

# When Innovation Counts: Running a State-of-the-Art Awards Program

## AT A GLANCE:

### Organization:

PRSA Georgia Chapter

### Website:

prsageorgia.org

### Headquarters:

Norcross, GA

### Description:

An organization dedicated to developing and enriching the professional lives of Georgia's public relations practitioners.

As the second largest chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, PRSA Georgia attracts a great deal of attention through its annual Phoenix Awards program.

Viewed as a leader among PRSA chapters, PRSA Georgia sets high standards for success for all of its activities – and its annual Phoenix Awards program is no exception. As one of the most important events the chapter stages each year, the Phoenix Awards program requires a significant investment of time and care.



Chief Operating Officer Denise Grant, who has been with PRSA Georgia for 31 years, understands what it takes to allow the awards program not only to work, but to grow. The entry process had traditionally been run manually (mailing in entries, sending entries to judges, etc.), which opened room for delays, confusion and stress. Over the years, Grant saw countless couriers racing across town to meet deadlines and overcome shipping delays.

PRSA Georgia needed a way to manage the awards entry process that streamlined work for entrants, chapter volunteers and judges. “One or two years ago, we started hearing about the idea of entering awards online. The idea of managing the system more efficiently was worth investigation,” said Grant. After doing research and evaluating several vendors, PRSA Georgia decided to move their entry process online and work with **OpenWater Awards**.

### **OpenWater Awards: The Standard in Awards Management Software**

In the past, even though entrants applied on the chapter website, they were still required to submit actual entries in hard-copy format. Moving to a fully automated, online system was a major step forward. OpenWater worked with Grant and Debbie Fitzgerald, Chapter Board of Directors liaison for the awards, to translate the PRSA Georgia process to OpenWater's awards management software. "Everything we needed to make it work the way we wanted was there for us," Grant commented.

As PRSA Georgia began working with OpenWater, they maintained a tight focus on serving the needs of their key constituents: entrants, judges and awards committee volunteers. Grant told OpenWater, "We always want more entries, but we also want to make it an easier and better experience for everyone involved."

### **Significant Improvements to the Entrant Experience**

As an organization that celebrates innovative work within the world of public relations, PRSA Georgia wanted an awards system that supported the values of their program. And now it does.

Switching to OpenWater Awards made it easier for PRSA Georgia to manage the entry and judging process. Entrants and judges have given rave reviews concerning the software's ease of use and efficiency. The chapter also saw a spike not only in the number of entries, but the number of new organizations submitting entries. Fitzgerald summed it up perfectly, "In our profession, we expect ourselves to be on top of the newest technology. Being able to achieve that goal and provide members with a better user experience is awesome."

**OpenWater Awards: Right for PRSA Georgia. Right for you.  
Contact us today at [getopenwater.com](http://getopenwater.com) to get started.**



### **About OpenWater**

*Based in Washington D.C., OpenWater is a cloud-based awards software platform that automates and helps to grow awards and recognition programs. We pride ourselves on offering clients more than software. We guide them every step of the way, from planning and initial system buildout to continuous support throughout the awards season. The result? Customized online solutions that allow staff to focus on core competencies, increase non-dues revenue, and improve membership value.*