



Chapter Management Awards 2019 Chapter Events

INTRODUCTION

Our small chapter of International Association of Business Communicators is located in Newfoundland and Labrador – a Canadian island in the North Atlantic and inspiration for the award winning Broadway musical *Come from Away*.

After centuries of making a living and raising families in a harsh ocean environment - a place referred to by many as “The Rock” - we have a work ethic known throughout the world and a culture that embodies the human spirit with warmth, creativity and humility.

It is in this environment - on the rugged rocks of the North Atlantic - that our small chapter thrives – bobbing and weaving with the economy that fluctuates with commodity prices and out-migration of our people who have gained a footing in business, industry and the arts throughout Canada and the world.

Here at home, our dedicated board of directors at IABC NL are helping to advance the profession, create connections, and develop strategic communicators in our province.

We are proud of our approximately 65 members who are the professional communicators at the heart of every organization and shine brightly throughout IABC nationally and internationally.

We continue to learn so much from our IABC colleagues and we are delighted to have the opportunity to present our work through the Chapter Management Awards Program.

This submission describes our annual Pinnacle Awards, a historic event for our chapter that has thrived for over 20 years now. Pinnacle is the only event of its kind in Newfoundland and Labrador that celebrates the work of some of the most innovative and creative communications projects and professionals in our community.

Event Strategy

The Pinnacle Awards is a well-respected and well-loved tradition now in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Each year, the IABC NL chapter undertakes annual strategic planning to help guide our work, including revisiting our value proposition for our members, providing a relevant professional development program, certification options, and networking opportunities. Our strategic planning has been informed by research undertaken to find out what our members need.



Chapter Management Awards 2019

Chapter Events

What has remained somewhat consistent in our research is our members' and the community's connection with the Pinnacle Awards. Likely, this is because it is the Province's only event that celebrates the work of communicators and excellence within our profession. Through our research leading into the 2018 year, members did identify some discontent with the submission process and judging, and as such, our Chapter made it a priority to improve this experience for those who apply. Additionally, logistical event suggestions were also made that were incorporated into this year's event.

For our Chapter, the Pinnacle Awards are the perfect way to align with the three core components of the #IABC1720 strategic framework.

1. Advancing our profession: Pinnacles provide a means for members and the business community to see the value of our work, educating them on the fact that communicators are truly at the heart of every organization.
2. Creating connections – apart from the amazing networking benefits during the actual event in our own community, Pinnacles connects our local communicators, including members and other applicants, with IABC members from across the globe, who take the time to review and provide feedback on their work.
3. Developing strategic communicators – The Pinnacle Awards celebrate excellence, provide applicants with useful feedback and provide recognition of incredible projects that were beautifully communicated within our community. Participating in the event is educational, and inspirational. Additionally, we recognize role models and leaders in our profession through a Communications Professional of the Year Award (members only) and an Organizations Leader of the Year Award (non-member).

Managing the Pinnacle Awards

There is a designated member on our Board of Directors to manage the Pinnacles Awards, as it is a large scale event with a number of details to attend to. After being inspired by the "Lazy Leader" presentation at Leadership Institute 2018, our chapter wanted to ensure that the Director for the Program was well supported with volunteers and other Board Members. To improve the workings of this person, we have added a sponsorship support role for the 2019 event year. We also put out a call for volunteers to help with the awards, who supported the director with logistical tasks for the 2018 event.

The Pinnacle director also works with Chapter leaders to coordinate the awards program and event logistics. They work closely with the communications director to market the event and help with event communications, the finance director to manage the budget, invoicing and payments, and the president for decision making.



Chapter Management Awards 2019

Chapter Events

Technology plays a key role in the management of the event from the website used to outline categories to the Awards Force Platform used to accept entries to the Eventbrite app for ticket sales.

The Board also relies on a relationship it has built with the College of the North Atlantic. This relationship continues to evolve yearly, with the College providing in-kind services to the event. In the beginning, graphic design students supported the event by helping develop the brand and providing design and printing support. Students also submit entries for our student categories each year.

This year we were pleased to strengthen the relationship even further by growing our reach to also include photography, journalism and music students at the school. The music students provided incredible entertainment throughout the evening, a photography student took photos for the evening, and the Journalism Program provided us with a co-host for the evening, Jonathan Crowe, a well-respected journalist in our province. We look forward to continuing to build on this relationship into the future.

Event Marketing

Pinnacle is marketed to both the business community and members. The brand image we created for the awards of a ship navigating the waters ties in directly with the environment in which we live and work (**Work Sample 1**).

In a recent member survey that 50 per cent of our members responded to, 79 per cent of members identified email as their preferred method of contact. The remaining respondents stated social media as their preferred method of communication. As such, Pinnacle is marketed to members strongly through email and supported through social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn).

With regards to members of the public, we use opportunities like Pinnacle to enhance our address book and have a "Friends of IABC" list in our Mail Chimp. Using this list, we share information about award deadlines and the event. We also have a strong following on social media that extends past our members, where we engage non-members. One method used this year was to do throwback posts where we would tag previous winners, and encourage new entries.

Identifying key areas of interest within the program to share on social media is also key. We make it a point to release the names of our most prestigious award winners prior to the event through email and social media, which helps generate both interest in the event and recognize the individual. Our social media posts recognizing this year's winners gained significant engagements and reach (**Work Sample 2**).

Of course, we also follow up with some regular submitters through phone when needed.

On event night, social media is a key tool for recognition and promotion. Our communications director provides live updates throughout the evening on all platforms, with a strong focus on Twitter and



Chapter Management Awards 2019

Chapter Events

Instagram, ensuring to recognize each award winner (**Work Sample 3**). This year, approximately 25,000 tweet impressions were achieved in June through recognition of Pinnacle Award winners. Additionally, winning organizations also shared news of their awards, helping build respect for the role of communicators in our communities.

A press release is also sent recognizing the winners to media, members and friends of IABC through emailing the following morning after the event (Work Sample 4).

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The annual IABC Newfoundland and Labrador Pinnacle Awards recognize excellence in the field of communications. The goal of Pinnacle Awards is to create connection among chapter members and engage non-members.

More specifically, the objectives of the 2018 Pinnacle Awards were to:

- Achieve attendance of at least 100 people (members, award winners, family and friends).
- To enhance the submission process and judging for awards.
- To increase sponsorship for the event.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Event

The 2018 Pinnacle Awards took place on June 14, 2018, at Spirit of Newfoundland Theatre in St. John's, NL, with approximately 100 people in attendance (IABC members, award winners, business leaders, supporters and sponsors).

Hosts for the event were:

- Karen McCarthy, vice-president of corporate affairs at Fortis Inc., and a well-respected IABC NL member and communicator; and
- Jonathan Crowe, journalism instructor at College of the North Atlantic and a well-respected journalist in our province.

Choosing these hosts was strategic. Karen McCarthy was recently part of a team who took home a Gold Quill for their work, is a long-standing member and works with event sponsor Fortis Inc.



Chapter Management Awards 2019

Chapter Events

Jonathan Crowe is a representative from a major sponsor of the event, College of the North Atlantic, as well as a popular member of the media.

A seated meal was provided to guests, with a round table set-up. Based on recommendations from last year, the venue contained a stage, as well as a designated area for pictures of Award Winners.

Sponsorship

This year, we felt it important to improve how we both secure and steward our sponsors. As such, we created a new sponsorship package to help communicate and guide the opportunity (**Work Sample 4**)

While we did not meet our budgeted amount of \$5,000 cash, we did increase sponsorship from the previous year by 33 per cent to \$3,000. Additionally, we increased our in-kind contributions by securing musical entertainment from our sponsor College of the North Atlantic.

Event sponsors included: College of the North Atlantic, Atlantic Lottery Corporation, Fortis Inc. and Functional Communications and Events. We recognized all event sponsors through social media during and leading up to the event, in the event program, on the slideshow, in the news release and in speeches.

Award Winners and Submissions

After the conclusion of the 2017 awards, applicants expressed concerns about feedback on their submissions and the process used to collect entries. As such, we wanted to introduce a solution that would modernize the process, and also provide a platform to engage judges internationally. What we found was a program also used for the Silver Leaf and Gold Quill awards programs – Award Force. This is an online system that allows applicants to easily upload their entries, where they will then be shared with by judges internationally. To secure the judges, we used Leadership Institute 2018 as a networking opportunity, providing us with new contacts from throughout the US and Canada who agreed to help judge our awards.

Twenty-three entries were received from industry professionals, and students from College of the North Atlantic and Academy Canada.

During the Pinnacle Awards Gala, six Awards of Merit and four Awards of Excellence were presented.



Chapter Management Awards 2019

Chapter Events

IABC NL was pleased to present Dr. Andrew Furey, CEO of Team Broken Earth, with the Award of Excellence for Organizational Leader. Additionally, both Glenda Power, Director of Strategic Communications with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Martha Muzychka, ABC, MC, Principal at Praxis Communications, received the prestigious Award of Excellence for Communications Professional. This was the first time two recipients were chosen for the Communications Professional Award. After both candidates' nominations were reviewed within two separate chapters, it was determined we had a tie!

The Pinnacle Award of Excellence for a Communications Professional is a prestigious award recognizing a communicator who practices exemplary communications and encourages communication excellence in the activities and initiatives in which he/she is involved. Open to all communicators in the province who are IABC members, this award acknowledges the recipient for their leadership, professional accomplishments and outstanding efforts to improve business communication in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Pinnacle Award of Excellence for Organization Leaders is a prestigious award that recognizes an individual who is not an IABC member or communications professional, but who has demonstrated leadership, vision and commitment to excellent communications. Whether involved in private, public, not-for-profit sectors, the recipient of this award will have made contributions to business communications by initiating, supporting, and/or participating in effective, successful communications programs.

In addition to the Pinnacle Awards, milestone certificates are presented to qualifying members, and those who complete certification are also recognized. This year, two communicators were recognized for being the first to complete the SCMP in Atlantic Canada.

BUDGET

Revenue for award submissions, ticket sales and sponsorship for Pinnacle totalled \$9,735, a slight increase from the previous year.

Expenses were \$8,746, which included an investment of \$1,516.25 into a new judging platform, Awards Force. A profit of \$989 was made.



Chapter Management Awards 2019 Chapter Events

MEASUREMENT & RESULTS

- We achieved our objective of creating connection among chapter members and engaging non-members by having approximately 100 people attend Pinnacle Awards, with many of those being non-members.
- We increased sponsorship into the event, and built a process to further improve sponsorship this year.
- We broke even on the event financially, with a surplus of \$989.
- We successfully implemented a new submissions and judging process.

WORK SAMPLES

- Work Sample 1: Pinnacle Awards Brand Logo
- Work Sample 2: Facebook Posts with Stats Recognizing Top Award Winners
- Work Sample 3: Live Tweets during 2018 Pinnacle Awards
- Work Sample 4: 2018 Pinnacle Awards News Release Issued to Media, Members and Friends Through MailChimp
- Work Sample 5: 2018 Pinnacle Sponsorship Package