

Awards Programs: Submitting Your Site For Awards

By Richard Lowe

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All right, you've got a nice site. You've worked long and hard to make it as good as you can. Now you want to get a little recognition for your efforts. You want someone to take a look at what you've accomplished and tell you if you've done a good job.

You can submit your site to awards programs to have it reviewed by other webmasters. There are literally thousands (and probably tens of thousands) of awards available all over the internet. Some are easy to win - all you have to do is send in your site and you get the award. These are about as fulfilling as white bread.

Some awards programs are exceptionally difficult to win. You have to have a perfect (literally) site to even get close to winning. These are exceptionally frustrating as most of us are not perfect at everything. However, winning one (even a "bronze") can make you feel like you are on top of the world.

Most awards programs are run by webmasters who honestly want to examine other sites and reward their creators in some small way for their efforts. These awardmasters generally will not spend a long time looking at your site (although you will find some who spend hours examining each entry), but they will look at least for a few minutes.

How do you submit your site to awards programs? Well, first you have to find sites which give out awards. The absolute best place to look is <http://www.awardsites.com> - there is no better list of awards programs. My advice is to go there and submit your site to as many programs as you see fit.

Okay, so you've found an award that you want to get. Perhaps it has a nice graphic image (always looks good to have some interesting award images on a web site) or perhaps it just appeals to you for some other reason. Now what?

Look over the site. Why? After all, the only thing you want to do is submit your site and move on, right? Well, there is an implicit exchange involved in awards programs. You see, the awardmaster is typically going to spend some time examining your site to see if it measures up to the criteria. In other words, he is going to look over your site. The least you can do is spend a few minutes checking out what he's done.

Once you've spent a few minutes or longer on the site, it's a nice touch to sign the guestbook. Now, no awards programs which is worth anything requires that a guestbook be signed as part of the criteria, and don't expect it to help you win, but it's a nice touch as it finishes your exchange. You are asking someone to do some work for you so you can win, so why not make him or her feel good while you are asking?

What's next? Read the criteria. Understand the criteria. Compare your site against the criteria.

This is the critical step that many people miss. You see, most people who submit their sites for awards want to do it fast and furious. They burrow through a site - straight for the awards submission page, enter the data and let fly. Within a few seconds they move on to the next award.

That's the wrong way to do it. No, read the criteria and look at your site with a critical eye. Let's say the criteria says, "good HTML code" and your site was created with Frontpage or the GeoCities site editor. Your chances of winning are highly reduced, because neither of these produces particularly good code.

Sometimes it will be pretty obvious that you should not submit your site. The criteria says the site has to be made by a woman, and you are a man, for instance. Or the awardmaster wants science fiction sites and your's is about how to make money from the internet. Don't waste everyone's time - please read the criteria.

Sometimes it's a bit more difficult. Let say the criteria says, "text must be easy to read." Well, step back and take a look at your site. Is the text light pink on a dark pink background? It's not easy to read. Or perhaps the criteria says, "usable navigation on every page." Does your site have usable navigation? Maybe the criteria says, "You must provide an obvious way to turn off any music." Well, do you?

Other criteria might include: no bandwidth stealing - check your images to be sure they are locally stored. No copyright violations - make sure you haven't "borrowed anything" from anyone. Fast loading - check your site on a 28.8 modem to see for yourself.

Correct anything that you feel like fixing, making a best guess as to the awardmasters intention. Once you feel your site is up-to-snuff, then go ahead and submit it.

You see what happens if you approach award programs from the proper direction? Your site gets better. You are taking the "advice" of dozens or even hundreds of webmasters and determining if you agree or disagree. If you agree (you want to submit your site to the award), then you make the change. If not, you move on.

An in reality, that's what awards programs are all about. They are a way to improve websites and make the internet a better place for us all.

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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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