MUSIC CITY

2019 GOLD PEN AWARDS

OPEN FOR ENTRIES

IABC Nashville

KEY DATES

EARLY DEADLINE
Friday, May 10, 2019

GRANT ME A LITTLE SLACK DEADLINE
Friday, May 17, 2019

AWARDS CELEBRATION
August 2019

IABC Nashville is on a quest to recognize Middle Tennessee professionals who exemplify excellence in strategic business communications, management skills, thought leadership, and creativity. Each year, the Music City Gold Pen Awards showcase leading-edge work from area communicators – members and non-members alike – from various sectors.

Submitting an entry will help you develop your professional knowledge and skills, and prepare for entry into the international Gold Quill Awards program. Judged by other IABC chapter professionals, a Music City Gold Pen Award is one of the most prestigious awards a communicator, designer, marketing strategist, or student can earn.

Enter online:
https://IABCNashville.awardsplatform.com

IABC Nashville is diverse, with members representing area agencies, broadcast stations, corporations, universities and nonprofit organizations.

IABC Nashville was recognized as the 2017 Small Chapter of the Year.

For more information, visit
http://nashville.iabc.com

10 REASONS TO ENTER MUSIC CITY GOLD PEN AWARDS

Demonstrate your skills in analytical thinking and creative implementation by entering an effective strategic communications plan according to IABC's global standards and criteria of excellence.

Earn credibility and a reputation for excellence, as one among the best in the region.

Be recognized for your work by colleagues, your employer, and clients, with solid evidence that you're one of the best at what you do.

Fine-tune your skills with expert feedback from senior professionals.

Inspire your team and enhance their reputation, both internally and externally.

Build a business case for an increase in your communications budget.

Elevate the standard of professional communication in your organization.

Build a portfolio of work & a stronger resumé to open doors for new clients and career advancement.

Show you can compete with the best of the best.

Use the feedback from our local IABC chapter awards to enter an even stronger submission at regional and international levels.

ELIGIBLE WORK

- All work must have been implemented, published or broadcast between January 1, 2018, and the day of submission.
- If a long-term strategy was developed prior to January 2018 and hasn't previously been entered, it is eligible for entry.
- If you entered your work in 2018 and didn't win an award, you may revise and re-enter your project.
- Entries that have won a Music City Gold Pen award in previous years may not be resubmitted.

REASONS AN ENTRY MAY BE DISQUALIFIED

- The work plan exceeds 4 pages.
- It is obvious the entrant did not play a role in the project.
- The entry depends mainly on syndicated, borrowed, reprinted or stock material.
- If the electronic files contain viruses, if they disable or require disabling of any part of the computer system used during evaluation, or if evaluators cannot view work samples using the instructions provided.
- You are a consultant submitting work done for a client without their express permission.

HOW TO ENTER

All entries must be submitted through the online judging system: **https://IABCNashville.awardsplatform.com**

1. Choose the divisions and category combinations you want to enter. You may enter multiple categories within one division. And you may enter the same project, or parts of a project in different categories.

2. Write your work plan for entries in Divisions 1, 2, or 3. Work plans are limited to four (4) pages using a font size no smaller than 10-point and margins no less than ½ inch. Only one, single PDF file will be accepted for your work plan per entry.

3. For entries in Division 4, Communication Skills, you will need to submit a brief entry form, found within the awards platform process.

4. Prepare your work sample. After you upload your work plan (or Division 4 entry form), you will be able to upload a maximum of five work sample files.

5. Check your work sample files, which must be in PDF, PNG, JPG, GIF, MP4, WMV, M4V, MOV, or MP3 formats. Each file is limited to 5 MB in size.

6. Review your entry. You have the opportunity to revise your entry up until the deadline.

7. When you're ready, hit **Submit**.

8. After the final deadline of Friday, May 17, you will receive an invoice with the applicable amount due, based on your submission date/time, status, and number of entries (see payment options).

ENTRY FEES

EARLY DEADLINE:
Friday, **May 10** by 11:59PM CDT
IABC members: $110 per entry*
Non-members: $150 per entry
Non-profit/**students**: $30 per entry

GRANT ME A LITTLE SLACK DEADLINE:
Friday, **May 17** by 11:59PM CDT
IABC members: $150 per entry*
Non-members: $190 per entry
Non-profit/**students**: $45 per entry

Entries received after the **Grant Me a Little Slack** deadline will not be judged.

* To receive the IABC member rate, the **entrant** must be an IABC member.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Follow the instructions in the invoice email to make a secure online payment by credit card or PayPal.

If paying by check, payments must be received by the invoice due date to qualify for entry (entries).

Make checks out to **IABC Nashville** and mail to:

Lysa Rigo,
VP of Finance,
2929 Greentree Drive,
Smyrna, TN 37167

Music City Gold Pen Categories

Distinguish your work in four divisions:

DIVISION
1
COMMUNICATION
MANAGEMENT

DIVISION
2
COMMUNICATION
RESEARCH

DIVISION
3
COMMUNICATION
TRAINING AND
EDUCATION

DIVISION
4
COMMUNICATION
SKILLS

JUDGING CRITERIA

Judges evaluate entries on a 7-point scale with zero being the lowest score and 7 being the highest. An entry is considered to be competent if it scores at least 4. Entries must receive 5.25 to receive a Merit award. Entries scoring 5.75 receive an Award of Excellence. The Music City Gold Pen evaluation criteria is modeled after the IABC Gold Quill Awards criteria.

Winning entries must demonstrate that they met clearly stated objectives, show originality and demonstrate results based on measured outcomes. Evaluators consider how well a program was conceived and executed, how appropriate the chosen strategy and objectives were for the desired results, and how the outcomes are measured and achieved.

ENTERING DIVISIONS 1, 2 AND 3

These divisions include two key elements for your entry: the **work plan** and the **work sample**, scored 50% on each of the elements. The work plan is an executive summary of your communication strategy. It can be no more than four pages so be sure to edit your plan to ensure it's clear and concise. Bullets, tables and lists might help you save space.

If you're entering the same program or elements of the program in multiple categories, be sure to tailor your work plan so it fits each category.

The **work plan** should:
- Describe the context for your program or project.
- Clearly state the communication challenge or opportunity.
- Provide an analysis of your target audiences.
- Demonstrate high-level goals and measurable objectives stated as outputs or outcomes.
- Provide insight into your strategic approach.
- Highlight your budget.
- Provide an abbreviated tactical execution plan.
- Demonstrate collaboration with stakeholders, if appropriate.
- Discuss any challenges you faced during planning and execution.

- Provide measurable, meaningful results aligned with the stated objective, audience and business need.
- Ensure your work plan references your work sample and assists evaluators in navigating through your entry, finding the examples that best illustrate your work.

The **work sample** contains the supporting materials that illustrate the communication work you planned and implemented. It can include video/audio files, Word documents, PDFs, magazines, brochures, and links to websites or hosting platforms. Your work sample should represent the full scope of your work; however, remember that evaluators have limited time to review your submission – a well-organized work sample that demonstrates your very best efforts will score higher than an overwhelming number of items that evaluators can't sort through. Showcase a representative, and condensed, overview of your project. Pick examples (clips, photos, etc.) that best support your work plan and represent your strategy. Be creative in demonstrating how the elements of your work sample are aligned with the business needs and audience preferences.

ENTERING DIVISION 4

You do not need to complete a detailed work plan for the Communication Skills division. Instead, you will need to complete a brief entry form on the awards entry website and submit it along with your work sample. The work sample should represent the full scope of your work.

The Skills division entry form has questions such as:
- Describe your organization.
- Why was this project undertaken?
- Who was the audience for this project?
- What do you know about the audience?
- List up to three key measurable objectives for the project.
- How well did the project meet the objectives?
- List up to three key messages for the project.
- Describe the resources (budget, time, other) available for the project and how effectively they were managed.

For entries in Communication Skills, the score is based on the work sample's creativity, professional execution, and alignment to a higher-level campaign or initiative, all weighted equally.

STUDENT ENTRIES

A student or a group of students may submit entries. Professors, lecturers or advisers may not enter on behalf of a student. Work produced for educational courses, a club or volunteer association, an internship, or commercial and non-commercial activities, including work for an IABC chapter or region, is eligible for submission. When the work was created, the student must have been attending school full- or part-time, working toward a degree at a college, university or other educational institution. Entrants who were enrolled as students but have professional communication experience or are employed in the communication profession must submit their entries as professional members or non-members.

If the assignment was not fully implemented, please make note of this to the evaluators. It will not be a disadvantage to your entry, but you must show how the program would have been evaluated, had it been implemented in practice.

For student entries, 35% of the score is based on the work plan and 65% on the work sample.

IABC'S SEVEN-POINT SCALE OF EXCELLENCE

7	Outstanding	An extraordinary or insightful approach or result.
6	Significantly better than average	Demonstrates an innovative, strategic approach, takes all elements into account and delivers significant results.
5	Better than average	Demonstrates a strategic approach and aligns the communication solution with the business need to deliver meaningful results.
4	Average	Competent approach or results, professionally sound and appropriate.
3	Somewhat less than satisfactory	Several key elements that are critical to the strategy or execution are missing, incorrect or underrepresented.
2	An inadequate approach or result	A significant number of critical elements are missing.
1	Poor	Work that is wrong or inappropriate.

FAQs

Can I enter several different projects?

You may submit as many entries as you wish. If you are entering several different projects, submit a separate entry form, work plan and work sample for each entry, tailored to meet the specific requirements of each category. You pay a separate entry fee for each category entered.

Can I submit the same entry more than once in the same year?

The same project, or parts of a project, may be submitted in different categories. For example, if you are submitting a multi-media campaign targeted at several audiences, you may enter it in Marketing Communication, Community Relations, Multi-audience Communication and Customer Relations. Create a tailored work plan for each category and pay a separate entry fee for each category entered.

If my project was created by a team, which name do I use as the entrant's name?

The entrant should be the person who is principally responsible for the development, management and execution of the entry. If you want to recognize your team, submit the entry form and the work plan with your name and refer to the team, such as *Jane Smith and Team Company Name*. The name on the entry form must match the name on the work plan.

Who enters a project created by an agency and a client?

Either one can enter, as long as the entrant includes a letter of consent acknowledging the different roles in the project, and written permission to disclose corporate information as part of the entry requirements.

If the material is proprietary, be sure to clearly indicate this on your entry and entry form. Entries that do not include this letter of permission will be disqualified.

Do entrants receive feedback?

For each entry submitted by the final deadline, entrants receive a completed evaluation form with scores and brief comments from evaluators along with the final score.

How are winners notified and recognized?

Award-winning entries will be notified in late July. Winners will be recognized at the Music City Gold Pen Awards ceremony, on the IABC Nashville website, on social media, and through a news release.

What happens to the entries once the competition is over?

Entries are electronic, so they will not be returned. In addition, for the Publications category, hard copy work samples will not be returned.

How can I improve my scores?

1. Review the resources available on the Gold Quill Award website:

   https://gq.iabc.com/resources/resources-for-entrants/

   Look especially at the **How-To Guide to IABC Awards – The Midas Touch**, which explains how each section is scored and includes which attributes cause judges to mark your entry higher or lower.

2. Questions to ask yourself:

   - Does this work plan show the project was strategically planned and implemented with attention to detail?

   - Does it provide enough information that an evaluator (who may be from another country and/or not familiar with the campaign) can understand what took place?

   - Does it show how the project or program helped the organization?

   - Does it contain well-defined SMART, measurable goals and objectives?

   - Does it cover all of the important points and does it tell a compelling story based on the needs and interests of the target audience?

3. Include both output-based and outcome-based objectives. **Output-based objectives** measure volume or increases against media vehicles and communication channels like website visits, articles distributed, ads produced, meetings held, content analyzed, blogs posted, tweets, or downloads.

   Outcome-based objectives measure what the audience will gain by way of awareness, understanding, recall, different perceptions, and quantifiable change in attitudes, opinions and behaviors.

4. For the measurement section of the work plan, tie your results back to your objectives.

5. Include research completed both in the work plan and as part of the work sample.

6. If you combine project elements into one PDF for the work sample, make sure to label items so the judges understand what they are looking at.

DIVISION 1

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

The Communication Management division covers project, programs and campaigns guided by a communication strategy.

Entries to this division can be submitted by any type of organization, from governments to retail companies to services such as utilities and healthcare. Entrants must demonstrate how their project applied a full range of planning and management skills, including research, analysis, strategy, tactical implementation and evaluation.

Entries may include a wide range of communication materials.

(Note: A single tactical execution element that formed part of a communication program may also be entered in the Communication Skills division.)

CATEGORY 1:
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
- Programs or strategies targeted at employee or member audiences
- Includes programs that create awareness and influence opinion or behavioral change, including those focused on ethics, morale, internal culture or change management
- May involve improving employee understanding and alignment with business direction, improving face-to-face communication, preparing employees for change, integration of organizational cultures caused by an acquisition or downsizing, an internal brand ambassador program or a program to inspire pride in the organization

CATEGORY 2:
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
- Local, regional, national or international programs or strategies that profile the role of strategic communication as a driver in improving employee engagement
- Entries must focus on the communication elements of these programs, which could include contribution to program development and promotion through various communication vehicles and channels
- May include employee recognition and employee volunteer programs, including programs that benefit charitable or philanthropic causes, or that recognize employees' organizational contributions or achievements in the organization

CATEGORY 3:
HUMAN RESOURCES AND BENEFITS COMMUNICATION
- Programs or strategies targeted at internal audiences that relate to communication of health and welfare, savings and pension, stocks and compensation, or recruitment and retention initiatives

CATEGORY 4:
CHANGE COMMUNICATION
- Communication strategies that support organizational change
- May be directed at internal or external audiences, or both

CATEGORY 5:
SAFETY COMMUNICATION
- Programs or strategies that focus on improving awareness, understanding and behaviors related to safety and security issues within an organization

CATEGORY 6:
LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION
- Programs or strategies that help leaders become more effective communicators, improve the quality of leadership communication within an organization, or improve leader knowledge and the ability to use communication as a business driver
- Strategies may include tool kits with speaking notes, videos, games or other tools that help leaders communicate a specific topic, and special publications with information and support for leadership communication

DIVISION 1
COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

CATEGORY 7:
MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND BRAND COMMUNICATION

- May include various activities designed to sell products, services, destinations, organizations or ideas to external audiences, and is generally delivered through a variety of communication vehicles and channels
- Strategies for new brands and the repositioning of existing brands in relationship to internal and external audiences
- May include brand characteristics and attributes, changes to corporate identities and design solutions that address the challenges of brand communication (must be more than a logo redesign)
- Strategic advertising campaigns designed to build brand awareness, influence opinion, motivate audience behaviors, or sell products and services

CATEGORY 8:
CUSTOMER RELATIONS

- Strategies or ongoing programs targeted at customer audiences that educate, inform, engage or otherwise connect the organization and its employees to the customer
- Programs may influence reputation, brand awareness and loyalty, and market position
- May include relationship management, experience standards or appreciation programs, but must be focused on communication and marketing elements

CATEGORY 9:
MEDIA RELATIONS

- Strategies or ongoing programs that use the news media (includes print and/or online) as the primary channel to reach target audiences and seek to influence awareness, understanding and opinion or motivate action
- Should demonstrate the quality of media coverage and its impact on the organization—quantity of media stories alone is not considered a valid measurement in this category

CATEGORY 10:
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- A one-time or an ongoing program that enhances stakeholder understanding of issues affecting business operations within the community served
- Seeks to build trust and credibility with stakeholder groups generally through consultation and other communication-based activities
- Supporting strategies may include formal and informal meetings, town hall discussions, workshops, presentations, open houses, and electronic or printed material

CATEGORY 11:
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- Short- or long-term programs that influence the opinion or actions of government bodies or agencies
- May seek to create awareness or influence the attitudes and behaviors of decision-makers toward the organization or industry

DIVISION 1

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

CATEGORY 12:
FINANCIAL COMMUNICATION
- Entails strategies, tactics and tools used to share financial data and recommendations with investors and other interested parties
- Includes investor relations functions that integrate finance, communication, marketing and securities laws compliance to enable effective two-way communication between a company, the financial community and stakeholders

CATEGORY 13:
ISSUES MANAGEMENT AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION
- Programs targeted at external and/or internal audiences that address trends, issues or attitudes that have a significant impact on an organization, such as labor relations, crises, mergers, acquisitions, public policy or environmental concerns
- Programs may demonstrate proactive planning and preventive action during an extraordinary event, or show the actions taken to address trends, issues and interest group attitudes that have a major impact on an organization

CATEGORY 14:
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
- Programs or strategies that communicate social responsibility and encourage positive actions while building awareness and reputation, and positioning the organization as a good corporate citizen
- May be targeted to multiple audiences and influence share price and customer loyalty, retention and recruitment, operational efficiency and increased sales
- Generally long-term and focused on enhancing the well-being of communities and populations through causes such as the environment, energy sustainability, food safety, economic stability, employment, poverty reduction, literacy, education, health, cultural preservation, and indigenous and heritage protection

CATEGORY 15:
GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS
- Programs and strategies specific to government organizations at the municipal, state, provincial, regional, federal, national or international level
- May be targeted to one or more audiences, and include internal, external or integrated communication strategies or programs

CATEGORY 16:
NONPROFIT CAMPAIGNS
- Programs recognizing the particular challenges of the nonprofit sector
- May include multiple internal or external audiences
- Promotes nonprofit organizations or causes
- May be paid projects or pro-bono projects donated to the client by an organization, agency or consultancy; entries will generally have a small budget or none at all

CATEGORY 17:
COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT, STUDENT ENTRY
- Entries to any category in this division submitted by a student

DIVISION **2** COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Entries in this division recognize the importance of research and measurement as a foundation for strategic communication work and a competency that is integral to success throughout the career of a communication professional. A clear understanding of why the research was needed demonstrates its strategic value to an organization.

CATEGORY 18:
COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

- Formative research conducted during the initial stages of the strategic communication planning process that benchmarks internal audience opinions or behaviors, profiles the marketplace or internal communication environment in which the organization operates, aligns best practices against organizational needs, or informs strategic direction for internal communication programs
- May include stakeholder analysis, competitive benchmarking, secondary research related to best practices, program or product test markets, and reputation or brand studies

CATEGORY 19:
COMMUNICATION RESEARCH, STUDENT ENTRY

- Entries to any category in this division submitted by a student

DIVISION
3
COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND EDUCATION

This division recognizes the mentorship and education role of consultants and communicators in developing and delivering workshops, classes, seminars or training that educates an audience about any aspect of the communication profession. This division includes all communication disciplines and professional competencies.

Entries in this division must demonstrate:

Alignment of learning outcomes to goals and objectives

Alignment of assessments to specific learning outcomes

Theories and practices of educational excellence

Impact outside the classroom

CATEGORY 20:
COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- Training or educational programs delivered to an internal or external audience that help to improve their communication competencies
- For internal audiences, this may include supervisor/manager/leader training in communication skills, presentation skills and employee ambassador development, in addition to media training, speaker's bureau training and other communication disciplines
- For external audiences, this may include presentations for conferences, university classes, seminars or workshops, as well as media and executive coaching

CATEGORY 21:
COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND EDUCATION, STUDENT ENTRY

- Entries to any category in this division submitted by a student

DIVISION 4

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The Communication Skills division includes marketing and communication elements that showcase technical skills such as editing, writing, design and multimedia production. Entries in this division are generally tactical in nature. Entrants must demonstrate strategic alignment, the creative process and measurable results tied to objectives.

CATEGORY 22:
SPECIAL AND EXPERIENTIAL EVENTS

- Planning and execution of a special or experiential event for an internal or external audience
- For internal audiences, this may include employee appreciation events or events that mark a significant occasion such as an anniversary, internal conference or meeting, or a celebration or special retirement
- For external audiences, this may include conferences, workshops, anniversaries, official openings, product launches, road shows and customer events

CATEGORY 23:
COMMUNICATION FOR THE WEB

- Online communication vehicles that are produced for internal or external audiences
- Electronic and interactive communication channels such as websites, intranets, online stores and microsites

CATEGORY 24:
AUDIO/VISUAL

- Communication vehicles for internal or external audiences, and using sound, images, video, apps, film, slides, CDs or a combination of these elements
- May include webinars, video, audio, podcasts, PowerPoint or other presentations, infographics, and interactive content and film. Does not include advertising commercials or websites

CATEGORY 25:
SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAMS

- Engages internal and external audiences in conversation through social media
- Encompasses tools and practices that allow individuals and groups to collaborate and share knowledge and experiences online
- May use conversation-enabled publishing platforms such as blogs and podcasts, social networks such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, democratized content networks such as wikis and message boards, content-sharing sites such as YouTube and Flickr, enterprise social networks such as Yammer, Slack and Jive, and virtual networking platforms

DIVISION
4
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

CATEGORY 26:
PUBLICATIONS

- Publications produced for internal or external audiences in all formats, including hard copy and electronic, including online publications
- May include magazines, blogs, newspapers, newsletters or tabloids, annual reports, books, special publications, brochures and other advertising material, and similar material

CATEGORY 27:
WRITING

This category includes writing in both print and electronic formats, includes online writing and blogs:

JOURNALISM:
- Material in which the news media is the primary communication channel
- May include, but is not limited to, editorials, interpretive/expository articles, news releases, and feature stories

CORPORATE WRITING:
- Material written primarily for use by an organization to inform or educate employees or external stakeholders
- May include recurring features or columns, magazines, newsletters, internal or special publications, stand-alone features, speeches and presentations, executive correspondence, scripts for corporate use, writing for an intranet, internet, internal publications, technical writing, and annual and special reports

PROMOTIONAL WRITING:
- Material written to persuade customers, consumers, employees or stakeholders to adopt a point of view, perform an action, or to purchase goods or services
- May include commercials, advertising, marketing or sales promotion material, advertorials and writing for the Web

NONPROFIT WRITING:
- Material written to promote nonprofit organizations, including IABC regional and chapter events

WRITING – SPECIAL PROJECTS:
- Books (fiction and nonfiction), educational material, scripts for theatrical use, and other writing projects not covered above

CATEGORY 28:
COMMUNICATION SKILLS, STUDENT ENTRY

- Entries to any category in this division submitted by a student
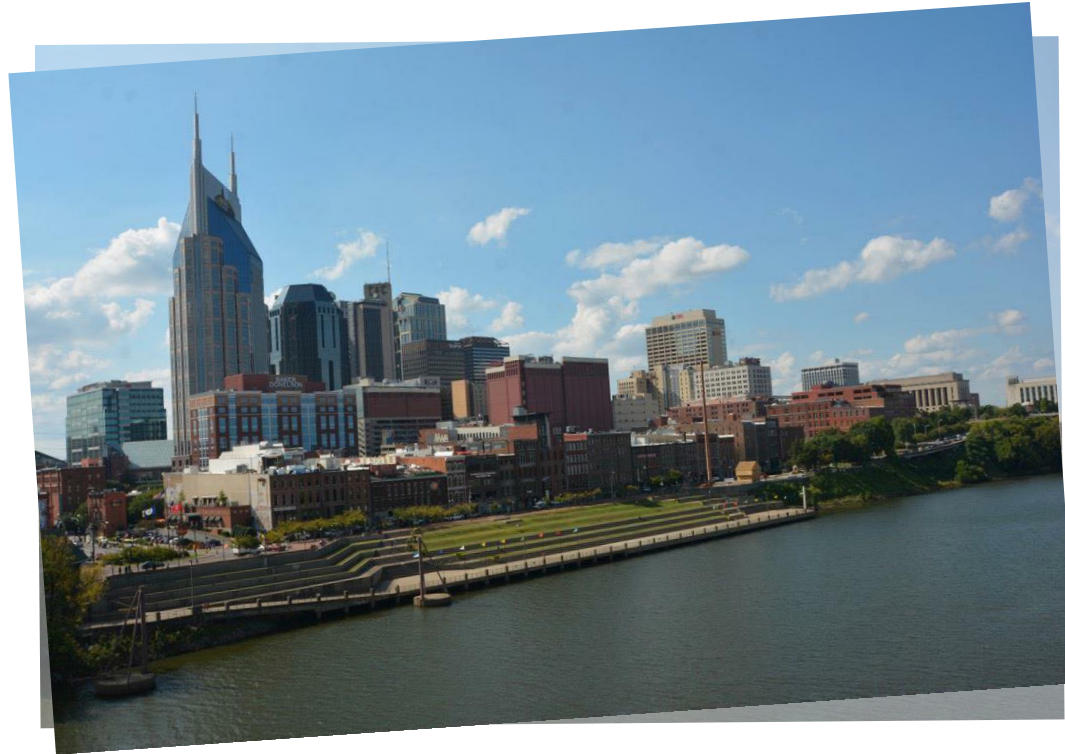
ABOUT IABC NASHVILLE

IABC Nashville is one of more than 100 chapters of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) in 70 countries, providing learning opportunities for its members and professional development sessions, featuring local and international subject matter experts and thought leaders, who offer new insights into the latest communication trends, technology, and issues facing the industry.

Questions?
Email Music City Gold Pen Awards Vice President of Awards:
MichelleLynnMichaud@gmail.com
or call/text **Michelle Michaud at 423-290-7394**