

John Cotton Dana Awards EVALUATION CRITERIA

The John Cotton Dana Award judges will evaluate the scope, relevance and effectiveness of your strategic communication campaign based on the following criteria:

Needs Assessment and Planning (25%)

How did you determine the need for your strategic communication program? Include a brief description of the community served.

- Community profile/demographics/social, cultural, economic or learning focus
- What need did your assessment identify? Why is it needed? What's the anticipated benefit?
- What result will your communication be designed to achieve?
- Will your communication bring you closer to the result? Will the result meet the need?
- Any other research--formal or informal--that describes the rationale for your project.

Specify all your target audience(s), including community partners.

List your communication goals.

Describe your objectives and how you plan to measure them.

If possible, show how you established your project's budget.

Judges look for careful focus, research, planning and organization of your communication campaign, with a focus on results: Will your plan lead to reaching your measurable objectives? They also look for how your planning process involved other parts of the library and other segments of the organization or community.

Implementation and Creativity (50%)

The implementation of your plan, as well as originality and creativity of the public relations program.

- How did you implement your plan?
- What tools, techniques, activities, materials and resources did you use to reach your goals?
- What print, digital and social media did you use?
- How did outside organizations and individuals participate?
- What graphics/collateral did you develop/use?
- How did you incorporate your library's identity/brand?

Judges review your implementation and relate it to your plan. How well did you carry out your plans? Did you create unified and consistent graphics and use effective, appropriate media?

Did you do a great job communicating about a traditional library program? Did your communication program break new ground? Imagination, out-of-the-box thinking, and working wonders with a one-person staff and no money all count here.

Evaluation (25%)

The evaluation phase is the most overlooked element in any public relations program and depends on setting measurable objectives in the planning stage. Did you measure results? Increased participation? Reaching a set goal? What did you change along the way, and why? The judges consider evaluation very carefully. They look for a purposeful review of the program in the light of the following questions:

- Did the program meet its goals and measurable objectives? (List measurements that support the achievement of the program or show areas for future improvement.)
- What were the successful elements of the plan and the results?
- What change, if any, took place in the target audience?
- What, if any, difficulties were encountered and how were they handled?
- Did the program point out any changes that could be made to improve the library's public relations?
- What did you learn from this project that you will use in your NEXT strategic communication effort?