

IAS Agency Credentials Award 2023: Guidance for a shot at the prize

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It's that time of year again when agencies get an opportunity to shine up their credentials and polish their presentation to marketers waiting to be impressed. But, says Johanna McDowell, Independent Agency Search & Selection Company (IAS) CEO and Scopen partner, make sure there's more substance than shine...



IAS

Independent Agency Search and Selection Company

The DMASA Assegai Awards' call for entries is a good time to remind agencies that the prestigious annual event introduced the IAS Agency Credentials Award as a new award category in collaboration with the Assegai Integrated Marketing Awards in 2016. It was a first in South Africa and remains the only award in the country that recognises the significance of agency credentials.

The aim of the award is to acknowledge an agency's credentials and its ability to wow marketers. So, what are credentials supposed to do? Essentially, they inform marketers how agencies market themselves, so positioning that comes across as distinctive and case studies that stand out garner attention.

What marketers always want to know is the history and general information about the agency; its client list and standing in the industry, backed up by press coverage and case studies; its points of differentiation; and its proven value for money. Company culture, BBBEE standing and procurement recommendations are also crucial to a client determining the value an agency provides.

Who judges the agency?

In creating this award, we enable agencies to highlight their best suite of services, show up, and be seen. The secret sauce, though, is who the judges are. What we don't want is one agency judging others – aside from any possible bias, there's no better group to adjudicate than the very group who choose agencies from pitches: Marketers.

To find an award platform that fits the bill, we reviewed all the industry awards and their judges. The best fit for the IAS Credentials Award was the Assegai Awards.



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As a judge myself, it was clear that half or more of all judges were marketers - which made sense for two reasons: firstly, marketers reviewing agency credentials would give precise, valuable feedback and acknowledgment about what works for them. Secondly, agencies would have the opportunity to showcase their credentials to a group of top marketers they may otherwise never have access to.

The latter has been lauded by previous agencies as being an extremely valuable opportunity to put their names and talent on show.

A virtual judging session including the IAS and the marketers who will be adjudicating the IAS Credentials Award will ensure that all are aligned for the selection of the credentials most deserving of the award.

It's a real-time opportunity to see the points of which all judges are aligned, with a deep-dive discussion to determine a winner, and not a mere allocation of points. This format also provides participants to engender maximum impact on today's marketers.

Entries are open now and will close at the end of August.

As always, we look forward to these esteemed industry awards. You may not walk away with a trophy, but we're confident your next pitch will certainly be a winner.

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The Direct Marketing Association of Southern Africa (DMASA) is a Section 21 company dedicated to the protection and development of the Interactive and Direct Marketing (IDM) industry. It established itself as an independent body in November 2005.

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