

# Awards Programs: Handling The Winners

By Richard Lowe

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Internet Tips And Secrets <http://www.internet-tips.net>

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Someone has sent in their site to be reviewed as part of your awards program. If you've done everything correctly, this should happen several times per week or even per day. You could review them as they arrive, or you could set them aside and do it once a week or on some other schedule. This is completely up to you.

Okay, so you review the site and it meets all of the criteria for your program. The site has good content, the links (at least those you checked) seem to work, the HTML looks okay and, well, it's just a pretty good site. What do you do now?

This depends upon how you are running your program. I've seen some sites which simply send a very quick email with the awards graphics and a simple link - and that's all. Not very satisfying, really.

Then again, I've received awards from other programs which go all out. I remember receiving a long email which informed me I was a winner, went into all of the exact criteria which I passed and failed, and left no doubt in my mind as to why I received the award and rating that I got.

So what do you need to do at a minimum?

- You need to inform the winner that he has received your award.
- Congratulate him or her for their accomplishment.
- Attach their awards graphic or inform them as to it's location.

- Request a link back if that's something you desire from your program.

This is the bare minimum, and it will serve the purpose nicely.

Personally, I like to send an email which congratulates the winner and says some good things about his site. For example, I might mention that the page about their pet was especially cute, the article on how they survived some disease was meaningful or the gardening tips were especially useful. The point is simple - by including such details I'm showing that I did actually look at the site, which makes the award more meaningful.

I prefer sending plain text messages as opposed to stationary or HTML. Yes, I know that stationary looks great, but not everyone can read them. All email clients can read text messages.

It's a good idea to attach the graphic directly to email message, as well as to include a link where it can be picked up if, for some reason, the image is not received properly.

I've found an email similar to below hits upon all of the necessary points.

Hi Sally,

Thanks for applying for the Excellent Site award. Your site has met the criteria for the award and has won! I found your site is indeed excellent and I thoroughly enjoyed my visit. I especially liked your page about Sammy (your dog) - it made me laugh. The photos of your children are a nice touch (cute kids) and your choice of background images is good.

Your award image is attached. Please link it back to <http://www.internet-tips.net> - this is not a requirement but it would be appreciated.

Some URLs which you may find useful:

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Winawards/Winanaward.htm>

Description of our awards program in detail

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Winawards/excellent.htm>

Excellent site award home page.

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Winawards/criteria.htm>

The criteria common to all of our awards.

<http://www.internet-tips.net/images/sample01.gif>

You may also pick up the award image here if you wish.

One thing that I do NOT recommend is to inform your winners about any negatives or give them any criticism. I know from personal experience that these kinds of comments detract from the thrill of winning an award. I prefer to just tell my winners the good news and leave it at that.

Some sites use a scoring system to figure out who has won the award. In those instance, I would also recommend that this score NOT be shared with anyone - again, no need to take anything away from your winners victory.

That, in a nutshell, is a method which is useful for handling your winners.

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