

PRSK AWARDS HANDBOOK

Introduction

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) is the umbrella body for all public relations and communication management practitioners in Kenya. Established in 1971 and registered under the Societies Act, PRSK is governed by a constitution and is the only professional body for public relations and communication practitioners in the country. The Society's broad objective is to advance excellence in public relations and communication management while ensuring the practice thrives within an ethical framework. PRSK has over 14,000 registered members from government ministries and parastatals, state corporations, private companies, small and medium enterprises, and individual consultants.

The Editorial Committee commissioned a survey to gain insights into the key elements of crafting a winning submission, as well as the factors that contribute to a submission's success in award evaluations. The survey included the perspectives of both award winners and judges, providing a comprehensive understanding of the criteria and qualities that define an award-winning entry. The PRSK Awards Handbook is designed to guide members in preparing strong submissions for the PRSK Awards. It provides a comprehensive overview of the award process, judging criteria, and best practices to help members enhance their chances of success. The goal is to ensure transparency, fairness, and high standards in recognizing excellence within the public relations profession.

Background

PRSK Awards for Excellence

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) Awards for Excellence, established in 2000, recognizes and celebrates the outstanding achievements of public relations and communications practitioners each year. The PRSK Awards for Excellence are open to members and non-members drawn from business enterprises, associations, private and government bodies, and students pursuing public relations studies. The PRSK Awards reflect the level of competitive services offered in the Kenyan public relations and communications industry.

Below are the various categories:

1. Consumer Relations Campaign of the Year
2. Crisis and Reputation Management
3. Corporate Publication of the Year
4. ESG Communication Campaign of the Year
5. Internal Communication Campaign of the Year
6. Media Relations Campaign of the Year
7. Not-for-Profit Campaign of the Year
8. New Media PR Campaign of the Year

9. Partnership Engagement Initiative of the Year
10. Public Affairs Campaign of the Year
11. Public Sector Campaign of the Year
12. PR Event of the Year
13. Social Investment Campaign of the Year

People Category Award

1. Young Communicator of the Year
2. Young PR Professional of the Year (In- House)
3. Young PR Professional of the Year (Agency)
4. PRSK Golden Honours Award
5. PRSK Shepherd Honours Award

PRSK Moran/Warrior Awards

Through the PRSK Moran Awards, the Society honors and celebrates outstanding achievements, leadership, and contributions to the field of public relations and communication by PRSK members. The Moran Awards also inspire and motivate PRSK members to strive for excellence, uphold the highest ethical standards, and continue their professional development.

PRSK Awards for Excellence and Moran Awards: Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility for the PRSK Awards For Excellence is open to both PRSK members and non-members who are engaged in public relations and communication work in Kenya. Campaigns and projects submitted should have been conducted within the specified period. Specific requirements for each category are outlined in the “Award Categories” section in the awards guide. Members must ensure compliance with these criteria to be considered.

Eligibility for PRSK Moran Awards is open **ONLY** to PRSK Members in good standing. The Moran Awards have significantly boosted recognition and career advancement for recipients and serve as a motivator for increased engagement in the profession.

Entry Process

Submissions must follow the guidelines outlined below to ensure eligibility for consideration:

1. Complete the online submission form available on the PRSK Awards portal.
2. Upload all required documents in the specified formats (PDF, DOCX). Required Documents:
 - ◇ Award write-up (Word and PDF): 1200 to 1500 words, preferred typeface: Georgia 12
 - ◇ Award supporting materials (e.g., client endorsement letter, photos, videos (20mb per video), media releases and others

- ◇ Maximum of 15 supporting documents or items

3. Submit entries by the deadline provided.

Judging Criteria

The PRSK Awards for Excellence entries are evaluated based on competence in the following areas:

1. Background Statement

A brief introduction about the organization for which the campaign was conducted, the purpose of the campaign, why the campaign was initiated, and the strategic importance of the campaign to the organization.

2. Justification of the Campaign

Clearly articulate why the campaign deserves an award and the specific problem or opportunity addressed by the campaign.

3. Research

Describe how research influenced the campaign's strategy and tactics.

4. Planning Process

Campaign objectives must be SMARRT (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and aligned with the organization goals. Clearly state the campaign outcomes. Describe the PR and communication theory supporting the campaign. Provide a clear work plan outlining the steps of the campaign.

5. Execution

Demonstrate how the campaign met its objectives; methods used for communication must be aligned with campaign goals and objectives. Execution of the campaign should highlight creativity and originality.

6. Evaluation

The campaign should have a clear monitoring and evaluation plan measuring its success. It should evaluate to what extent the campaign succeeded and explain the reason it succeeded. Share key lessons learnt from the campaign experiences.

7. Typography and Writing Excellence

The campaign should demonstrate excellence in writing and presentation, clarity, conciseness, and professional formatting.

Entries that demonstrate strong alignment with these criteria are more likely to succeed.

Common Mistakes to Avoid When Submitting Entries

Avoiding common pitfalls can greatly enhance the quality of submissions. Some frequent mistakes include:

- ◇ Vague or poorly defined problem statements.
- ◇ Lack of supporting research evidence.
- ◇ Incomplete or irrelevant supporting documents.

- ◇ Failure to align objectives with the stated goals of the campaign.

Entrants are encouraged to review their submissions thoroughly before submission to ensure accuracy, excellence in writing and presentation, as well as completeness.

Best Practices for Successful Submissions

To craft compelling entries, consider the following tips:

- ◇ Use storytelling to highlight achievements and outcomes.
- ◇ Clearly state how objectives were achieved with measurable results.
- ◇ Ensure supporting documents directly relate to and strengthen your submission.
- ◇ Reference successful entries from previous years to understand what stands out.

These practices will help applicants maximize the impact and effectiveness of their submissions.

Q&A with the Judges: Insights on the PRSK Awards

Q: Why are the PRSK Awards for Excellence important for public relations professionals in Kenya?

A: The PRSK Awards for Excellence celebrate the achievements and contributions of public relations professionals in advancing the industry in Kenya. The awards offer a platform for professionals to showcase their innovative campaigns, which helps to set industry benchmarks. They also enhance the reputation of practitioners and organizations, highlighting their role in strategic communication and societal impact. By recognizing best practices, the awards encourage continuous professional development and promote ethical standards in the field.

Q: What value does winning a PRSK Award bring to a PR professional or their organization?

A: Winning a PRSK Award brings prestige and recognition, not only among peers but also within the broader business community. It provides a unique opportunity to validate the effectiveness of PR strategies and campaigns through peer-reviewed assessments. This can elevate an individual's or organization's profile, attract new business opportunities, and foster greater trust from clients and stakeholders. It also serves as a testament to excellence and a commitment to the highest standards in the industry.

Q: What advice do you have for entrants looking to submit a winning entry?

A: To submit a winning entry, it's crucial to focus on the following elements:

- Justification of the Campaign:** Define the problem or opportunity addressed by the campaign with precision. Clearly state what the campaign sought to achieve and why it was necessary.
- Ground Your Submission in Research:** Highlight how research guided your campaign decisions and how it helped identify key insights.
- Set SMARRT Objectives:** Ensure that your campaign objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This makes it easier to demonstrate how the campaign met or exceeded its goals.
- Focus on Creative and Strategic Execution:** Detail the tactics you employed and explain the rationale behind your strategy. Judges appreciate entries that demonstrate creativity, innovation, and strategic alignment with organizational goals.

- v. **Evaluate with Evidence:** Use clear metrics to show how you measured the success of the campaign. Include before-and-after comparisons and use data to demonstrate the impact on the target audience or business outcomes.

Q: What common mistakes should entrants avoid when preparing their submissions?

A: Common mistakes that can detract from a submission include:

- i. **Vagueness in Justification of the Campaign:** Entries should not assume the judges will infer the problem; it needs to be explicitly stated.
- ii. **Insufficient Research Evidence:** A lack of research makes it difficult to justify the chosen strategies and tactics.
- iii. **Overlooking the Role of Supporting Documents:** Make sure that every piece of supporting evidence directly relates to your campaign's objectives and outcomes.
- iv. **Ignoring the Evaluation Aspect:** Successful submissions include thorough evaluations that connect campaign activities to tangible results, such as changes in awareness, behavior, or engagement levels.

Q: How can PR professionals leverage the awards for career growth?

A: PR professionals can leverage the visibility and credibility of a PRSK Award win to advance their careers. The awards serve as a benchmark for excellence, providing a talking point for career achievements in interviews or when pitching for new business. Additionally, award-winning professionals often become sought-after speakers and mentors, which can further expand their influence and network within the industry.