



JC Brown Award Criteria

The nominations will be judged on the completion of the following four criteria. Each response is limited to 500 words. Point values have been assigned to each criterion to guide the panel of judges. The final score of each nomination will be determined by combining the four individual criterion scores.

a. Strategic Communications Approach (25 points)

How does the nominee integrate communication into the organization's strategic planning and management processes? Evidence may include, a well-defined strategic communication plan, active CEO engagement as well as adequate annual budgets and resources devoted specifically to communication.

Consider:

- a. How is the nominee engaged with staff/board/consumer-members?
- b. How does the nominee foster communications innovation?
- c. How are communications included in the co-op's strategic planning process and in other leadership meetings where important co-op issues, practices, and challenges are discussed?
- d. How often is the strategic communication plan updated and reviewed for effectiveness?

Note: Budget size alone is not a major factor; it is part of the overall plan.

b. Internal Leadership Approach (25 points)

How does the nominee ensure co-op employees are informed, engaged, and empowered with the information they need to be effective communicators?

- a. Does the nominee view all employees of the organization as part of the communication team? For example, are staff members in all areas of the organization—particularly those who have contact with consumer-members—kept informed about the co-op's priorities and kept up to date on important organizational developments and on changes to major co-op products, services, and programs?
- b. Is there evidence of an effective employee communication program at the co-op, as well as two-way communication within the co-op, i.e., top-down, and bottom-up?
- c. Are there examples or indicators demonstrating how information on critical projects and management decisions is shared in a timely and open fashion in executing the cooperative's communication plan?
- d. Other examples include a dedication to hiring professional communication staff people, as well as providing adequate educational and training opportunities for staff.

c. The Cooperative Difference (25 points)

How does the nominee's commitment to communication, both internal and external, help advance the seven cooperative principles, philosophy, and way of doing business?

- a. Evidence may include any type of leadership action, communication activity, or product that promotes the cooperative principles to staff, consumer-members, or other audiences.



J.C. Brown CEO Communication Leadership Award



d. Measures of Success (25 points)

Please note indicators of the success of the cooperative's communication/marketing programs during the nominee's tenure, and on which he or she has had an influence. This criterion is not intended to be an evaluation or showcase of the cooperative's communication products and services as defined in the larger Spotlight on Excellence awards program.

- a. Other information may include awards received by the cooperative during the nominee's tenure but should not be limited to that. For example, the evidence should include how the organization measures the success of its communication programs and projects, i.e., what evaluation techniques and methods are used to determine whether strategic communication goals have been met. CEO/GM involvement or endorsement should be described.
- b. Additional evidence may include how the organization's communication programs have led to changes in thinking, attitudes, or actions among consumer-members and/or other key audiences, and how the nominee has been a part of this result.

Supplemental Materials

Up to three additional supporting materials may be added to reinforce your submission. All supporting material will be viewed by the judges but will not be separately scored. If included, supporting material must be uploaded using the area provided in the online nomination form.

Submission Tips

Your nominee may be a great communications champion, but unless you provide solid proof points, your score sheet won't reflect what you see in your co-op's leader.

Successful entries:

1. Closely match the responses to each of the four questions and prompts.
2. Provide proof points and details such as examples, evidence, and data to support your contention.
3. Include optional supporting material to provide additional context and dimension for your contentions.
4. Recognize that every question is important. Past winners have scored in the highest part of the "excellent" range across all four categories. See score chart.

Don't get discouraged if your submission doesn't win this time. Every cycle is different. For the majority of award winners, it took more than one cycle before they won the top honor.

Judging Information

The J.C. Brown nominations are reviewed by a panel of three judges, consisting of one retired CEO or senior communicator from the electric cooperative industry, and two judges from outside the industry who possess senior-level experience.

For each award cycle, all three judges review the nomination materials for each candidate. The work of the judges is confidential, and they do not collaborate. Judges work independently on evaluating the entries and submit their evaluations to the NRECA Award Program Manager.

The winner is determined by having the highest average score across all three judges.

Scoring

Judges consider the completeness of the entry forms and whether entrants followed all instructions. The effectiveness in achieving the stated goal will be heavily weighted in the scoring. Evaluations will be based on absolute scores rather than a comparison of entries. The entrant with the highest average score across all three independent judges will be deemed the winner. While the judges will review all supplemental material submitted, it will not be scored.

Judges' Evaluation Form

The evaluation form is the centerpiece of the awards judging. There are four, equally weighted criteria. All entries will be evaluated and scored independently by each of the judges. The work of all judges has equal weight when averaging nominees' individual scores.

POINTS & CRITERIA BREAKDOWN						
Category	Maximum Points	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor
Strategic Communications Approach	25	25 - 21	20 - 16	15 - 11	10 - 6	5 - 1
Internal Leadership Approach	25	25 - 21	20 - 16	15 - 11	10 - 6	5 - 1
Cooperative Difference	25	25 - 21	20 - 16	15 - 11	10 - 6	5 - 1
Measure of Success	25	25 - 21	20 - 16	15 - 11	10 - 6	5 - 1



Sample Scoring Sheet for Judges

Criterion 1. Overall Strategic Communications Approach

_____ points

Answers the question, “How does the nominee integrate communication into the organization’s strategic planning and management processes? Evidence may include, a well-defined strategic communication plan, active CEO engagement as well as adequate annual budgets and resources devoted specifically to communication. “

Considerations include:

- c. How the nominee engaged with staff/board/consumer-members.
- d. How the nominee fosters communications innovation.
- e. How communications are included in the co-op’s strategic planning process and in other leadership meetings where important co-op issues, practices and challenges are discussed.
- f. How often the strategic communication plan updated and reviewed for its effectiveness?

Criterion 2. Internal Communications Approach

_____ points

Answers the question, “How does the nominee ensure co-op employees are informed, engaged, and empowered with the information they need to be effective communicators?”

Considerations include:

- g. Does the nominee view all employees of the organization as part of the communication team? For example, are staff members in all areas of the organization—particularly those who have contact with consumer-members—kept informed about the co-op’s priorities and kept up to date on important organizational developments and on changes to major co-op products, services, and programs?
- h. Is there evidence of an effective employee communication program at the co-op, as well as two-way communication within the co-op, i.e., top-down, and bottom-up?
- i. Are there examples or indicators demonstrating how information on critical projects and management decisions is shared in timely and open fashion in executing the cooperative’s communication plan.
- j. Other examples include a dedication to hiring professional communication staff people, as well as providing adequate educational and training opportunities for staff.

Criterion 3. The Cooperative Difference

_____ points

Answers the question, “How does the nominee’s commitment to communication, both internal and external, help advance the seven cooperative principles, philosophy, and way of doing business?”

Additional considerations include: Any type of leadership action, communication activity or product that promotes the cooperative principles to staff, consumer-members, or other audiences.



Criterion 4. Measures of Success

_____ points

Answers the question, “How successful have the cooperative’s communication/marketing programs and efforts been during the nominee’s tenure, and on which he or she has had an influence?”

Note: This criterion is not intended to be an evaluation or showcase of the cooperative’s communication products and services as defined in the larger Spotlight on Excellence awards program.

Overall Summary for this entry, including all four criteria (to be completed after finishing evaluation of the four criteria on the following four pages)

Summary of Entry

Total Points: _____

Strengths of entry:

- 1.
- 2.

Areas for improvement for entry:

- 1.
- 2.

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