

Awards Programs: Promotion

By Richard Lowe

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I know you've finished creating your awards program. You spent ages creating the perfect award image - everyone agrees it is the best that they have ever seen. Your criteria are exact and exceptional. Your award is completely defined and, well, it's perfect.

Now what?

Hey! You need to tell people about it! That's the whole purpose of awards after all - to get people to send in their site data. And they cannot do that if you don't tell them all about it.

The first thing to do is make sure you reference your awards program from every single page on your web site. Build it right into your main, top level navigation. Make it as obvious as you can without detracting from your design.

I cannot stress this point enough. You are already (presumably) promoting your web site - so it only makes sense to be sure your web site promotes your awards program. Make it very easy to get to the program signup page so that people will flock to it and literally flood you with submissions.

Next, make sure you submit your program to all of the same search engines as you submit your site. Submit the page separately and on a different day than you submit your index page.

Now is the time to also make sure you are in the big index - <http://www.awardsites.com>

This is arguably the most important awards index on the internet. If you are listed here you will get

by far more traffic than any other listing. Awardsites carefully reviews every single award that gets submitted, and they are so good at this that they have earned a prestige and trust that is unparalleled anywhere.

How do you get listed on Awardsites? Begin by reading the promotional material on the site. You will find that awards are separated by subject and grade (higher grades means better awards programs). Read the criteria and determine which level you think you would like to be listed within.

Now, go back to your awards program and compare it to the criteria with a critical eye. Does your program measure up? For example, one of the big requirements to get a better grade is "good criteria". Look at some award sites listed in the different levels and see what "good criteria" means. Once you understand, go back and modify your criteria to measure up. Do this for every point and you will probably get a higher listing.

Be sure to add your award program to the Website Awards Worksheet at <http://websiteawards.xe.net/> as soon as you are finished. You will get some visitors from this worksheet. It's a good idea to make sure you have gotten your award listed in Awardsites before you submit to the worksheet.

There are other places to get your award listed. Search them out and apply as you see fit. Generally, I've found these by applying for awards - usually the banners and buttons for these different programs are listed on the same page as the awards. Believe me, though, the amount of traffic you get from ALL of the other listings will probably be less than a good listing in Awardsites.

Oh yes, one thing to avoid is those programs which allow visitors to "automatically" submit to your awards program without visiting your site. My advice is to avoid these like the plague. Why? Well, these mean you will spend quite a bit of time looking at sites, but the award winners (and losers) will probably never see yours. That throws out the implicit exchange.

It also means that people who submit have not read your criteria, which means you will get lots of worthless submissions that you should never have received in the first place.

In addition, I've found that by far most of the sites submitted in this manner do not measure up. In other words, the amount of effort that the award submission process requires is so small that the sites are often not even worth visiting.

Where else do you promote your awards program?

- In your signature line on every email that you send out.

- As part of every single autoresponder message that you send. You should be sending an autoresponder follow-up for every guestbook signing, email form submission and anything else entered by visitors. Those autoresponder messages should include a brief promotion for your awards program.

- Anywhere else that you would promote your website.

If you do these things, you will most likely find that people will be submitting their sites to your awards programs in droves.

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Richard Lowe Jr. is the webmaster of Internet Tips And Secrets. This website includes over 1,000 free articles to improve your internet profits, enjoyment and knowledge.

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