC's European Chapter leadership team), helped firms improve their entries in two categories:

- Research, Data Analytics & Insight Generation
- PR Excellence in Effectiveness

His aim?

To bring credibility to the story of a campaign by putting research and analytics at the forefront of an award entry.

Why?

Judges are looking for campaigns that have a good story to tell with "real results" – and that doesn't just mean hearing about the big brands.

Sometimes, it's the smaller more focused campaigns that really stand out. There will always be a great story to tell if you can show how a small budget went a long way.

Off the back of Hender's How to Write A Killer Awards Entry webinar with AMEC in January, he reveals three key areas PRs need to consider to ensure they tell a strong credible story in their award entry:

Judges want to see "real results"

Evaluation is a vital ingredient of any campaign, and PRs still need to be reminded that there is a big difference between "outputs" (coverage) and "outcomes" (engagement, ROI, sales lift).

Providing a proven correlation between the "outputs" and "outcomes" of a campaign will show that proof really is in the pudding.

Submission first, awards second

Don't start your submission by deciding which award category your campaign will fit best. First, address two questions:

- Does your entry tell a story?
- Can you show your campaign has had a clear positive impact for the client?

Paul's five "Ps" for award success

Prioritise:

Make sure your award submission is a priority in the office. If you're going to spend time and money, make sure your submission gets the attention it deserves.

Plan:

Award entries take time. Don't start scurrying around for comments and stats a week before deadline. It will show in the submission.

Partnership:

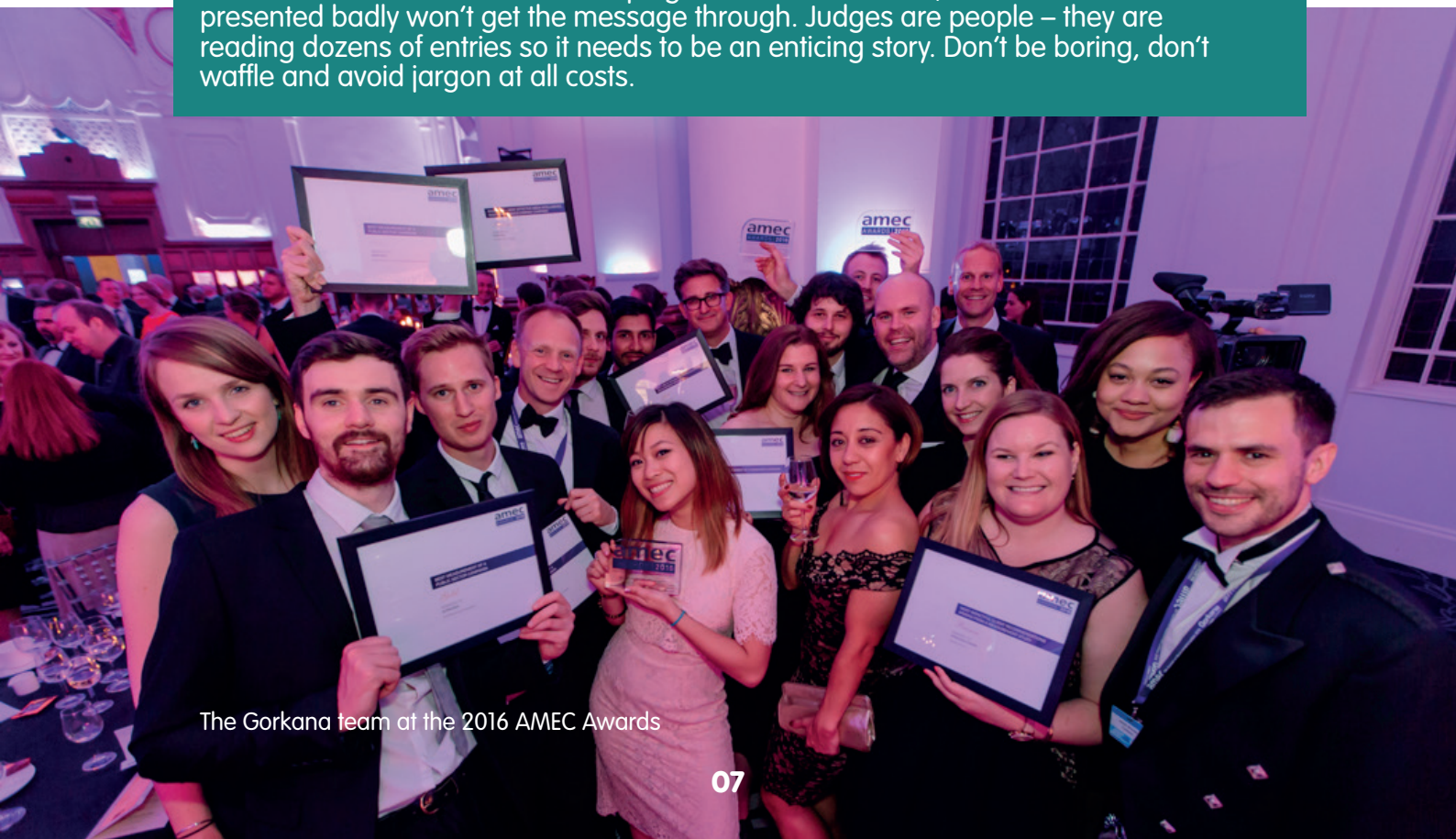
Create an awards entry team and get clients onboard. This can unearth new ideas and better data. Also, make sure you've decided who's writing what and be sure to get someone outside the team to proof the submission. This will improve clarity.

Purpose:

It's important that your submission has a clear set of objectives on what your client wanted to achieve through the campaign. This will make it easier to show how you met and exceeded each goal.

Presentation:

You could have the best set of campaign results in the world, but a submission presented badly won't get the message through. Judges are people – they are reading dozens of entries so it needs to be an enticing story. Don't be boring, don't waffle and avoid jargon at all costs.



The Gorkana team at the 2016 AMEC Awards

Case study: Engine / MHP - Missing Type

The Missing Type NHS campaign by Engine won 50 awards in 2016, including a Health & Wellness Lion at the 2016 Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity. The campaign for NHS Blood and Transplant during National Blood Week raised awareness around a need for blood donors through missing letters across major media and signage.

Mark Perkins, creative director at MHP Communications, reveals the work his team put into creating awards entries for the highly successful campaign...

The campaign

In the case of Missing Type, the brief was clear. This was about behaviour change: informing and inspiring young adults to register to give blood and with a specific minimum target to exceed. Our goal was to beat the record 10,000 donor registrations in a week and we achieved over 30,000.

How many awards did the campaign win?

50 – including both the **PRCA** and **PR Week's Campaign of the Year, Grand Prix** at the **Social Buzz Awards** and **Drum Marketing Awards** and a number of global awards, such as a **Cannes Gold Lion**.

How long did each submission take on average?

A week of back and forth. The real work is in the very first submission you write. Nail that and then you can tweak the rest. It's collating the data for the evaluation, then developing a compelling narrative

that reveals to the judges the problem we faced at the beginning. Then you write down the journey and realise you've got a novel on your hands.

The challenge is distilling it down to fewer than 1,000 essential words for the judges.

How big was the award submission team?

Just myself for selecting the categories and writing the submissions, then working with MHP's in-house design team to work on supporting material. If you've been close to a campaign from day one of getting a brief, then you're the one best equipped to tell the story. It was a much wider team for the Cannes entries, especially producing the video show reel. I deferred to a creative team at our sister Engine agencies WCRS and Trailerpark, which specialise in ads and trailers.

What was the most important section of the awards submission?

Definitely the **evaluation and positive outcomes**



from a campaign. There **has to be an ROI** and business benefit in everything we do. Otherwise what's the point in all the creative, the coverage and all those likes and shares?

NHS Blood & Transplant supplied data that demonstrated success, for example the marketing cost per registration fell from £34 to £6 in the period the campaign was active.

How important was video content in the submission process?

It definitely helps, especially if you had a visual campaign and plenty of TV coverage that can be made into a montage. Bit of a cliché but it works. Honestly though, it's not the most important thing if you've got a great written entry and can bring it to life with a supporting document. Average campaigns will still look average on video.

For Cannes, however, **it's all about the video**. PR agencies are heavily disadvantaged competing against global advertising agencies with big budget and integrated campaigns who invest heavily in their show reels. They are made to such a high-spec production, packed with emotion and impact that you could be watching a trailer for a Hollywood film or the next big Netflix series – and that's because they are using the same resources and creatives as those who make those trailers and TV ads.

Why did it win a Cannes Gold Lion?

Because it was an **original, creative activation** that delivered **tremendous outcomes**. The brilliant show reel from WCRS and Trailerpark dramatically demonstrated how pervasive the campaign was across so many different audience touchpoints.

Which award was the team most proud of?

The Paul Arden Award for Innovation at the **Campaign Awards**. An earned media / social campaign won the most prestigious award in adland in a shortlist comprising blockbuster heavyweights such as John Lewis's Monty the Penguin and Always Like a Girl. We were just thrilled to be on the list.

What is the biggest gain for an agency winning an award?

It helps put your **agency on the map** and to **drive new business**. The thing that matters for me is it **builds a winning mentality in the team** and raises the bar internally of what great looks like. Ok, we did that, lets enjoy the moment, now let's see if we can beat it.

The MHP / Engine team at the 2016 PRWeek Awards



A man with a beard, wearing a denim shirt, is leaning over a table and looking at a tablet. In the background, other people are seated at a long table in a meeting room with large windows. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the windows.

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Case study: Unity – Spark Something Good

Unity's Spark Something Good campaign for Marks & Spencer brought in nine awards for the agency in 2016, including Campaign of the Year (Techniques) at the PR Week Awards. The CSR initiative provided a platform to inspire customers and employees to help out in their local communities.

Unity's co-founder, Nik Govier, talks about why awards are the primary new business generation tool for the agency...

The Campaign

The big idea was to radically transform 24 community projects in 24 hours – a bold call to action for hundreds of volunteers, which would ultimately impact on tens of thousands of lives. Projects included renovating a community farmyard; constructing a rooftop playground for inner city children; creating a new dining room for a busy soup kitchen; building and planting an edible garden and painting a mural for autistic children.

To inspire the nation, M&S and Unity needed to give people a bite-sized taste, to show just what could be achieved when a group unite behind a common goal. By showing this on a small scale at launch, they could communicate the potential power of the programme and encourage people to take part long-term.

How many awards did the Spark Something Good campaign win?

Two **PR Week Awards**, two **EMEA Sabre Awards**, four **In2 Awards** and a **Global Sabre Award**.

How long did each submission take on average?

The first entry probably five hours, and then an hour for each subsequent entry.

How big was the award submission team?

Just two people.

What was the most important section of each awards submission?

In my experience, you only win awards if you knock it out of the park in each section. But of course results are essential.



Why do you think it won Campaign of the Year (Techniques) at the PRWeek Awards?

I'd like to think it was a creative concept that was well executed and delivered results.

Here's some feedback we received from judges:

- "I absolutely **love this approach** to launching a new CSR project, and the bringing together of both internal employees and customers."
- "The campaign successfully used a mix of internal and external comms channels. **Seamless delivery** in a short space of time exciting employees and customers to create real talking points."
- "A great example of how **internal and external comms** should work together."

Which award was the team most proud of?

Campaign of the Year is a great accolade!

What is the biggest gain for an agency winning an award?

For us, it's our primary **new business generation tool**. It's proof that our work works. And clearly it's also great for team morale. Overall, we won seven awards at the last PR Week Awards and the whole agency was there to enjoy the moment.

What value do they add to the agency?

Probably **70% of all new business** comes via awards.

The Unity team at the 2016 PRWeek Awards



Something a little bit different: The Creative Shootout



Johnny Pitt - founder - Launch PR

In 2015, Launch PR founder Johnny Pitt launched a one-day creativity competition called the Creative Shootout.

To make the shortlist, entrants need to give judges a 60 second campaign submission, in whatever format they choose, for a chosen charity (in 2015 it was Unicef / this year it was Mind and Rethink Mental Illness).

Chosen finalists then receive a real brief on a given morning. Each team has four hours to respond to the brief and 15 minutes to pitch their idea live to the judging panel and an audience of several hundred people in the afternoon.

Eight agencies battled it out in the final of this year's Creative Shootout, which took place in January.

Mischief, Hotwire and Ready 10, which came first, second and third respectively for their responses to the brief by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, reveal why they each had a winning pitch.

Mischief - Give a sh*t about the idea



Mischief, the winner of the competition for the second year in a row, achieved the top prize in the competition by asking the audience to "be arsed about mental health". Highlighting the statistic that the average person spends an average of one hour 42 minutes in the toilet each week, it proposed creating a standalone portaloo in central London with messages on the toilet roll about mental health.



The Mischief winning team, which consisted of James Robinson, Georgina Quayle, Andy Garner and Indigo LeFevre, told Gorkana that the winning pitch was created from a simple insight that would develop and drive business impact.

"[The idea] had to be simple, had to shock and provoke the audience, and had to be memorable with humour at its heart. The majority of people don't even entertain thinking about mental health, we believed our idea would make them give a sh*t about it and talk about it in years to come," said the Mischief team.

Hotwire - #TuneIn to data 2



An idea based on data and insight was also of high importance for Hotwire's Jamie Readon, Amy Ronge, Paul Stollery and John Brown. The team pitched its "#TuneIn" campaign idea which aims to use the power of radio to get people to "tune in" to the importance of mental health. For a winning pitch they simply said it comes down to "the big idea and the data to back it up".

Ready10 – Be passionate and original 3

Time restraint in the competition also means that clarity of idea is essential, according to Ready 10's founder David Fraser.

Fraser said: "Because of the limitations of time and preparation, your idea has to jump out to everyone from the get-go, so passion and originality in how you are communicating it are vital."



Ready 10's team came up with the "All Talk" campaign, which was centred on the idea of what men say to each other. Fraser said that a winning idea takes 'clarity, creativity and chutzpah!'. "If [an idea is] too complicated or not 'gettable' then you've lost it at that point."

The Creative Shootout FACTBOX

What is The Creative Shootout?

The Creative Shootout celebrates the brilliance of our industry by setting a task in REAL TIME (and for a major charitable cause). The audience watch the responses (award entries, technically) in real time. They vote on who should win in real time (along with the high profile judges of course) - and winners are announced in real time.

What format does it take?

The awards process is LIVE, as it should be, in this day and age. It's almost a creative gladiatorial process. It lives, breathes and gives energy to all involved. Entrants, supporters, audience and sponsors.

Why is it different?

You still get the usual stuff (nice food, drink, trophies, tonnes of publicity), but it does two things. It celebrates, showcases and respects what's at the core of marketing, namely creativity and people - and then plays it out in real time. A win / win for everyone involved. And because our finalists are very carefully chosen from their original entry (60 seconds of content, not blah, blah of A4), everyone's a winner.

When will nominations open for the 2018 Creative Shootout?

Nominations for the next Creative Shootout will open w/c 25 September 2017. The shortlist will then be announced in December, and the 2018 Creative Shootout will take place next January.

Conclusion

Like a good PR campaign, a strong awards strategy comes down to two key elements – the strength of the idea and how well the success of the campaign can be measured. Couple these with a good story to tell, and judges are bound to take note.

Awards can bring a boost to team morale, validation for your excellent work, recognition from your peers and, above all, attention from potential new clients.



Sources

www.gorkana.com/news

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