



2010 Showalter Political Involvement Program Innovation Award Winners Named

San Antonio – The winners of the 2010 Showalter Political Involvement Program Innovation Award were announced on February 10 in San Antonio at the annual Innovate to Motivate™ conference. Innovate to Motivate™ (I2M) was founded in 2001 to provide advanced training curriculum for experienced political involvement professionals.

Grassroots Winner – Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association

The grassroots winner is the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association, which won for its “Colorado Campaign Road Trip 2010” program. Due to strict Colorado campaign finance laws, the RMIIA need a new way to inform their stakeholders of candidates’ positions on critical insurance industry issues. The flash animated application took the viewer on an interactive campaign road trip to highly contested legislative races across Colorado. When the viewer moved the mouse over “Vic the Voter,” a synopsis of the district and candidates appeared, as well as their answers to four key insurance industry legislative questions. The site had almost 3,000 views during the eight weeks of operation.

“As a veteran of the insurance industry, I know how hard it can be to make insurance issues ‘fun’ and interesting. This project cracked the code on the fun factor. The quantifiable results make it a winner,” said I2M Co-Founder Amy Showalter.

Grassroots Runner-Up - National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)

NFIB succeeded in electing 25 members to Congress, more than any time in their history. To achieve this, they integrated voter guides, social media, volunteer recruitment (over 1,000 small business owners volunteered for an NFIB-endorsed candidate), issue advertisements and perhaps most unique, deployed road teams to visit NFIB members one on one and thank them for supporting NFIB candidates and encouraging them to vote.

“NFIB used different mediums to reach their audience. They involved their members but also reached out to the general public,” said judge Meredith Hartstern of Caesar’s Entertainment.

“Trade associations and corporations should be involved in candidate recruitment and Get Out the Vote activities. The outcome of the 2010 elections and the stats that NFIB provided showcase the importance to capitalize on the momentum provided by the media and public taking interest in the group you represent and then pushing your program to new heights. The independent voters did swing to vote for business, and I'm sure it had to do with NFIB's well executed plan,” said judge Chad Wilson of Nationwide Insurance.

“The apex of any grassroots program should be to get your members elected to office. NFIB accomplished that in a big way, and the resulting motivation among their membership will pay big dividends for years. And the personal meetings to encourage campaign involvement and thank their members isn’t “old school” – it’s the “only school” when it comes to creating authentic, long-term commitment to your organization,” commented I2M Co-Founder Amy Showalter.

Grassroots Runner – Up American Academy of Neurology (AAN)

The American Academy of Neurology was recognized for its Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum, an advocacy and leadership skills development curriculum with the mission of training AAN members to better advocate for their patients and the profession. The four-day program offers challenging instruction in media relations, communications, and legislative grassroots advocacy. They regularly receive over 100 applications each year for only 30 training spots.

“This program includes quantitative results, which swayed me, and the success stories are motivating,” said judge Carrie Schneider of CMS Energy.

“Most government relations professionals feel that the grassroots and PAC functions are not a part of their organizational culture. This solves that issue. Also, integrating accountability through an action plan is a best practice I wish everyone would implement,” said I2M Co-Founder Amy Showalter.

PAC Winner

The Political Action Committee award went to Kraft Foods for allowing PAC members to vote on which candidate in an open seat race should receive PAC funds. The vote was facilitated by events with both candidates at the Kraft headquarters, as well as regular communications to PAC members about each of the candidates.

“One of the biggest hurdles that corporate PACs face is lack of trust from members and non-members on who decided how PAC dollars are contributed. This idea not only benefited Kraft Foods in 2010, but I am sure will be a recruiting tool in the next election cycle by making the PAC story personal to the employees. Great job Kraft Foods!” said judge Chad Wilson of Nationwide Insurance.

“All I could say when reading Kraft’s nomination was “Wow!” commented judge Kristine Kilbride of Genworth Financial. “I can’t recall that this has ever been done by a corporate PAC. It’s a great way to engage all PAC members in the endorsement process.”

About the Showalter Political Involvement Program Innovation Award

In 2000, Amy Showalter asked Peter Kennerdell at the Public Affairs Council if they could support an award for the best grassroots and PAC managers. Peter liked Amy’s idea, but

suggested a twist: instead of recognizing individuals, recognize specific innovations. Amy agreed, and created the criteria and judging process. The Showalter Innovation Award was born.

It recognizes in the grassroots and political action committee profession. Among the over 15 past winners are companies like Pfizer, International Paper, and Southwest Airlines, and non-profits like the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and Citizens for a Sound Economy.

The Innovation Award is voted on by previous Innovation Award winners and leaders in the Innovate to Motivate community. This year's judges are:

Meredith Hartstern, Caesar's Entertainment, Co-Chair, Innovate to Motivate 2011

Kari Lantos, NAFSA, Co-Chair, Innovate to Motivate 2011

Carrie Schneider, CMS Energy, Co-Chair, Innovate to Motivate 2011

Kristine Kilbride, Genworth Financial (2009 PAC Innovation Award Winner)

Chad Wilson, Nationwide Insurance (2009 Grassroots Innovation Award Winner)
