



International Society
of Hotel Associations

2018 ISHA AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE APPLICATION

Entries must be for projects completed by **January 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018.**

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Association: RI Hospitality Association

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Association Staff Size: 9

Associations Annual Budget (not including AH&LA dues): **X** Over \$500,000 ____ Under \$500,000

Entry Category: ____ Education and Workforce Development **X** Events and Fundraising

____ Government Affairs ____ Member Programs ____ Public Relations ____ Communications

Please respond to the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. Goals & Objectives of Program
2. Target Audience
3. Results of Program
4. Evaluation Measures
5. How was the program presented to the Target audience?
6. Addition information

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 3, 2018

1. Goals & Objectives of the Program

The purpose of the Stars of the Industry Awards is to celebrate outstanding members within the hospitality industry who have demonstrated professionalism in performing their jobs and have contributed to the positive image of Rhode Island's hospitality industry.

2. Target Audience

Our core audience includes members of the lodging, food service, and tourism sectors that make up the hospitality industry. Attendees include award winners, their colleagues, friends, and family as this event is a night to honor the best and brightest in our industry.

Awards are presented in over twenty different categories including, but not limited to:

1. Allied Employees of the Year
2. Chairman's Award
3. Chef of the Year
4. Education Ambassador of the Year
5. Education Partnership of the Year
6. Emerging Leader of the Year
7. Farm to Fork Excellence in Sustainability Award
8. Hospitality Ambassador of the Year
9. Hotel Employees of the Year
10. Hotelier of the Year
11. Lifetime Achievement Award
12. Man of the Year
13. Media Partner Award
14. President's Award
15. Restaurant Employees of the Year
16. Restaurateur of the Year
17. Teacher of the Year
18. Tourism Employee of the Year
19. Vendor of the Year
20. Vendor Representatives of the Year
21. Volunteer of the Year
22. Woman of the Year

3. Results of the Program

Over the past ten years, our annual meeting has nearly doubled in attendance and increased by 774% in net profit. What used to be a break-even or net-loss event has become our second largest annual fundraiser. In 2017, the Stars of the Industry Awards was sold out for the first time ever with over 900 attendees and 85 award winners which generated \$21,500.00 in net profit.

We have grown from a traditional sit down dinner to a professional production including live entertainment.

4. Evaluation Measures

Our success is measured by the overall net profit, number of tickets sold, number of sponsorships sold, number of program book advertisements sold, number of award winners and feedback from all event attendees.

Net profit for this event has generated \$21,500.00. To accomplish this, we have tightened our expenses by hosting the event at a member location that has the production ability to host live performances, including sound, staging, and lighting, reduces our need to hire outside vendors. They waive our rental fee, allow us to negotiate an all-inclusive F&B cost, utilize in-house décor, and also bring in donated table wine.

5. How was the program presented to the Target audience?

Event logistics begin in June with a Call for Award Nominees. We accept nominations from members and non-members in most categories but reserve a special few for our President and Chairman of Board to decide. RIHA staff reviews over 150 nominations that are received. This process includes confirmation that this member is in good standing with our Association, they haven't won an award within the past 5 years, and if they are receiving an employee of the year award, that their owner/operator approves the nomination. For example; a customer could nominate a banquet server for an employee of the year because they received terrific service, however, that employee could have received a poor performance review and their award recognition is not supported by management.

All nominees are submitted to our Board of Directors for an official vote in early September.

Once award winners are selected and approved, personalized letters, which are all individually signed by our President/CEO, are mailed to each award winner. Many times, companies will ask to present the award winner letter to their employees in a staff meeting amongst peers. Once all award winners are notified, invitations are mailed out announcing the names and companies all award winners.

Between September and November, there is a very short window for the RIHA staff to sell program book advertisements and sponsorships to help offset the cost of the awards. Many companies like to recognize their employees by purchasing an advertisement in the program book congratulating their winners.

During this time, we also collected, proofed, and edited all award winners' headshots and biographies to be posted in the four-color, printed, 100-page program book, given to all attendees at the awards dinner.

The event is always held on the first Wednesday after Thanksgiving and was held on November 29, 2017 at the Twin River Casino Event Center in Lincoln, RI; a full casino with live entertainment and various dining options

Upon arrival, all attendees are greeted at the registration table. Award winners are welcomed in a separate VIP line where our Association staff celebrates their arrival to the event by ringing bells and using noise-makers to announce an award winner has entered the building. Award winners and attendees then enter a special cocktail hour.

The cocktail hour is important to many of our allied vendor members who have the ability showcase their business to their target audience. Every year we try to come up with new ways for our vendor members to do this. In previous years, we had exhibition tables during the cocktail hour, however we learned that vendors wanted to get out from behind the tables and network with attendees, one-on-one.

In 2017, we created a new way for vendor members to not only showcase their business but also get some one-on-one time with attendees. Due to our unique location at a casino event center, we were able to host six sponsored tables of charitable Black Jack, with official casino Black Jack dealers and rules. Attendees were encouraged to play \$5 hands of black jack. Vendor members had signage and were able to network with attendees who participated in the charitable Black Jack. All proceeds benefitted the RI Hospitality Education Foundation. This very new addition to the event brought in an additional \$3,780.00 in revenue.

While attendees played Black Jack and took photos at our step and repeat, we also had cash bars with specialty drinks named after our Chairman of the Board and our President/CEO.

Following the cocktail hour, loud music hits the speakers and attendees are escorted into a magnificent event space that has been transformed into a winter wonderland. With up-lighting, a raised runway that cuts right through the center of the room, a production team, live cameras, four projection screens and gold trophies that glisten from the stage, it's a moment to take in.

After attendees find their assigned seats, the lights start to dim. An Emcee takes the mic and introduces an opening act with dancers, music, and surprise performances by the President/CEO, Association Chairman of the Board, Education Foundation Chairman of the Board, and two very special guests; former NFL New England Patriots football players who dance down the runway setting the scene and raising the energy for a very fun night.

Attendees are encouraged to sing along to the music and lyrics displayed on the big screens (an iteration of the Y.M.C.A. turned into R.I.H.A.) holding up 2 foot tall letters that spell out R-I-H-A.

Once the opening act ends, the President/CEO, Chairman of the Board and Chief Operating Officer take the stage to deliver over eighty-five awards throughout the evening.

Award winners are announced by name, their photos hit the projection screens and each award winner receives their moment-in-time to strut and dance down a runway in front of 900+ attendees. They receive a glistening trophy that weighs in at 2lbs, as well as citations from the Governor of Rhode Island, and the Mayor of their local town/city.

Awards are paused during dinner while guests are then surprised by a special guest performance by BMI singer/songwriter and former NBC's The Voice top ten contestant Joe Maye.

Once all awards are given out and after many laughs and tears the event ends but the party doesn't. Many guests meet-up at another location within the casino for a after-party with a live DJ and plenty more dancing.

Post-event the Association works with our PR company to launch press-releases for each of the 85 award winners. For months to come, award winners are being recognized in their local newspapers which really lets the celebration live on.

6. Additional information

The Stars of the Industry event began as a required annual meeting of our Association 29 years ago. It was never intended to be a fundraiser for the organization, in fact it was considered a 'break-even' event for the last twenty-three years. As attendance grew and more and more nominations for awards were submitted, change was happening. We realized the importance of this event and that we could use this as our opportunity to improve the overall image of our industry. Through this event we can engage those outside of just our Association. From industry partners to employees and their families, this event allows for celebration and recognition amongst colleagues and peers industry wide.

Due to the timing of this event, many members have begun using this awards dinner as their annual employee recognition outing. Our members know being recognized by your peers is perhaps one of the most meaningful achievements one can receive.

What was once an annual meeting dinner is now a full blown production with a runway stage, opening acts, musicians, DJ's, videos, slideshows, celebrity cameos, photography and much more, and most importantly a new fundraiser for the Association.

Photos from the 2017 Stars of the Industry Event are enclosed.
The 2017 Stars of the Industry Program Book is also enclosed.









