THE ULTIMATE AWARDS PROGRAM PREP CHECKLIST

Is your awards program ready for another great season?

There's a lot to get done before the start of your call for entry, so before opening the floodgates, make sure you've got everything in ship-shape! Use this checklist as a guide to help you make sure you've covered all your bases.

TASK	DUE DATE	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE
1. Create your awards website - Your awards website is where people go to learn more about your program and apply. As the main source of information, it's one of the most important elements of your program to have ready. Your website should include the following:	_____	☐	☐
• **Overview Page**	_____	☐	☐
• **Call for Entry**	_____	☐	☐
• **Submission Form**	_____	☐	☐
• **Information About Your Judges**	_____	☐	☐
• **Historical Winners Gallery**	_____	☐	☐
• **Rules / Eligibility Requirements**	_____	☐	☐
• **FAQ**	_____	☐	☐
• **Awards Gala Info**	_____	☐	☐
• **Contact Page**	_____	☐	☐
2. Prepare your marketing strategy - We think it goes without saying, but if you don't have a solid marketing plan, who's going to apply or even hear about your awards program? A killer awards marketing strategy should include:	_____	☐	☐
• **Press Release(s)**	_____	☐	☐
• **Emails**	_____	☐	☐
• **Content Calendar**	_____	☐	☐
• **Prepared messages for social media**	_____	☐	☐
• **Ads**	_____	☐	☐
3. Set up your judging process - There's more to judging than just having some folks sift through submissions. To really get a judging process that not only stands out, but improves your awards program (instead of causing additional headaches) be sure to:	_____	☐	☐
• **Select Industry Experts to Judge Entries**	_____	☐	☐
• **Train Judges on Your Unique Judging Processes**	_____	☐	☐
• **Create a Plan for the Judging Process**	_____	☐	☐
• **Prepare Arrangements for Any Judges Attending the Awards Ceremony**	_____	☐	☐
• **Create Judging Criteria**		☐	☐

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4. Get a dedicated staff up to speed - Your awards program isn't going to prepare itself! It's imporant to have a team that's dedicated to making your program a success. Ideally your staff would be broken down thus:	_____	☐	☐
• **Executive Director**	_____	☐	☐
• **Program Manager**	_____	☐	☐
• **Marketing**	_____	☐	☐
• **Support**	_____	☐	☐
• **Event Planner**	_____	☐	☐
• **Chair / Committee (if applicable)**	_____	☐	☐
5. Get a "sales" strategy in place - Getting the desired number of entrants can be difficult. Getting these entrants to complete their entries can be even more difficult. That's why it's a good idea to set up a "sales" strategy. Some of the tasks will include:	_____	☐	☐
• **Compiling a List of Potential Entrants**	_____	☐	☐
• **Establish a Strategy for Contacting Entrants**	_____	☐	☐

And now you're ready to go! Congratulate yourself on a job well done.

Additional Notes:

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Request a Demo of Our Awards Software

www.getopenwater.com

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Before OpenWater, we struggled a bit managing our numerous awards programs. We had a combination of email based applications and home built web-based forms that lacked the simplicity and sophistication our staff and members deserved. That all has changed with OpenWater. We not only use it for our awards programs, but also for grants, fellowships and generally anything that requires an application or judging process. All of this in one central system that integrates nicely with our association management system.