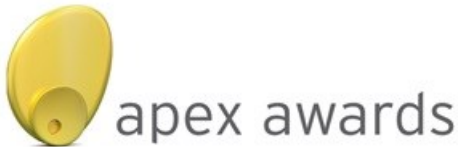


# Rewarding the sweet spot in tough times

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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This year's Apex Awards entry process remains the same, with two rounds, but the percentages to win an Apex Award has dropped. Previously a score of 70% was needed to receive a Bronze Award, this year that percentage has been dropped to 65%. Similarly, the scores to be awarded a silver and gold have been changed from 80% to 75% and 90% to 85% respectively. The Grand Prix winning percentage changes from 95% to 90%.



However, do not mistake this for a lowering of standards or that it will be “easier” to win, warns Association for Communication and Advertising (ACA) CEO Odette van der Haar. “The change has been made in recognition of the economy and the highly aggressive environment out there that has had an impact on the quality of work.”

As such she foresees less winners in terms of the top awards. “It takes a lot to win the top awards and I am not talking about money here, but about investment. You need to find something new and innovative that is effective and that sweet spot is not always easy to find in a tough economy when clients are nervous to spend. “

This year's entry will be characterised by collaborations between agency partners, and campaigns that aim to deliver short term results, with some promotions. “While this is not always a winning strategy; it is symptomatic of a tough economy,” she adds.

Experienced entry writers and new comers as well as past winners were in attendance as was Chairperson of the Apex Awards, Ivan Moroke (founder and CEO of Co-Currency) as van der Haar briefed agencies and clients on this year's Apex Awards in Randburg and Cape Town.

Also new this year is the template document. This provides an overview of what should be in the case study, with headings and sections making it very clear what is needed to write the entry. It's a guide, says van der Haar. “In the past case studies have left out important information or have not been packaged properly and this has cost that campaign an award.”

The core of the Apex Award case study is to prove that it was only the communications campaign that led to the results achieved. “So consider all possible factors and then eliminate them, from pricing, to product improvement, seasonality,

competitive weakness, etc., and the not so obvious such as value, gender issues and patriotism.”

Her advice is to be very clear in what the objectives are and why these were the objectives and how it changed things. “It always starts with the business objectives, how the marketing objectives tied in and what were the campaign objectives, and what tactical things did you do to tie back to this. What was there, what did you do, and how did it change that service/product and how did you measure this.”

While Apex is based on information, it is not about chucking in data. “The data must be able to tell a story,” she adds.

This is van der Haar’s 10th Apex Awards, but she says, in a decade, nothing has changed. “The Apex Awards have always represented efficacy, and they still do today. The Apex Awards confirm that value of marketing and agencies. It is about the client’s perception of value. How much value are you offering back into the client’s organisation is what an Apex Award demonstrates.”

Effectiveness is now mandatory in the workplace and effectiveness starts when you over achieve your goals. “That is why the Apex Awards demand that you go beyond what is required of you,” she adds.

This year the Apex Awards workshop was also presented in Durban for the first time.

View the entry form [here](#).

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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