



SHARON HEFLIN CHAPTER OF THE YEAR (COTY)

GUIDELINES

COTY COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Each year, the Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) honors the work of its six chapters through the annual Sharon T. Heflin Chapter of the Year (COTY) awards.

Chapters can compete in and win awards in four individual achievement categories including:

- Accreditation and Education
- Communications (promoting public relations externally and internally)
- Membership
- Programs and Projects

First, second and third place awards are designated within each category at the discretion of the judges. A COTY Award is given to a chapter based on the first, second and third place awards it receives. For each first-place award, a chapter receives 50 points; each second-place award receives 30 points and each third-place award receives 20 points to yield a total score for each chapter. Any ties will be broken at the discretion of the judges.

Judging

PRCA secures a panel of judges composed of individuals who have professional expertise in the field of public relations. Each judge reviews and scores all entries using the following criteria and point values.

- Outline and relevance of objectives: 10 points
- Tactics/methods used to achieve objective(s): 25 points
- Measurement of objectives: 30 points
- Degree to which the collateral material documents the narrative description of the project or activities: 35 points

Total possible points per category is 100 points.

Eligibility

All chapters affiliated with PRCA and in good standing may compete in any, or all, of the four categories. Chapter projects implemented from the previous year qualify for the competition.

Entry Format & Content

- Entries must be submitted via the PRCA Awards website.
- Entries are divided into two sections: narrative and collateral.
- The narrative section is used to describe the activities or projects pertinent to the category, and the collateral section contains printed and other materials in support of the narrative. All collateral material must have been produced during the eligibility period.
- Each narrative section cannot exceed eight pages using 12-point Times New Roman font. Each collateral section should be saved as a single PDF file (for printed materials). Audio and video files may be saved separately.
- Chapters should use the following format to name/save entries:
 - Chapter Name - Category - Narrative or Collateral | Example: Mobile-Community Service-Narrative

Deadline for Entries

All entries and payment must be received no later than the deadline listed on the PRCA website.

Entry Process and Fees

Fees are \$65 for the first entry and \$10 per additional entry. Payment may be made via credit card or by Check. Checks should be made payable to "Public Relations Council of Alabama," and mailed to:

PRCA
Medallion Awards
PO Box 1294
Montgomery, AL 36102

COTY CATEGORIES OF ENTRY GUIDELINES

Chapters are encouraged to use the RACE format in writing their narrative (R: Research, A: Action, C: Communication, E: Evaluation). Guidelines ask that chapter's state objectives in each area, how they will achieve those objectives and their measurement of success.

The following is provided as a guideline for chapters to prepare their entries. Include a budget (if applicable) and answer the following questions in evaluating your narrative.

Research/Situation Analysis

- How well did the entry identify (through formal and/or informal research methods) and explain the problem or issue?
- How well were the targeted audiences selected and identified?
- How well did the plan appear to meet the objectives of solving the problem or meeting the issue?

Objectives

- How clearly were the specific objectives (qualitative and/or quantitative) of the plan stated?
- How well did they address the stated problem or issue?

Implementation

- How well did the activities address the stated objectives of the plan?
- Did the plan address all the targeted audiences?
- Rate the overall professionalism of the plan execution.
- Rate the plan for creativeness and innovativeness.

Evaluation

- How well did the entry meet the stated objectives?
- How well were the results documented?
- How successful was the entry overall in solving the problem or communicating the issue?

Budget

- How well was the budget documented?
- How well did end results justify the stated budget?
- Rate the entry's effectiveness in relation to its budget.

Support Material

- How well did support materials address the stated objectives or the plan?
- Were the support materials suitable for the targeted audience?
- Rate the overall professionalism of the support materials in terms of quality of writing, design, and production.
- Rate the support materials for creativity and innovativeness.

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ACCREDITATION AND EDUCATION

COTY | Accreditation and Education

Definition Educational programs, study groups, and mentoring initiatives that promote knowledge and attainment of Accreditation in Public Relations by the Universal Accreditation Board.

Explain ways in which your chapter educated members on Accreditation in Public Relations.

- Event details
- Goal/objectives
- Target audience

Explain how you achieved your goal(s) by describing:

- Execution/tactics
- Promotional materials used (documentation of use required)
- Results attained (may include number of members earning Accreditation or number of members in study group, or those studying individually for Accreditation)

Judging Considerations for Accreditation Achievement

- Did the chapter conduct a program specifically on accreditation (the importance of accreditation or how to prepare for the examination)?
- How does the percentage of accredited members compare with other chapters?

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COMMUNICATIONS

COTY | Communications

Definition

Collateral materials and/or websites produced and distributed exclusively for the chapter. This category is designed to assess the chapter's efforts to promote the image, professionalism and general awareness of the public relations profession within its local area.

Describe your chapter's use of communication materials for any or all of the following areas:

- Regular communication with members
- Event or meeting promotions and announcements
- Communication with non-members
- Self-promotion
- Others (e.g., telephone and broadcast scripts, press releases, etc.)

Judging Considerations for Communications Achievement

- How effective were chapter activities in promoting public relations to the local business community and general public? Did these activities appear to have a newsworthy element to them?
- Did supportive materials display a level of professionalism expected from the community's best public relations professionals?
- Were projects and other chapter activities used to promote public relations or to help others with their public relations skills?
- What was the extent of public or audience participation in PRCA-sponsored activities?
- Was the scope of the organization's public relations promotional activities challenging and innovative for the chapter membership?
- Was there an attempt to effectively evaluate the impact of the external publicity?

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MEMBERSHIP

COTY | Membership

Definition

Membership development is defined as activities designed to enhance the local chapter in three ways: recruitment, retention, and involvement.

State your chapter's membership goals as they relate to:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Involvement

How did you achieve these goals including (but not limited to) the following activities:

- Projects/Programs
- Volunteerism
- Member feedback
- Chapter operations

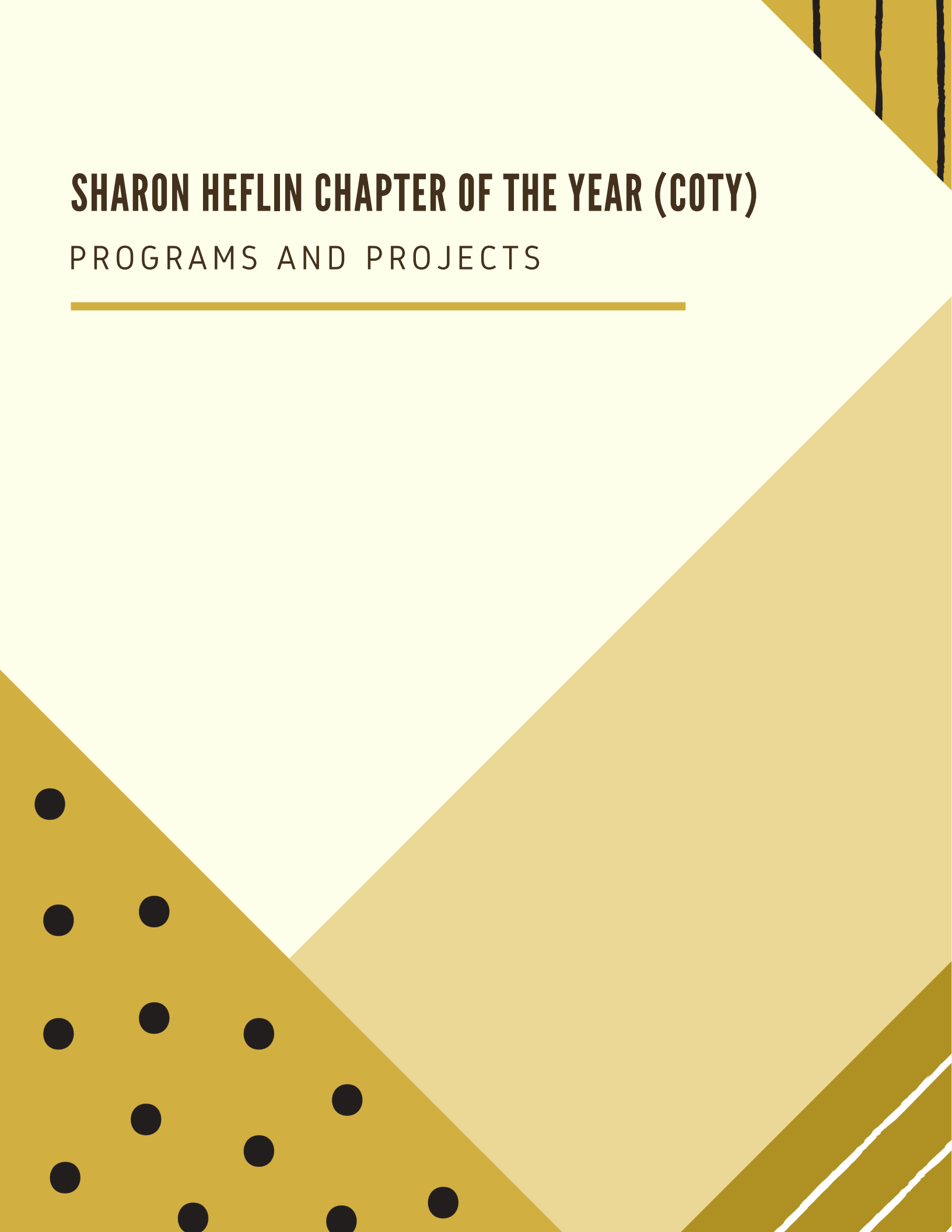
Describe, in detail, the results of your membership activities including membership numbers at the beginning, and membership numbers at the end of the competition period.

Judging Considerations for Membership Achievement

Judges will be asked to evaluate the chapter's success in retaining current members, recruiting new members, and attracting members and guests to regular meetings. Membership lists or other information should not be included in this section.

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PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS



COTY | Programs and Projects

Definition

Innovative projects and quality programming providing public relations educational opportunities, offering professional development, and promoting a financially-stable chapter with a goal of promoting the public relations profession as well as fostering actively interested membership, well-attended meetings, and membership growth.

State your chapter's overall programs and projects goals and provide (in the collateral material) a calendar of the year's programs.

Describe three of your most successful programs and projects. Explain how your chapter achieved your goal(s) by describing:

- Event details
- Target audience
- Method of promotion
- Average attendance
- Feedback mechanism
- Results

Judging Considerations for Projects Achievement

- Did the project(s) make a tangible contribution to an organization or individuals in the public?
- Were the projects' objectives achieved?
- Was there significant participation in the project by chapter members?
- Was there significant participation by the public or the organization(s) supported by the project?
- Did the chapter make use of good public relations skills in research, planning, implementing, promoting and evaluating the project?
- Were the project materials and method relevant for the intended audience?
- How relevant are the program topics to public relations?
- If a program is not about public relations, is the reason or significance stated so as to justify such a program? (i.e., a membership-drive party or networking).
- Do the topics add some useful information to public relations skill development?
- Do the programs contribute to a better understanding of the role of public relations?
- Is the series of programs, taken as a whole, consistent in quality and relevance, or do they vary widely?
- Does the synopsis for each program provide adequate information to effectively value the program?

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JUDGES' SCORE SHEET

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JUDGES' SCORE SHEET

CATEGORY: _____ CHAPTER: _____

RESEARCH, SITUATION, AND RELEVANCE OF OBJECTIVE(S)

(10 points maximum)

Did the entry address these questions?

- How well did the entry identify (through formal and/or informal research methods) and explain the problem or issue?
- How well were the targeted audiences selected and identified?
- How well did the plan appear to meet the objectives of solving the problem or meeting the issue?
- How clearly were the specific objectives (qualitative and/or quantitative) of the plan stated?
- How well did they address the stated problem or issue?

TACTICS/METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVE(S)

(25 points maximum)

Did the entry address these questions?

- How well did the activities address the stated objectives of the plan?
- Did the plan address all the targeted audiences?
- Rate the overall professionalism of the plan execution.
- Rate the plan for creativeness and innovativeness

MEASUREMENT

(30 points maximum)

Did the entry address these questions?

- How well did the entry meet the stated objectives?
- How well were the results documented?
- How successful was the entry overall in solving the problem or communicating the issue?

Budget (if applicable)

- How well was the budget documented?
- How well did end results justify the stated budget?
- Rate the entry's effectiveness in relation to its budget.

DEGREE TO WHICH THE COLLATERAL MATERIAL DOCUMENTS THE NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT OR ACTIVITIES

(35 points maximum)

Did the entry address these questions?

- How well did support materials address the stated objectives or the plan?
- Were the support materials suitable for the targeted audience?
- Rate the overall professionalism of the support materials in terms of quality of writing, design, and production.
- Rate the support materials for creativity and innovativeness.

