

PRISM Awards 2016: Creating magic

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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It's the last working day before the PRISM Awards deadline and you are in the midst of our entry and thinking, why are we doing this? It's just an award right... it doesn't mean anything... Right?



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Five years ago Kevin Welman, managing director, FleishmanHillard, did not believe awards were necessary. Then he gave it a go so see what happens and what happened led to an abrupt about turn.

“Awards are important for a number of reasons including clients and morale. It is also the opportunity to view and compare yourself to the best work in the industry, but its biggest advantage is that it gives you the ability to stand back and look at work critically and see what made it special.”

He says a project getting lots of publicity is not special. “It’s your job to do that as it is to get media attention, trending on Twitter, exceeding the client brief... none of that makes your campaign special because in this world that is just doing your job.”

It is about the magic. “The PRISM Awards judges are looking for more than just numbers. They look for what stands out,

what goes wow.”

Hand in hand with this is the style in which the entries are written. “Work that is average can be a great entry because of how it is presented and written. Too often the entries state the problem, explain the research, and then the plan, execution and measurement. And that’s it... no magic. Tell me a story not a process. Weave in the magic so I can feel some of the emotion.”

Make sure your entry is perfect he says. “The judges read many entries so ensure your grammar is perfect and your captions are legible. Your language should be easy to understand and concepts that are important easy to grasp.”

He stresses the visual aspects. “Have clear pictures. When you put together and design your entry, think about it. Use a crisp simple font. Think about the process of how it gets judges rather than how it is put together.”

Welman’s biggest tip to entrants is write the entry as if you are going to judge it and Marilyn Watson, founding partner: Cinnamon Communication agrees with him. “When entrants put their campaign to paper, it is important to keep the judge in mind. Put yourself in the judges’ shoes and with that in mind start completing your entry. The judges are busy so make it as easy as possible for them to judge your campaign. This is true for all the elements of the entry; from the layout to the word count... get the basics right.”

She agrees that the judges are also looking for work that stands out, not run of the mill work. For example, five years ago social media in campaigns were something special. This is no longer the case she stresses. “Today a PR campaign without social media is a huge missed opportunity. It is a given that these channels are part of your campaign. However, this is not enough, you must also show how it helped make your campaign strong or how it enhanced your campaign.”

What has become more and more important over the years as well is that the campaign must talk back to how it helped the business objective. “It is critical to show the value you brought with your campaign,” she says.

It is important that the entry reflect your understanding of your client’s business and the opportunity that lead to the campaign is absolutely critical.

Success, says Bridget von Holdt, Convenor: PRISM Awards, will come to those who go beyond the criteria, who demonstrate the wow and something different with phenomenal results. “And it does not have to be off a huge budget. Last year we identified many campaigns worthy of an entry, and many do not boast big budgets; they were just able to mobilise South Africans and get everyone involved.”

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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