SOUTH CAROLINA PRSA MERCURY AWARDS COMPETITION
for work completed in 2018

Entry Deadlines
The deadline for Mercury and Silver Wing Award entries is noon on **Friday, February 1, 2019**. All entries must be submitted online at **bit.ly/Mercury19**.

The deadline for nominations for individual awards is 5 p.m. on Friday, February 8, 2019. Nominations must be submitted online at **bit.ly/Mercury19**.

Contest Period
Your program must have taken place, or your tactic used, between **January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018.**

Planning for your program may have begun prior to January 1, 2018 but the entry must represent a program that is complete.

Who's Eligible? The SCPRSA Mercury and Silver Wing Awards Competitions are open to anyone in the communications or public relations field in South Carolina, including public relations students at any college or university in South Carolina.

Mercury Awards recognize public relations programs and campaigns.

Silver Wing Awards recognize outstanding tactics used in public relations.

Individual Awards recognize personal and professional accomplishments of public relations practitioners, business executives, educators and students in South Carolina.

Cost to Enter

SCPRSA Member Rate: **$55**
Entry fee is the same for Mercury and Silver Wing entries.

Non-Member Rate: **$85**
Entry fee is the same for Mercury and Silver Wing entries.

Individual Awards:
There is no cost to nominate regardless of membership status.

NEW THIS YEAR: We have extensively reviewed and revised our entry categories to bring them in line with modern public relations practice and with the PRSA national Silver Anvil and Bronze Anvil competitions. Please note the new categories in both the Mercury and Silver Wing competitions. The Silver Wing competition is focused on the PESO model (Paid, Earned, Shared, Owned). If you're not familiar with the PESO model, visit **www.prsa.org/peso_booklet** for a free resource.

PAYMENT: You are encouraged to pay online via OmniContests, our awards entry and payment portal. Online payment, purchase orders or checks payable to SCPRSA must be received with your entries and no later than the Friday, Feb. 1 deadline. You can also pay by MasterCard or Visa at scprsa.org. SCPRSA's federal ID number is 23-7193937.

To qualify for the member rate, the person entering the award must be a member of both the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the South Carolina Chapter of PRSA. Obtain the membership application by visiting www.PRSA.org/joinus. Be sure to select South Carolina Chapter membership in addition to your national PRSA membership. Email info@scprsa.org with any questions about your membership status.

HOW TO ENTER

Mercury and Silver Wing Awards

While your program or campaign can be entered in only one Mercury Award category, you may enter components of that program (such as social media, feature stories, events, newsletters, websites, etc.) in the Silver Wing competition as well. Please complete a separate entry and submit a separate fee for each entry.

We are only accepting entries online at **bit.ly/Mercury19**. We will not accept entries in three-ring binders, folders, CDs or flash drives. Please do not wait until the last minute to submit your entries. Leave yourself enough time to learn how to use the platform and to ensure that your entries are submitted on time.

Required Documents for all Entries:

1) A summary addressing each of the judging criteria. Mercury Award submissions may be no longer than two pages. Silver Wing submissions may be no longer than one page. The summary should be typed using no smaller than a 10-point typeface and 1-inch margins.

2) Supporting materials referred to in the summary. You may upload a maximum of 10 files. Supporting files may include clippings, photos, videos, news releases, etc.. Clearly label the files so that the judges can identify the supporting materials. Remember that they are not familiar with your organization or program, so you'll need to be as specific as possible.

3) An image depicting your program or tactic that can be used in the banquet presentation if your entry receives an award.

4) A 75-word description of your program or tactic that can be used in the banquet presentation if your entry receives an award.

If paying by check or purchase order, it must be postmarked by Friday, February 1, 2019. Mail your check or purchase order to SCPRSA, P.O. Box 513, Columbia, SC 29202. Entries submitted without payment or proof of payment will be disqualified.

The envelope, please!
Mercury, Silver Wing and Individual Award winners will be recognized at the annual Mercury Awards banquet on Thursday, April 11 in Charleston. (See page 6 for details.) Winners will be notified prior to the banquet on or around March 15.

Need More Help?
Contact The Mercury Awards Judging Chair:

Kelly Davis, APR
kelly@davispublicrelations.com
803-479-0411

STUDENT COMPETITION

Student Awards

Undergraduate or graduate students at any college or university in South Carolina may enter the Student Mercury Awards and Student Silver Wing competition, regardless of whether the school has a PRSSA Chapter.

Eligibility Requirements for Student Entries:

Applicants must be enrolled full or part-time as undergraduate or graduate students in an accredited educational institution in the state of South Carolina.

The entry must be completely written and submitted by a full or part-time student, not by a faculty member, staff member or professional advisor.

All work entered into the competition must have been created and implemented between January 1 and December 31, 2018.

Students may enter any of the Mercury or Silver Wing categories in this year's competition. Please be sure to check the box for "Student Entry" on the entry form.

Student entries will only be judged against other student entries, and professional entries will be judged against professional entries. All judging guidelines for professional entries will be applied to student entries.

If work was created by a student for the purpose of a class, volunteer activity, internship, practicum or student-run firm (paid or pro bono), it must be entered into the student competition. Student intern work is eligible for the student competition provided the employer gives permission for the work to be entered and the work is not also being entered by the employer into the professional competition.

The work must be created while the entrant is a student, not while they are primarily employed in the public relations industry. Graduate students who are employed part-time or full-time may only submit work to the student competition if it meets the guidelines in the paragraph above. Graduate students who currently work in the public relations industry must submit work completed in the course of their employment into the professional competition.

Recent graduates are eligible to enter as long as the entry was created while the entrant was a student during the 2018 calendar year and the entry meets all other requirements.

JUDGING CRITERIA: Mercury and Silver Wing Awards

Your entry must address each of the four areas outlined below. Entries not clearly outlining each of the four areas will be disqualified. Entries that exceed the two-page summary limit for Mercury Awards or the one-page limit for Silver Wing Awards will be disqualified.

Please note: If you've entered this competition in the past, you may recall that the judging criteria for Mercury Awards has differed slightly from the criteria for Silver Wing Awards. We've streamlined the judging process so that all entries will follow the same four-step criteria of Research, Planning, Execution and Evaluation.

Research

Each entry will be judged on the quality of the original and/or secondary research. Analyze or describe the situation on which the campaign or tactic is based. When addressing the actual research component, describe who specifically initiated the research. Was it in response to a problem or to examine a potential problem? Did research help redefine the situation in any way? How was the research relevant to shaping the planning process? How did research help define the audience or the situation?

Planning

Judges will examine how each entry relates to measurable objectives, originality, judgment in selected strategy and techniques, accuracy of budget and difficulties encountered/overcome. How do the plans correlate to the research findings? Who was involved in the planning? In general terms, what was the plan? Who were the target audiences? What was the overall strategy employed? What materials were used? What was your budget?

Execution

Judges will examine plan implementation, materials used, in-progress adjustments to the plan and effectiveness of resources. How were the plans executed and what were the results? In general terms, how did the activities flow? Were there any difficulties encountered? If so, how were they handled? Were other organizations involved? Were other nontraditional public relations tactics (i.e., advertising) employed?

Evaluation

Judges will consider to what degree a program met its objectives and what efforts were made to identify, analyze and quantify results. What method(s) of evaluation were used? How are results related to research findings? How are results related to strategic objectives? (Note: media circulation figures and advertising value equivalencies are not acceptable as the only means of quantitative measurement.) Documentation of how success was measured is encouraged.

MERCURY AWARDS

SCPRSA Mercury Awards are given annually to organizations that have successfully addressed a contemporary issue with exemplary professional skill, creativity and resourcefulness. Mercury Awards recognize complete public relations programs or campaigns incorporating measurable and sound research, planning, execution and evaluation. These four areas represent the solid criteria by which senior practitioners judge each entry to ensure it meets the highest standards of performance in the profession. The Mercury Awards are regarded as the pre-eminent achievement of public relations in South Carolina. New categories are marked with an asterisk.

M1.   Community Relations

Programs that aim to improve relations with, or seek to win the support or cooperation of, people or organizations in communities in which the sponsoring organization has an interest, need or opportunity. "Community" in this category refers to a specific geographic location or locations. (Campaigns designed to promote products should be entered in Marketing Consumer Products or Services.)

M2.   Content Marketing*

Programs that effectively demonstrate a strategic program that includes creating and distributing valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage target audience(s). Include examples and metrics. May include programs for associations/government/nonprofits, business products, business services, consumer products or consumer services.

M3.   Crisis Communications / Issues Management

Programs undertaken to deal with an unplanned event that required an immediate response, or issues that could extraordinarily affect ongoing business strategy.

M4.   Events and Observances (Seven or Fewer Days)

Programs or events scheduled for one to seven consecutive days (not including planning and preparation). Events may be commemorations, observances, openings, celebrations or other special activities and must occur within a time span of one week.

M5.   Events and Observances (More Than Seven Days)

Programs or events that take place for longer than a one week period, such as a year-long anniversary, or activities (commemorations, observances, celebrations, etc.).

M6.   Financial Communications

Programs directed to shareowners, other investors and the investment community.

M7.   Global Communications

Includes any type of program, such as Reputation/Brand Management, Marketing or Events and Observances, that demonstrates effective global communications implemented in more than one country.

M8.   Influencer Marketing*

M8a. Macro-Influencers: Celebrities, executives, bloggers, and journalists who have 10,000 to 1 million followers. They have the highest topical relevance on the spectrum, with category-specific influence - such as lifestyle, fashion or business.

M8b: Micro-Influencers: Everyday consumers or employees or industry experts who have 500-10,000 followers. They have the highest brand relevance and resonance on the spectrum of influencers, with influence driven by their personal experience and strength of relationship with their networks.

M9.   Integrated Communications

Includes any program that demonstrates leadership of public relations strategies and tactics in a creative and effective integrated campaign, along with other marketing or communications. The program must demonstrate the clear leadership of public relations, along with its integration with other disciplines.

M10.   Internal Communications

Programs targeted specifically to special publics directly allied with an organization, such as employees, members, affiliated dealers or franchisees.

M11.   Marketing Business to Business

Programs designed to introduce new or promote existing products or services to a business audience.

M12.   Marketing Consumer Products

Programs designed to introduce new or promote existing products to a consumer audience. (i.e. Healthcare, Technology, Food & Beverage, Packaged or Non-Packaged Goods)

MERCURY AWARDS
continued

M13.   Marketing Consumer Services
Programs designed to introduce new or promote existing services to a consumer audience. (i.e. Travel & Tourism, Hospitality, Healthcare Services, Technology, Financial Services)

M14.   Corporate Social Responsibility*
Program that enhances a corporate reputation and demonstrates a business approach to initiatives that positively impact society. Campaigns to highlight the positive impact that they have had delivering economic, social and environmental benefits to stakeholders.

M15.   Multicultural Public Relations
For any type of program, such as institutional, marketing and community relations, specifically targeted to a cultural group.

M16.   Public Affairs
Programs specifically designed to influence public policy and/or affect legislation, regulations, political activities or candidacies — at the local, state or federal government levels — so that the entity funding the program benefits.

M17.   Public Service
Programs that advance public understanding of a societal issue, problem or concern. (Similar programs conducted principally to enhance an organization's standing or to otherwise serve its interests directly will fall in Category 2: Brand/Reputation Management).

M18.   Brand/Reputation Management
Programs designed to build or enhance the overall reputation, integrity and/or perceived value of an organization from a holistic point of view. Programs encompass the full organization or entity versus a specific product or service of the organization.

SAVE THE DATE

The Mercury Awards return to Charleston in 2019!

Thursday, April 11
Mercury Awards Banquet
6-9 p.m.

Friday, April 12
Morning Professional Development Workshop
Afternoon Tours of Historic Charleston

After you finish uploading your entries, go ahead and make your plans to attend the Mercury Awards banquet on Thursday, April 11 at the Cooper River Room in Mt. Pleasant.

We've negotiated an outstanding rate of $139/night at the Hotel Indigo in Mt. Pleasant so you can stay after the awards banquet and enjoy a half-day professional development workshop on Friday morning followed by afternoon tours of historic Charleston. This incredible rate is available through the weekend. There is a limited number of rooms available at this rate so reserve your room ASAP using the code "SCPRSA."

Hotel Indigo
250 Johnnie Dodds Blvd.
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 884-6000

SILVER WING AWARDS

Silver Wing Awards recognize outstanding public relations tactics — the individual items or components that contribute to the success of an overall program or campaign. These tactics are the hard-working parts of any public relations program.

Note our many new categories this year grouped by the PESO (Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned) model and better reflecting our rapidly changing profession. These changes also bring our competition in line with PRSA's national Bronze Anvil Award categories. New categories are marked with an asterisk.

PAID MEDIA TACTICS

S1.   Best Sponsorship Activation*
Sponsorships represent the alignment of shared values and goals, and can be profitable marketing opportunities for building harmonious partnerships. Activation requires a deep understanding of brand synergy to support how affiliations are formed and promoted to vetted demographics. Show how the activation leveraged investment.

S2.   Most Effective Influencer Promotion*
Influencer marketing focuses on an individual the audience sees as a trusted source of information and which can be differentiated far better than through advertising or content marketing. How did you ensure maximization of your ROi with these highly targeted consumers?

S3.   Best SEM*
Were you able to improve your brand's SEM with paid results on major search platforms? If your team or agency had a successful paid search campaign across one ore more search-based advertising platforms which demonstrated improvement and a positive return on investment, share your metrics and results.

EARNED MEDIA TACTICS

S4.   Media Relations (specify sub-category)
S4a. Associations/Government/Nonprofit Organizations
S4b. Business-to-Business
S4c. Consumer Products
S4d. Consumer Services
Tactics, programs and events driven entirely by media relations. Submit press releases, media advisories, pitch letters, requests for coverage, etc. along with the one-page summary that includes measurable objectives and results, such as evidence of the resulting media coverage.

S5.   Feature Stories
Feature articles that have been written by a practitioner, and submitted and published through his/her efforts. Submit text of feature article, as well as documentation of publication and placement. The one-page summary should include target audience, measurable objectives and any documented results.

S6.   Blogger Campaign
A proactive outreach to the blogger community on behalf of a product, service or organization. The one page summary should include rationale for blogger outreach strategy, statistics or other means of quantifiable measurement to support stated objectives, as well as a copy of (a) the outgoing messages and (b) the resulting blog entries either as uploads and/or the actual site URLs.

S7.   Executive Communications*
Positioning of an executive at any level across earned, owned and shared platforms. The one-page summary should include information about the executive and stated objectives, quantification of results as well as copies of significant placements, social media posts or memos.

SHARED MEDIA TACTICS

S8.   Best Use of Social Stories*
Did you take social storytelling to another level? How did you use YouTube, Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat to tell your brand's story? Share screenshots or links to your story and provide results.

S9.   Twitter Engagement*
How did you interact with your audience in real time? Show your most interactive Twitter accounts with measurements like retweets, likes, impressions and clicks. What impression did they leave on your audience?

SILVER WING AWARDS

S10.   Facebook Engagement*

How did you use Facebook to share your message and engage your audience? How did it enhance our overall marketing plan? Did it lead to increased activity and viral reach?

S11.   YouTube Engagement*

Did you make a popular YouTube video that persuaded your audience not only to watch but also comment and share the video? Share the videos that you created that combine storytelling and great production. In addition to the video, provide measurable objectives, such as the number of comments, shared and social reach of your video.

S12.   Instagram Communications*

How did you use this visual platform to connect and engage with your audience? Was it used to sell products or share insights? Provide details of the results you have seen.

S13.   LinkedIn*

Show how you used this social media gateway to optimize the company's business stature through announcements, engaging articles or other creative ways.

S14.   Pinterest*

How did you engage followers and increase brand awareness and sales through use of beautiful graphics? Show links to your Pinterest boards along with metrics.

S15.   Influencer Marketing*

Tactic used as part of a larger campaign that focuses on using paid spokespeople and key leaders to increase awareness and drive your brand's message to the larger market.

OWNED MEDIA TACTICS

S16.   New Digital Platform*

Did you launch a new website, newsroom, app or other digital platform? How was it launched and how much risk was involved in your marketing plan? What platforms were used? What value did the end user receive and how did it match goals?

S17.   Mobile App

Use of mobile applications as part of a public relations program. Include copy and any images of key pages to support your one-page summary. Additionally, include brief instructions on how to download the application.

S18.   Data and Analytics*

How did it uncover hidden patterns, correlations or other insights to help make quicker and more efficient business decisions to gain a competitive edge?

S19.   Websites

Use of a website as part of a communications or content marketing program. Include screen grabs or copies of key pages to support your one-page summary. Additionally, include the website URL for external sites.

S20.   Word-of-Mouth (viral, buzz, talk triggers)*

Tactics that get key audiences talking or provide an avenue for conversation using different techniques, such as viral marketing, sampling programs, loyalty programs, etc.

S21.   Creative Tactics

Innovative, unconventional, creative tactics or approaches used as part of a public relations program. Documentation of how the tactic specifically contributed to the measurable results of the campaign should be included in the one-page summary. (Photographic and/or video representation of any physical objects should be uploaded.)

S22.   Annual Reports

Print or digital publications that report on an organization's annual performance. Submit a PDF of the publication along with the one page summary.

S23.   Blogs

Web-based journals, or blogs, that communicated to a target audience. The one-page summary should include rationale for blogging strategy, target audiences and statistics, or other means of quantifiable measurement to support stated objectives. Screen downloads of the blog being entered, as well as the actual site URL, must be submitted as part of the entry.

S24.   Newsletters (designate appropriate category)

S24a.   Print

S24b.   Digital

Publications designed, written and published periodically to provide brief and timely information to target audiences while supporting an organization's overall objectives. Submit three consecutive issues along with the one-page summary.

S25.   Publications (Single Issue Newsletters, Booklets, or Calendars)

Single-issue publications designed for a special purpose. Books and other publications not eligible for consideration in other categories should be entered here. Upload a sample of one copy of the publication along with the one-page summary.

S26.   Online Videos*

Pre-produced videos distributed online to inform target audiences of an event, product, service, issue or organization. Entries may consist of an edited video and one of any sound bites. The one-page summary should include usage statistics or other means of quantified measurement to support stated objectives.

S27.   Online Newsroom*

Also known as a pressroom, media room, press center or media center is a website, web page or site section that contains distributable information about a corporation or organization.

S28.   Research / Evaluation

Research that provides a meaningful contribution or input to a public relations program, or an evaluation documenting the value or benefit of a public relations program or tactic. Sample of the methodology and findings of any research should be included in the entry, along with the one-page summary. One-page summaries for evaluations should detail how and why this method is unique and valuable.

S29.   Best Use of Branded Content*

Use of content generation to promote a particular brand which funds the content's production. May include consumer, business to business, professional services, financial services, healthcare, associations/government/nonprofit organizations, hospitality industry, arts, sports, entertainment or other.

S30.   Webcasts*

Media files distributed over the internet using streaming media technology. May be live or recorded. Submit the one-page summary and upload or provide YouTube/Vimeo links of the webcast, as well as the actual site URL.

S31.   Innovation in Customer Service*

Customers are wielding more power and demanding more from customer service. How did you demonstrate transformative innovation by introducing something new which revolved around the customer's needs and had a big impact on the company's service performance? Provide metrics.

S32.   Podcasts*

How did you tell your story? Was the purpose to teach or share? Was it intended for internal or external audiences and was there engagement on multiple platforms? Provide listener feedback.

S33.   Magazines

Print or digital publications designed to provide in-depth information about an organization or topic on a regular basis. Magazines typically differentiate from newsletters by the number of pages and length of articles. Upload samples of three consecutive issues along with the one-page summary.