Second Street

Best Of Ballot Series

Plan → Promote → Profit

Day 2: The Best Of Marketing Blueprint for Success



Welcome!



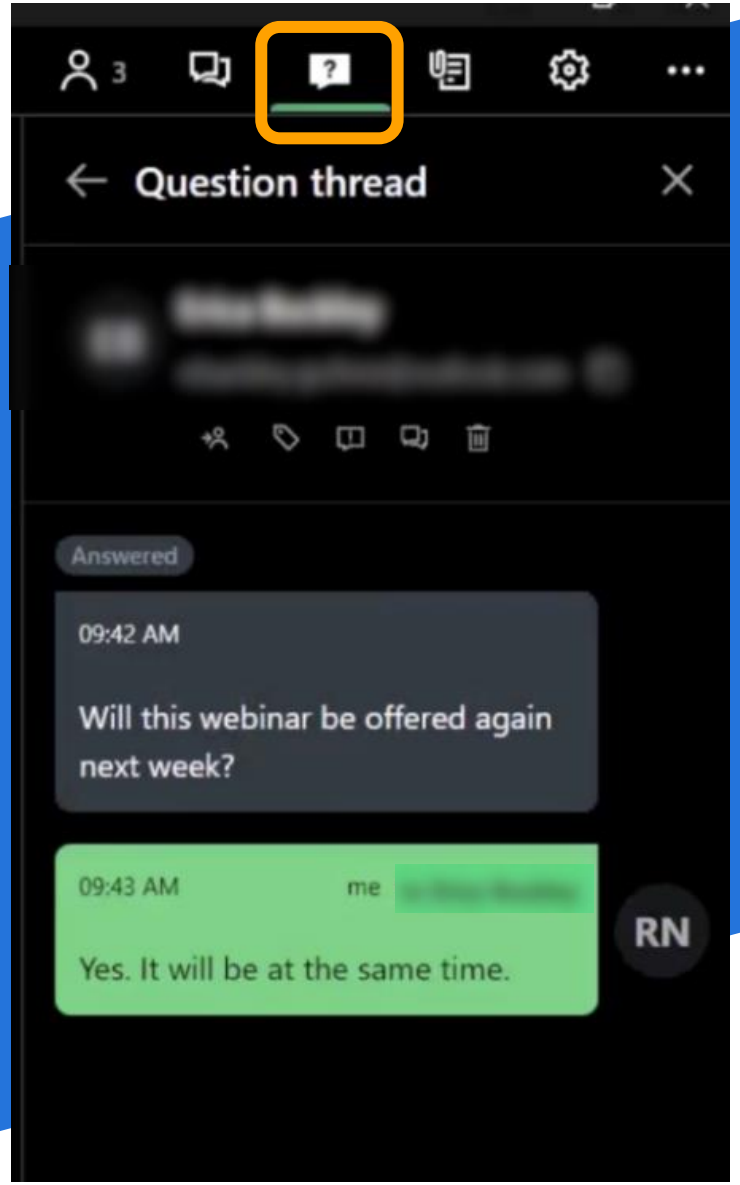
Julie Foley
jfoley@uplandsoftware.com



Kristen Wehe
kwehe@uplandsoftware.com

Got Questions?

Submit your questions in the Questions panel during the webinar, and we will answer them at the end or follow up with you!



We ran our Best of the
same as last year,
why didn’t engagement change?

THAT'S THE PROBLEM

BRANDING

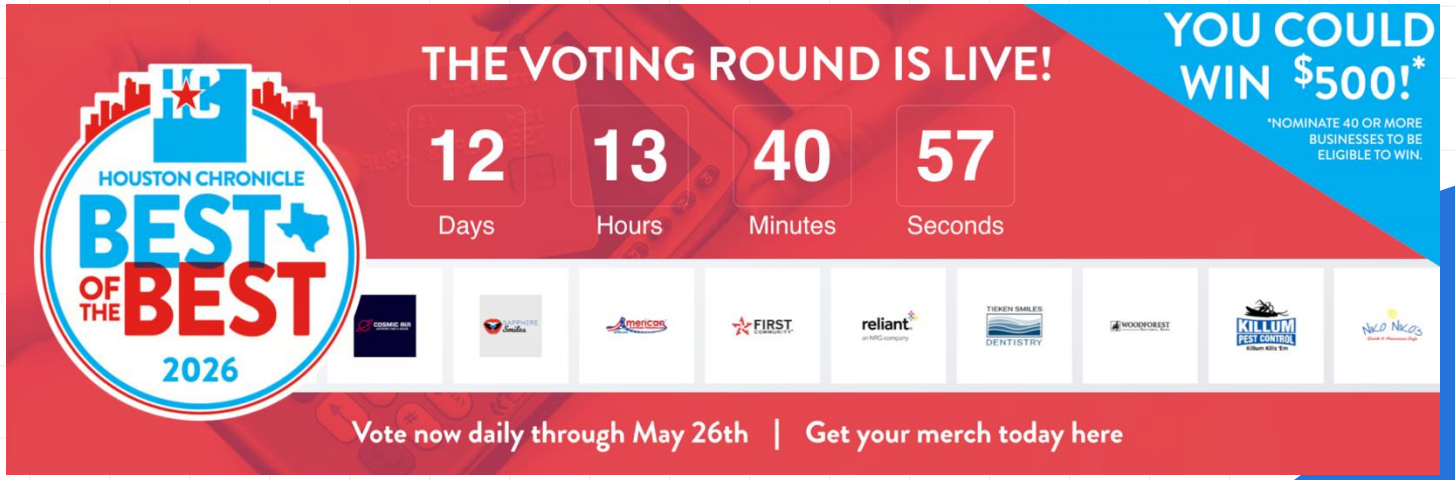
Your branding is the **first impression** you have – for both your audience and your ADVERTISERS

Subpar branding can lead advertisers to think the **work** you'd do for them will **also be subpar**

Header Images



NOT GREAT



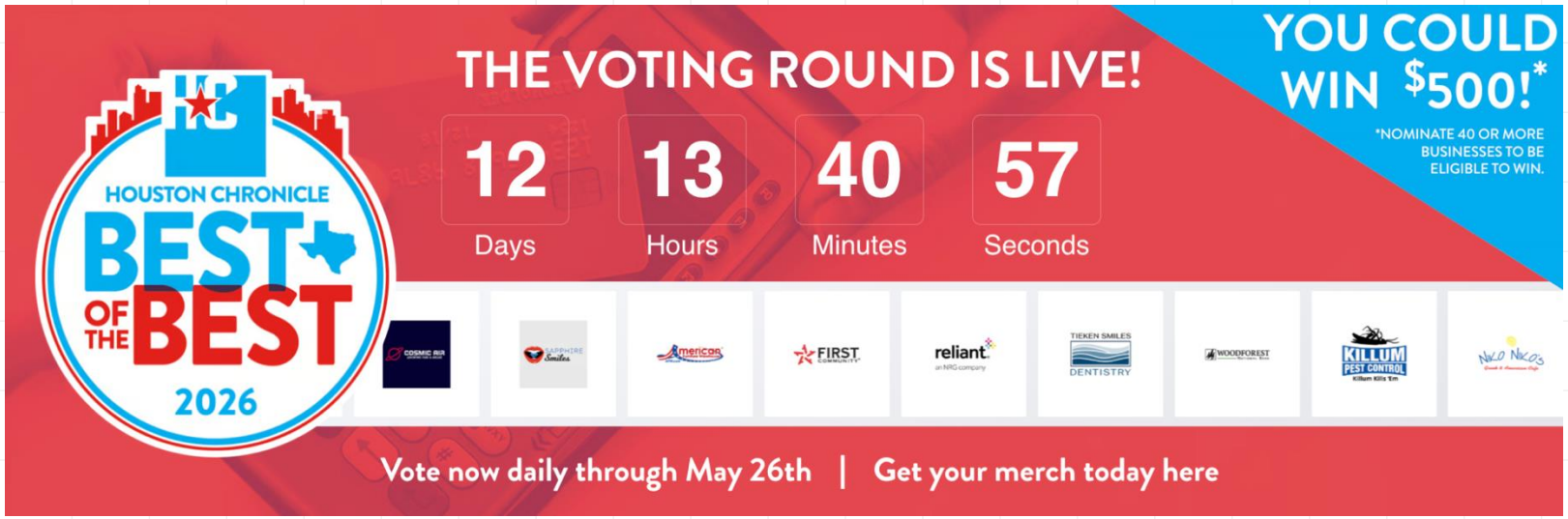
GREAT

Header Images

Logo calls back to location with brand recognition

Sweeps call out

Mentions ublication name



Sponsor inclusion

Call to action

Use of Color

Welcome to the 2026 Readers' Choice Awards!

These awards celebrate and recognize the best our community has to offer.

We invite you to Vote for your favorites in dozens of categories.

Voting is open
September 1- September 30 2026

It's easy to do. Simply choose a category, Vote for your favorite local businesses and fill in your email address*. Continue and complete the registration form. You MUST register to vote.

Typing in the name of the business will add them to the ballot and count as their first vote.

Readers' Choice winners will be announced in a special print and online section after the voting has finished, and the votes have been tallied and verified.

Let the Voting begin!

Already Voted?

The Promotion has Ended





NOT GREAT

2027 RAVES & Faves
BRAVA'S GUIDE TO THE BEST
MADISON, WI

COMING SOON!

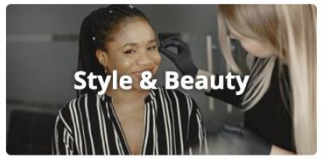
Nominate your favorite Madison area gems

- Nomination Round: Nov. 1-23
- Voting Round: Jan. 1-23
- Winners Announced: March 15

Are you a business owner? Advertise on this ballot!

Already Entered?

19 Days until Nominating Begins
Vote starting 01/01/2027 @ 12:00 AM Central



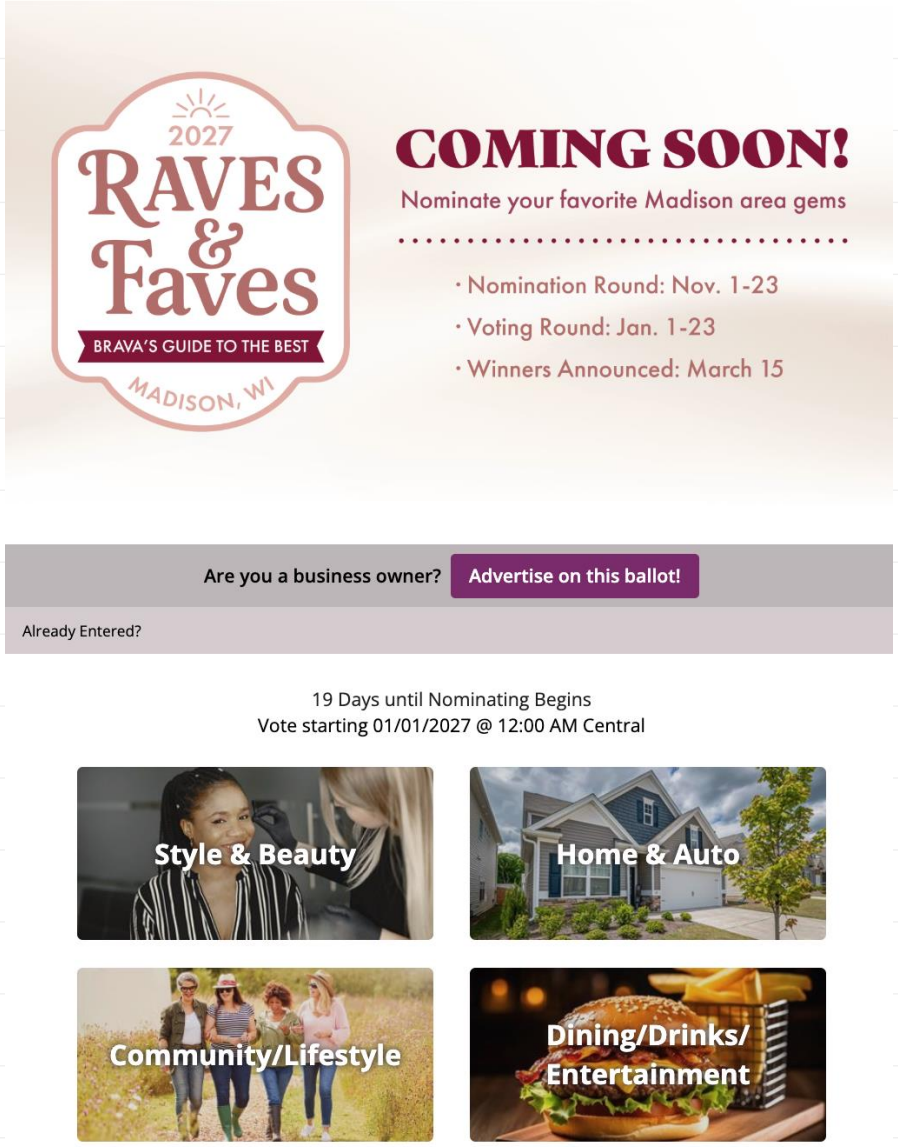






GREAT

Use of Color

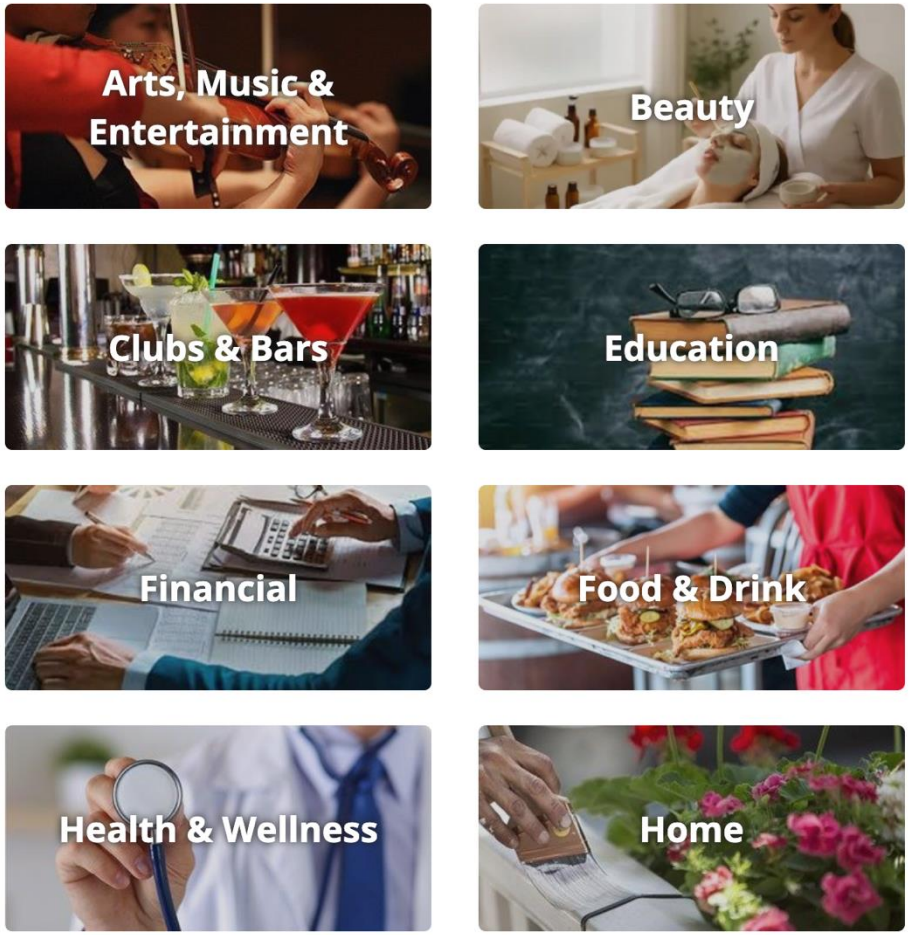


Clear, clean header image

Uses brand colors

Ballot groups are above the fold

Group Images



NOT GREAT



GREAT

Group Images



Not too busy & on theme/brand

Shows attention to detail

Sponsored Group Images

GREAT

















NOT GREAT

Sponsored Group Images





Stays on brand

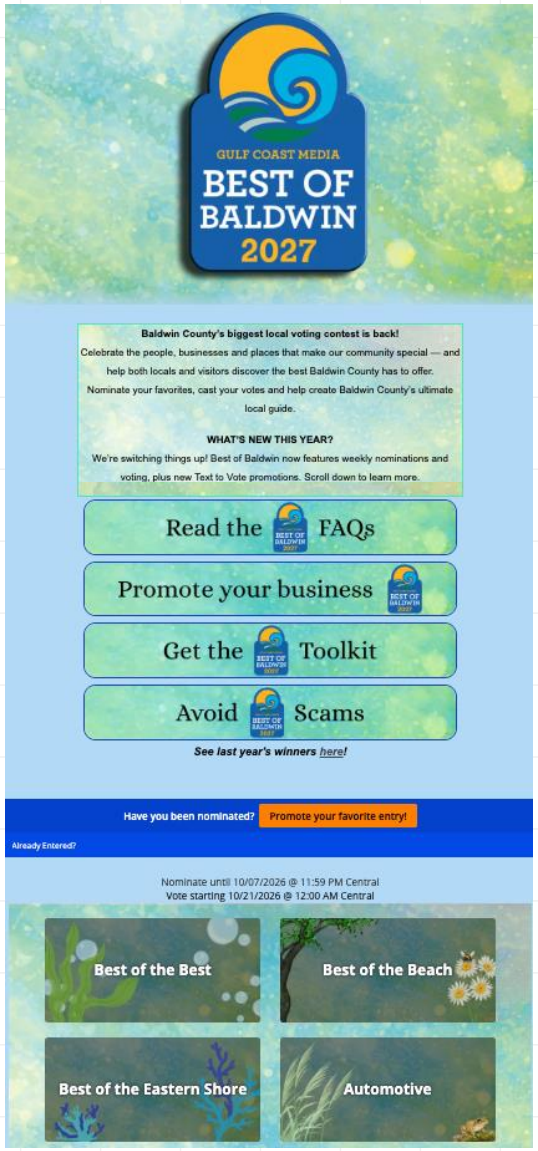


Sponsor visible but doesn’t take over



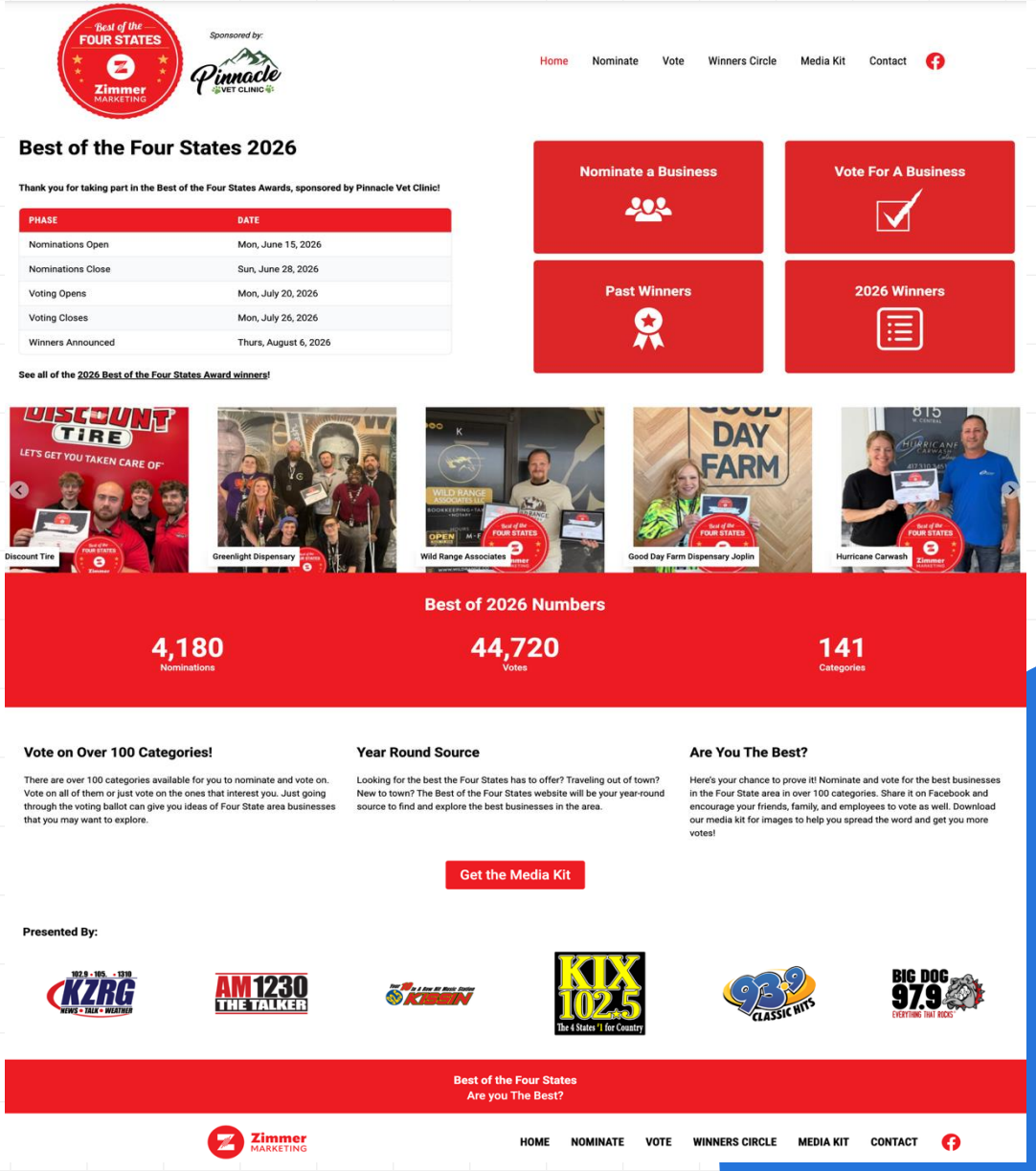
Not too busy

Landing Page



Use our template builder to create it within the ballot design

Or create your own page within your CMS



Recurring Winner Ads



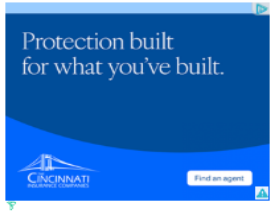




AMAZING

Right Rail Ads

NOT GREAT





Welcome to Puzzmo
Enjoy interactive puzzles on GuardOnline.com. Challenge yourself and have fun with fresh, free games every day.
CLICK ME to begin





GREAT







Right Rail Ads

Templated

Call to action

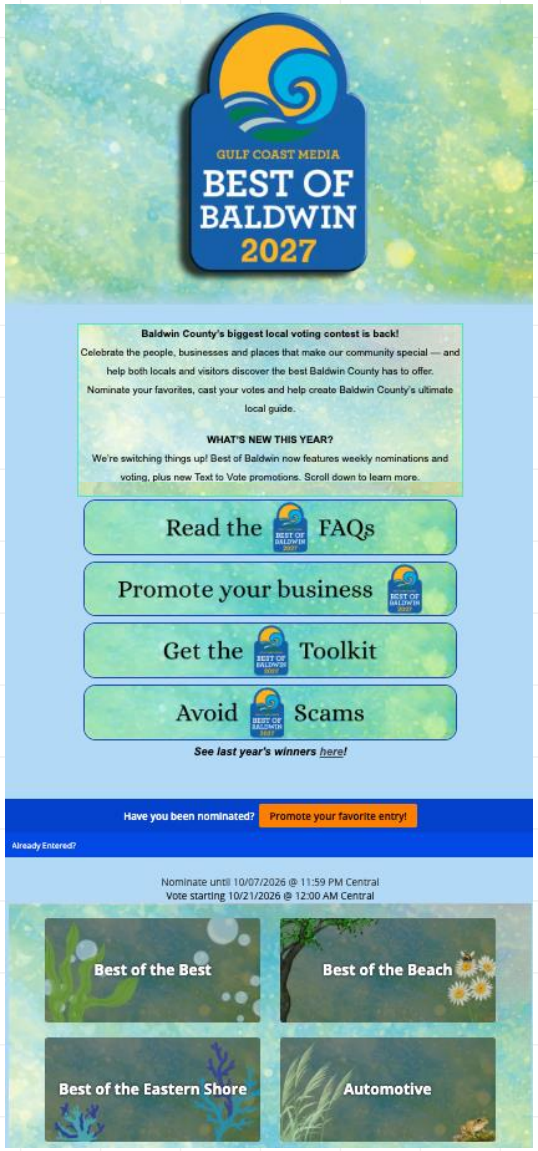


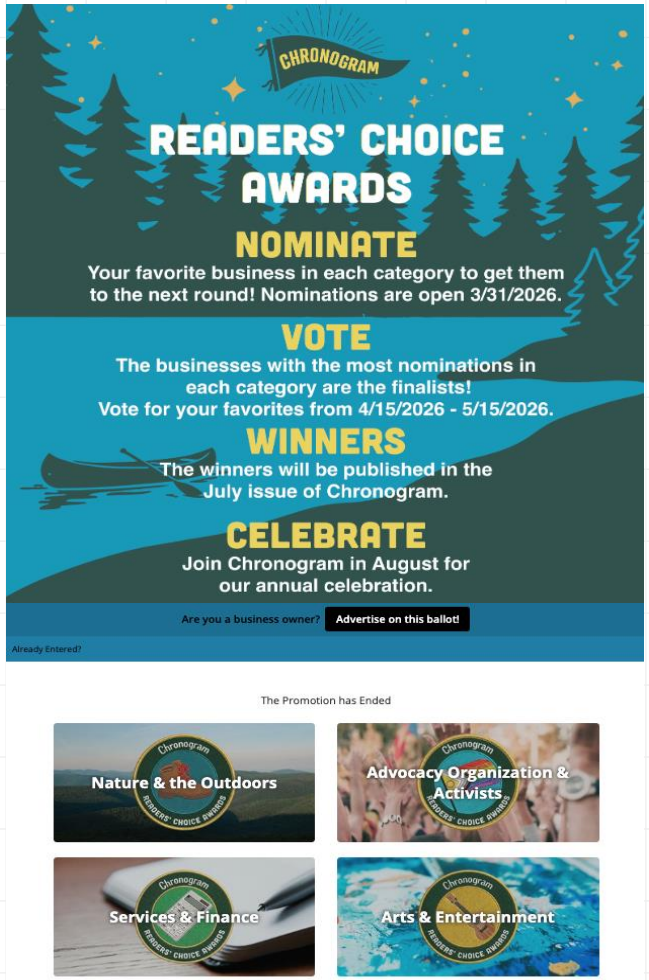




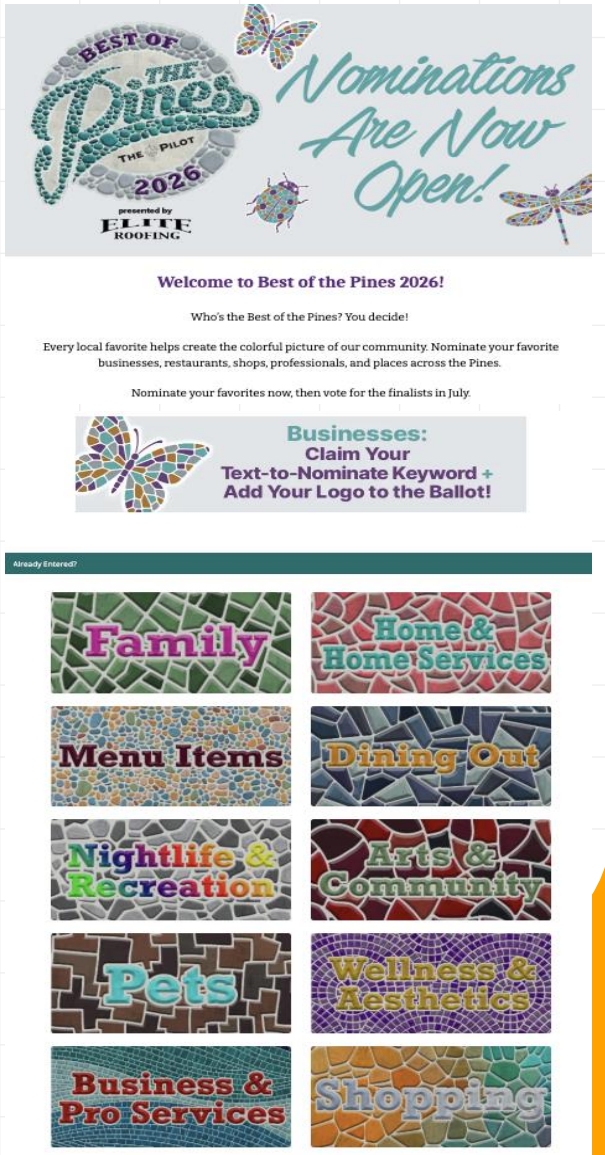
Includes ballot logo

Bonus: Themes





AMAZING



MARKETING

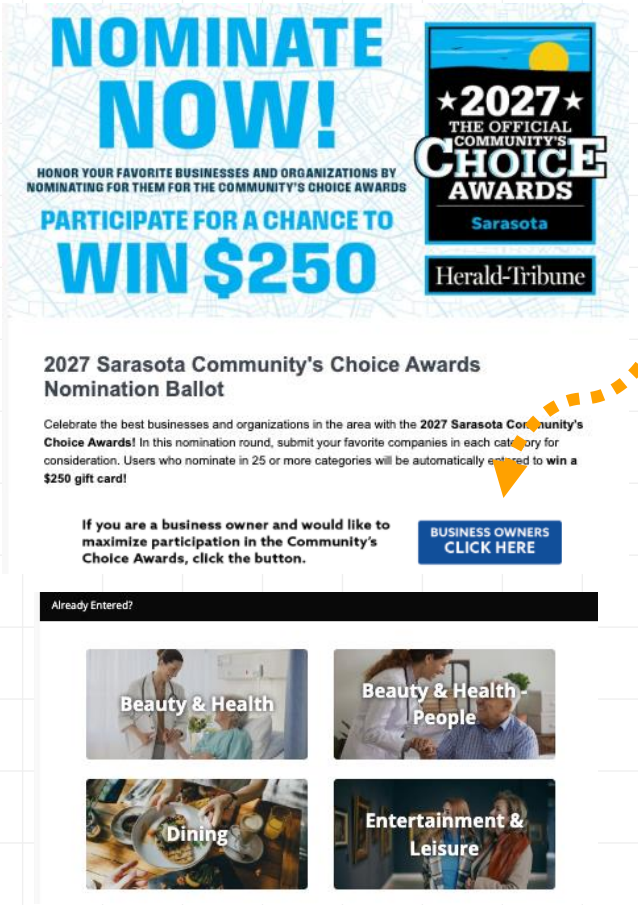
B2B Marketing

BUT

What if you don’t have a B2B list?

Building Your List

Building Your List



On the ballot



TRIBLIVE'S BEST OF THE BEST IS A COMMUNITY CHOICE AWARDS EVENT THAT HONORS AND RECOGNIZES THE LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES GREAT PLACES TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.

BEST OF THE BEST – BEST PRACTICES

Only the top 5 nominees in each category make it to the voting round! So, be sure to put your best marketing foot forward through the nomination phase.

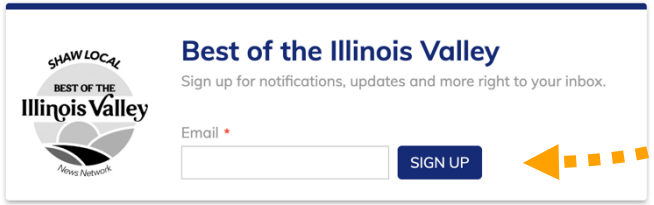
– **Use a Claim/Defend Your Title advertising package** to thank your customers, remind them how important they are to you and share the great products and services you offer!
– **Ask for nominations!** Encourage your employees, family, and friends to nominate. Individuals can nominate ONCE PER DAY – so send reminders!!
– **Supplement your Best of the Best advertising package** with store signage, email blasts, and social media posts to remind customers to submit their nominations.
– **Remember to tell your customers which categories** you want to be nominated in!

CLICK HERE! TO ACCESS OUR BEST OF THE BEST MARKETING MATERIALS!

On the landing page

Stay in the loop!

Best Of The Illinois Valley Newsletter



In a widget

On the registration form

☐ Yes! I am a business owner and I would like to maximize participation in the Best of the Best ballot, please contact me!

Building Your List: The Form



Ask businesses to register so you can gather their contact information

Include an option for businesses to opt-in to receive updates about your Best Of

THIS IS NOT A NOMINATION FORM OR A VOTING FORM.

Businesses can no longer be added to the ballot, but if you are trying to cast your votes please do so by clicking here.

CONGRATULATIONS ON BEING NOMINATED IN THE BEST OF MARION COUNTY!

After registering, you will have the opportunity to download images for you to utilize on your social media pages during the voting round in The Best of Marion County!

As an added bonus, you will also get the chance to learn how you can promote your business and maximize your business exposure during the 2026 Best of Marion County contest ballot!

There is no purchase necessary to vote or win. Registered users may vote once per day in every category throughout the final voting round, which ends October 2nd! Anyone may register!

Email Required

By clicking the submit button below, I agree to the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy

Full Name (First and Last) of person registering Required

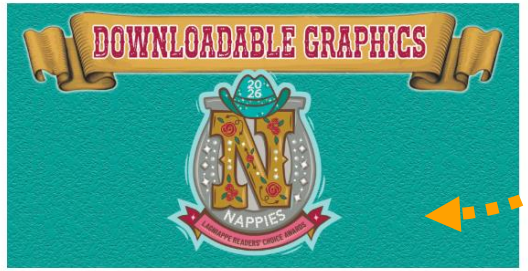
CONTINUE ›

Building Your List: Gated Resources

Advertising packages



Advertising Information



Downloadable Graphics

Social media marketing graphics

Marketing tips



Marketing Resources

B2B Emails

B2B Emails

Best Practices



Eye-catching, branded header

The pieces are coming together for the 2026 Best of the Pines Awards!

This year, nominations are about to get even easier.

Nominations open **June 1** for The Pilot's annual Best of the Pines readers' choice awards, Moore County's biggest and most visible community campaign!

With more than 20,000 voters participating each year, Best of the Pines puts your business in front of thousands of engaged local consumers actively searching for the area's favorite places to shop, dine, book services and do business.

Early Bird Advertising Packages Available Now!



New additions

This year's packages include our **NEW Text-to-Nominate** feature, making it easier than ever for customers to nominate your business with a quick text message!

Advertising packages also include:
- Business logos featured on the ballot
- Unique URL to nominate your business
- Beautiful ads in The Pilot newspaper
- And more!

-- Early Bird Pricing Ends Friday, May 22 --

Package info & key dates

Please note: Advertising enhances your business's exposure but is not required and does not guarantee advancement to the final voting round or placement in the Top 3.

KEY DATES:
Nomination Round: June 1 - 21, 2026
Voting Round: July 8 - 28, 2026
Winners will be announced in September.

Whether you're defending your title or building awareness for your business, **Best of the Pines** is one of the most effective ways to stay visible and connected with the local community throughout the summer.

Call to Action

CLICK HERE TO VIEW BEST OF THE PINES ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES



Early Bird Rates End This Friday!

Don't miss out on big dicounts!

Write-in nominations open **June 1,** when readers across Moore County will begin building the ballot by nominating their favorite local businesses in nearly 200 categories.

How it works

How the pieces come together: Only the top 8 nominees per category will move on to final voting in July. Winners and finalists will be featured in a special print and online edition in late September.

NEW CATEGORIES FOR 2026:

ESTATE SALES TEAM
GLASS REPAIR
LEGACY BUSINESS (opened 2006 or before)
TRAVEL AGENCY
MOCKTAILS / NA MENU
PLACE TO GRAB A DRINK
FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE PRACTICE
TATTOO SHOP

New additions

Is advertising required? Nope! Participation is completely free, and every business has the chance to appear on the ballot. Advertising is simply a great way to stay in front of the local 20,000+ voters on the ballot and in The Pilot.

We'll have lots of free promotional tools available for download once the ballot opens on June 1.

Don't forget about this year's **NEW Text-to-Nominate** feature! An easier way for customers to nominate your business!

DEADLINE for Early Bird Pricing: Friday, May 22

Please note: Advertising enhances your business's exposure but is not required and does not guarantee advancement to the final voting round or placement in the Top 3.

KEY DATES:
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Voting Round: July 8 - 28, 2026
Winners will be announced in September.

Package info & key dates

CLICK HERE TO VIEW BEST OF THE PINES ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Call to Action

B2B Emails

Best Practices



TribLIVE's **Best of the Best 2026 Community Choice Awards** are here—and your opportunity to save **15%** on a complete marketing campaign ends TOMORROW!

Why businesses invest in Best of the Best

This isn't just an awards program—it's one of the region's most powerful local marketing opportunities.

Businesses use Best of the Best to:

✓ Build brand awareness in their community
✓ Drive customer engagement and support
✓ Strengthen credibility through third-party recognition
✓ Stay visible throughout the entire campaign
✓ Reinforce their reputation as a trusted local favorite

The numbers speak for themselves.

91% of 2025 Best of the Best advertisers advanced to the final ballot.

Businesses that begin promoting early consistently build stronger momentum, generate more votes and stay top of mind throughout the competition.

But this exclusive offer disappears after June 30.

After that, the discount is gone—and so is the opportunity to lock in your campaign at the lowest price of the year.

Don't wait until your competitors have already started building buzz.

Reserve your MEGA Marketing Package today, save 15%, and give your business the best chance to earn—and promote—its Best of the Best title.

GET MY MEGA PACKAGE

Value proposition

Use your stats
% of advertisers that move to voting round/became winners

Early bird special

ST. LOUIS MAGAZINE'S A-LIST READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

St.Louis A-LIST 2026

The A-List 2026 nomination round begins tomorrow! Are you ready to claim or defend your title?

The ballot goes live TOMORROW—Thursday, February 19! We are excited to kick off another year of the A-List Awards, our tribute to the region's finest! Only the top five nominees in each category will advance to the voting round, so make the most of the nomination period.



Invite your audience to nominate you!

Download our complimentary social media graphics, a flyer/poster, and read tips on how to best promote your business. Make sure to specify which category (or categories) you want to be nominated in, and provide a link to the ballot (stlmag.com/alist). Remind them that they can nominate once a day per category through March 14!

Good luck from *St. Louis Magazine*!

Links to downloads

Download Social Graphics & Poster

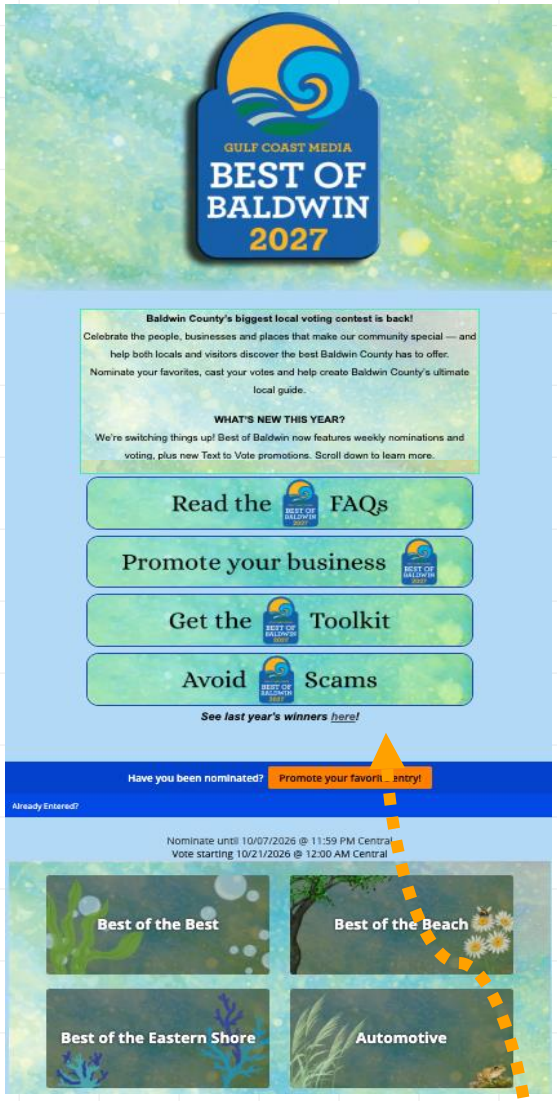
A-List Marketing Tips

A-List FAQs

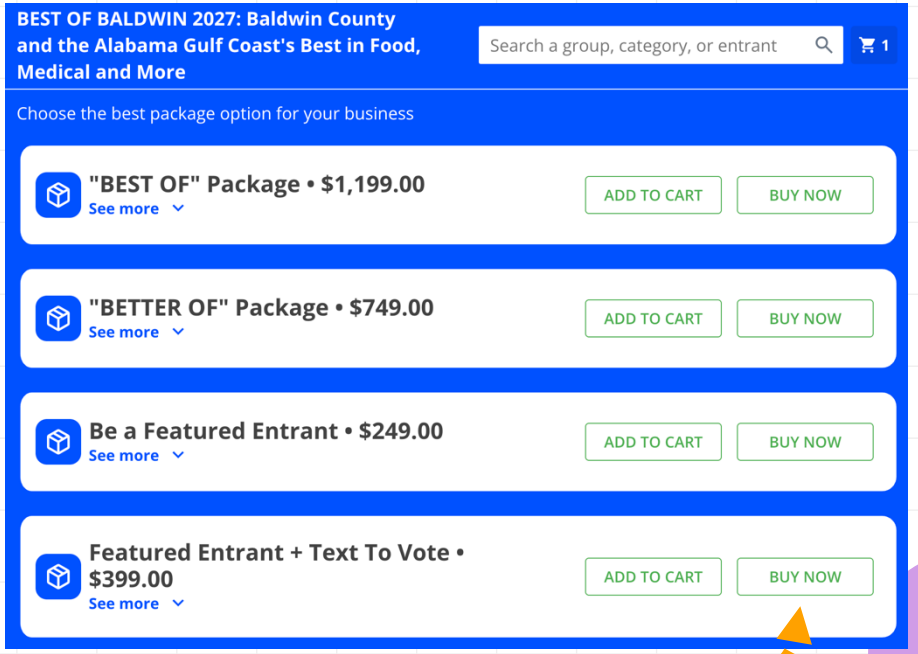
B2B Emails: CTA



Landing Page



Ballot w/ Links



eCommerce Site

B2B Emails

Pre-Nomination Phase

- ☑ 2 months before nominations
- ☑ 1 month out
- ☑ 15 days out
- ☑ 7 days out

During Nomination Phase

- ☑ When nominations begin

*Remember to remove advertisers who've already bought packages



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Don't wait until your competitors have already started building buzz.

Reserve your MEGA Marketing Package today, save 15%, and give your business the best chance to earn—and promote—its Best of the Best title.

GET MY MEGA PACKAGE



Nominations close Sunday Night.

Don't miss your chance to advance to the final voting round!

Remember, only the Top 8 nominees in each category advance to the Final Voting Round in July.

The more nominations your business receives, the better chance you have of making it to the Final Voting Ballot. We typically see a big bump in participation in the last few days, so make sure to invite your customers to nominate you!



FREE Tools for Your Business

1. Use our free SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS to get the word out.

2. Make sure to visit our NOMINATION TOOLKIT for printable flyers and other tips.

3. Here's a sample script to use for social media and emails:

We want your support for #bestofthepines 2026. Please nominate us so we can advance to the next round! Plus, if you nominate in 20 categories or more, you're automatically entered to win a $200 Visa gift card! Nominate by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, June 21 at bestofthepines.com!

B2B Emails

Pre-Voting Phase

- ☑ As soon as you confirm all entrants
- ☑ 1 week before voting starts
- ☑ 2 days

During Voting Phase

- ☑ When voting begins

*Remember to remove advertisers who've already bought packages



Make the most of Best of the Pines voting!

• View our voting media kit here to see how our specially priced promotional packages can help your business stand out during the biggest audience of the year. Don't miss your chance to reach more than 25,000 potential customers while voting is underway.

• Check out our free graphics and voting toolkit ! Take advantage of our complimentary social media graphics, promotional materials and ready-to-use tips to help rally your customers to vote for your business.

****Please do not use these graphics before Wednesday, July 8****

How can I get my business logo on the ballot?
Contact your Pilot ad rep directly to find out, or reply to this email and we'll connect you with someone who can help.



B2B Emails

Winner's Phase

- ☑ As soon as you confirm winners/finalists
- ☑ 2 weeks before deadline
- ☑ 1 week before deadline
- ☑ Last day before deadline



YOU'VE MADE THE TOP 3!

After another intense summer of voting, our community has spoken... and your business has been voted among the very best in Best of the Pines 2026!

You've placed in the Top 3 in one or more categories. Your exact placement (1st, 2nd or 3rd place) will be revealed at our celebration in September.

VERY IMPORTANT: This information is **TOP SECRET** until the official reveal on September 16.
We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.



Your Win, In Print!

Your business will be featured in the 2026 Best of the Pines magazine, publishing with The Pilot on Sunday, September 20 and shared digitally with all voters.

Want to make an even bigger splash?
Secure your spot in the glossy magazine announcing the winners! This keepsake reaches 30,000+ local readers and lives on as a year-round resource for locals and visitors.

Want to reserve an ad? We offer complimentary graphic design services!
Click **here** to reserve your ad space using our **self-service portal**.
Contact your Account Rep at The Pilot directly
or reply to this email and we'll connect you with someone who can help.





The Big Reveal - Awards Party Information

When: Wednesday, September 16
Where: The Fair Barn in Pinehurst
Time: 5:00-8:30 p.m

- **Tickets:** $65 each *(plus tax + fees)*
- Includes heavy hors d'oeuvres, beer, wine & an unforgettable evening
- **Limited to 6 tickets** per winning business
- **Tickets will go on sale Monday, August 10 at 1:00 p.m.**
- **Ticketing link will be emailed on Monday.**



Bonus: B2B Newsletters

TRIB TOTAL MEDIA MARKETING MINUTE

In 60 seconds or less, get valuable marketing and advertising news, opportunities and more.



Closing Soon: Your Take on AI.

The AI in Marketing survey we are running with Borrell Associates closes tomorrow, and we would hate for you to miss your chance to weigh in on how local businesses are using AI.

There's no right answers, as we are just after the real picture of what businesses like yours are doing, what is working and what isn't. Finishing it enters you in the national drawing for a **$500 Visa gift card**.

What are you waiting for? It takes about **12 minutes** and **closes tomorrow**.

Take the Survey

Print + Digital. One Package. More Opportunities.

Your next customer could be reading the newspaper OR browsing TribLIVE.com. **Make sure your business is there**.

Maximize your visibility with a powerful package that includes:

- Full-color print advertising
- Digital display impressions on TribLIVE.com
- Increased brand visibility across multiple touchpoints
- **No contract required**

It's a simple way to extend your reach, strengthen your visibility and stay top of mind with customers who matter most.

Start putting **print + digital** to work for your business.

Learn More

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

Less than one week remains in the 2026 TribLIVE Best of the Best voting round, and now is the time to make every vote count.

As voting enters its final days, keep your business visible, remind your customers to show their support and make one last push toward the finish line. A strong presence now can help keep your business top of mind when voters are making their final selections.

Contact your Advertising & Marketing Consultant today to learn about last-chance opportunities to promote your business before voting closes.

Please note: Receiving this email does not indicate that your business is a finalist in the 2026 TribLIVE Best of the Best Community Choice Awards. This message is being shared for informational and promotional purposes only.

Vote Now

TRIB TOTAL MEDIA MARKETING MINUTE

In 60 seconds or less, get valuable marketing and advertising news, opportunities and more.

Best of the Best Is Back — Are You Ready?

One of Trib Total Media's most anticipated audience engagement campaigns returns July 2 when nominations open for Best of the Best.

Best of the Best is more than an awards program—it's a powerful marketing opportunity. As consumers nominate, vote for and celebrate their favorite businesses, participating advertisers benefit from increased brand awareness, stronger community recognition and valuable customer engagement.

While advertising is not required for nomination, businesses that participate in the campaign consistently gain greater visibility. In 2025, **91% of advertisers earned a spot on the final ballot.**

With thousands of nominations, votes and pageviews generated across TribLIVE and print promotions, Best of the Best delivers broad exposure throughout Pittsburgh, Westmoreland County and the Alle-Kiski Valley.

The businesses that build the most momentum start early. Reserve your package today and maximize your visibility before nominations open July 2.

Learn More

A New Opportunity to Grow Your Business Has Arrived

The Tribune-Review's new Pittsburgh Edition expands our reach across Allegheny County and downtown Pittsburgh—giving advertisers a powerful new way to connect with engaged local audiences.

With 3.5 million monthly unique visitors to TribLIVE and a newsroom of 80+ local journalists, Trib Total Media delivers the scale, credibility and local connection today's businesses need. Combined with our new weekend print edition, your brand can reach consumers wherever and however they choose to engage with trusted local news.

Advertising in the Pittsburgh Edition means more than placing an ad. It means increasing visibility in a premium local news environment and aligning your business with a trusted community brand.

The Pittsburgh Edition is growing. Make sure your business grows with it.

Contact your Advertising & Marketing Consultant today to reserve your space.

Learn More

Should Your Advertising Strategy Include Both Print and Digital?

The most successful businesses aren't choosing one or the other—they're using both to maximize reach, build credibility and stay top of mind with consumers.

As Best of the Best approaches, now is the perfect time to explore how an integrated marketing strategy can amplify your visibility across multiple channels and connect with engaged local audiences.

Discover why combining print and digital advertising delivers stronger results—and how your business can benefit.

Read the Blog

TRIB TOTAL MEDIA MARKETING MINUTE

In 60 seconds or less, get valuable marketing and advertising news, opportunities and more.

Be Part of Pittsburgh's Next Chapter

On May 9, the Tribune-Review officially launched the new Pittsburgh Edition — a major expansion of trusted local journalism created to serve readers across the city, Allegheny County and downtown.

At a time when Pittsburgh's most affluent and engaged readers are looking for a new home for credible local news, Trib Total Media is uniquely positioned to deliver them to advertisers through a proven, digital-first media company with more than 30 years of market stability.

Backed by 80+ dedicated local journalists and 3.5 million monthly unique visitors — making TribLIVE the region's most-visited news source — the new weekend print edition is designed to capture the highly engaged "Saturday morning" reader while extending your brand's reach across print and digital platforms.

Advertising in the Tribune-Review Pittsburgh Edition gives your business the opportunity to align with a trusted local institution, strengthen visibility in a premium news environment and connect directly with the audiences shaping Pittsburgh's future.

Don't wait - contact your Advertising & Marketing Consultant today!

Learn More

Reach Travelers While They're Planning Their Next Move

Spring and summer are peak travel seasons, with consumers actively planning vacations, weekend getaways, business trips and local experiences. As audiences research destinations, compare options and make purchasing decisions, they're paying closer attention to messaging that feels timely, relevant and connected to where they are — and where they're headed next.

According to CivicScience data collected from TribLIVE audiences over the past 365 days, travel intent remains strong across our readership:

- 10% plan to travel by airplane
- 28% plan to travel by car or other transportation
- 5% expect to use both methods of travel
- 48% have traveled overseas at least once, while 11% travel internationally frequently

With a deeply engaged local audience, Trib Total Media offers advertisers the opportunity to connect with consumers as they make travel, entertainment and lifestyle decisions throughout the season.

Whether your business offers travel services, hospitality, dining, entertainment, outdoor recreation or staycation experiences across Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Westmoreland County or the Alle-Kiski Valley, now is the time to put your message in front of the right audience.

Summer is here — and consumers are on the move. Let's get your message moving with them.

Get Started

Best of the Best is BACK!

One of Trib Total Media's most anticipated audience engagement campaigns is back — and nominations for Best of the Best are opening soon! This highly visible community voting program gives local businesses the opportunity to build brand awareness, drive customer engagement and earn recognition as one of their region's favorite businesses.

With thousands of nominations, votes and pageviews generated across TribLIVE and print promotions, Best of the Best creates meaningful exposure throughout Pittsburgh, Westmoreland County and the Alle-Kiski Valley.

Now is the time to start planning your advertising presence to position your business front and center before the nomination round opens on June 15!

Learn More

B2C Marketing

You will NOT get the engagement you want unless you promote

Let’s talk about something first...

Comparison by Numbers

	Invite Emails Sent	Users	Nominations	Votes
2025	13	21,000	15,000	21,000
2026	0	7,000	9,000	13,000

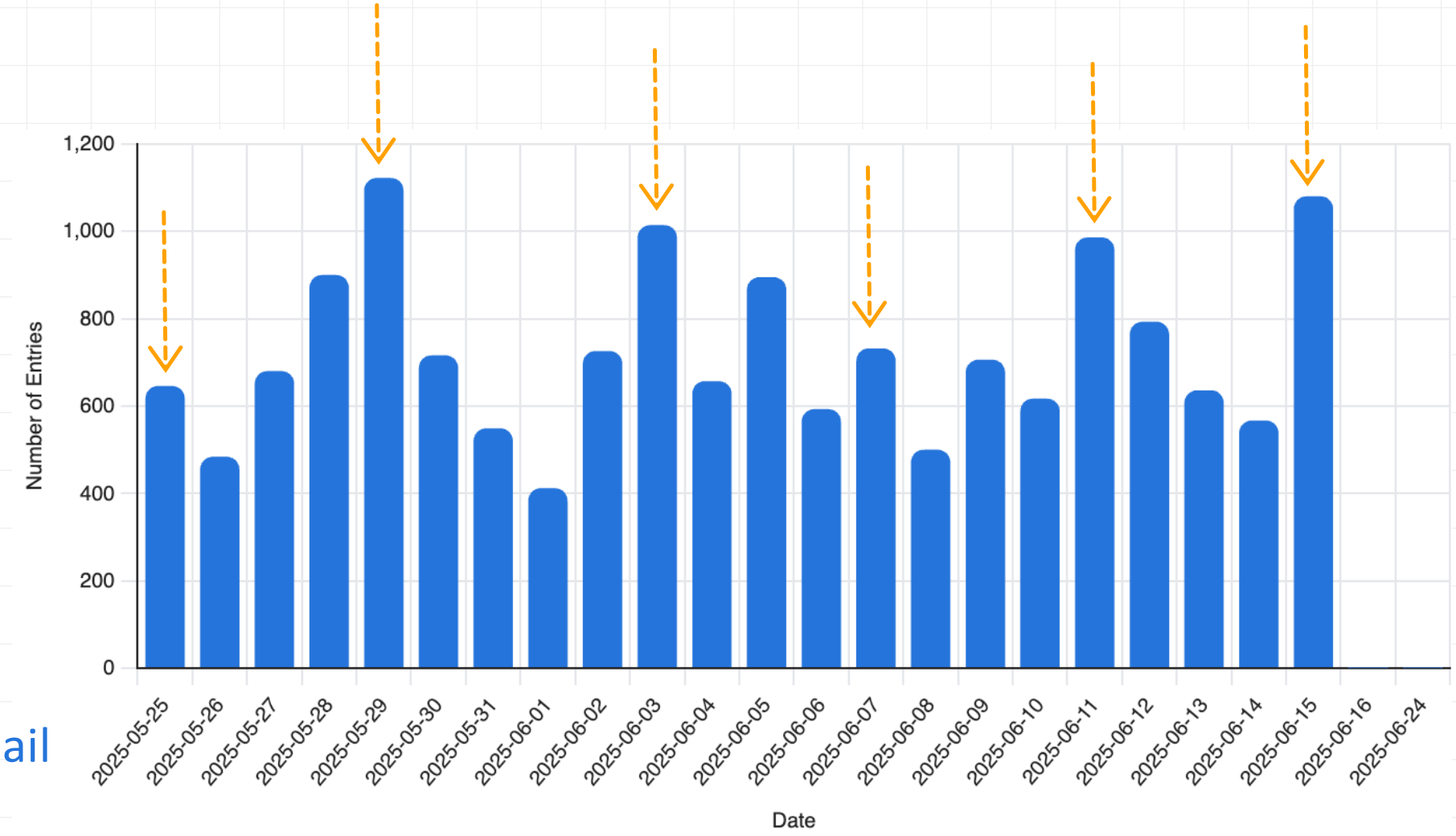
64%

decline in participation

The #1 driver of participation is **EMAIL**

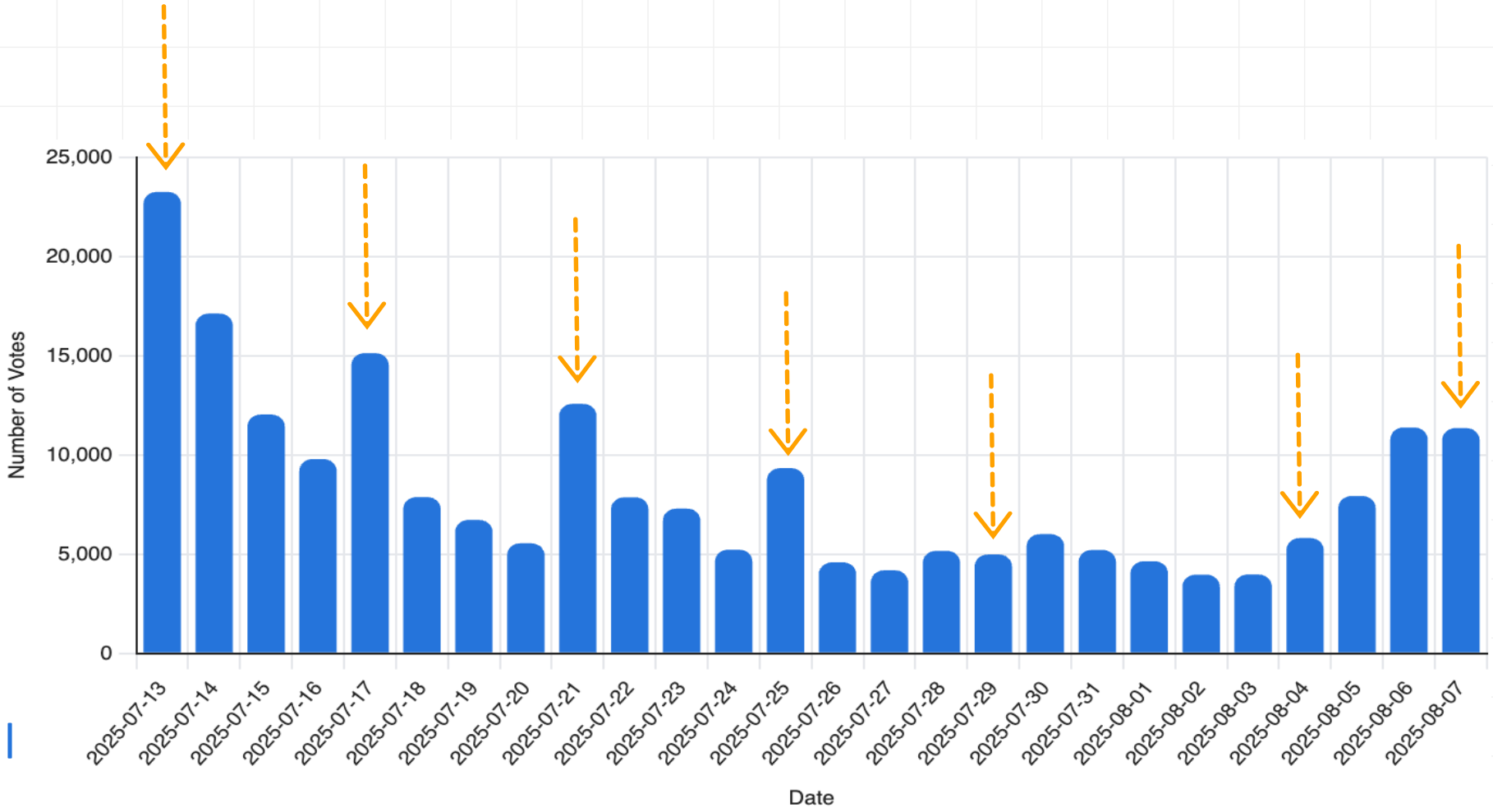
Nomination Invite Emails

Nominations **increase** every day an email is sent



Voting Invite Emails

Votes **increase** every day an email is sent



B2C Email Best Practices

- [x] Send on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday
- [x] Avoid sending early in the morning or late at night
- [x] Send to opted in audience

*This is for dedicated invite emails, not including ads or articles in your newsletters

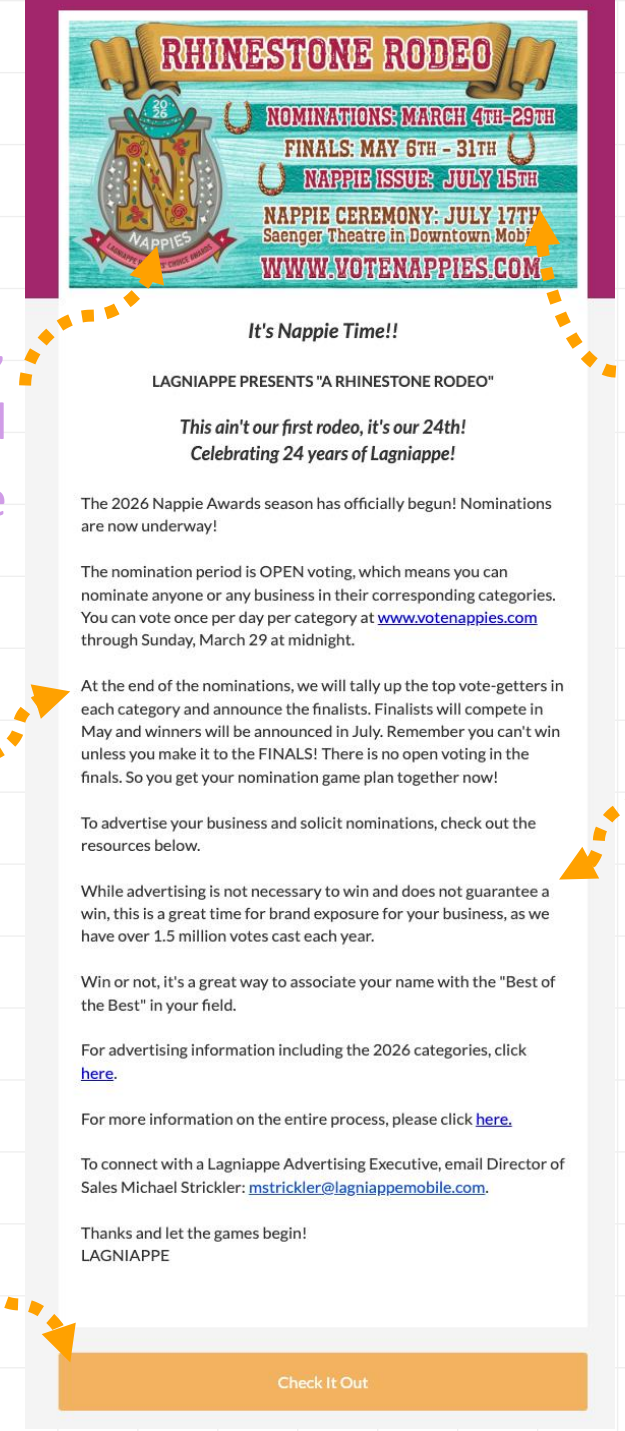
Eye-catching, branded, linked header image

Timeline

How it works

Advertising info

CTA



B2C Emails

Nomination Phase

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		Noms Start Email #1				
		Email #2		And include in any newsletters		
		Email #3				
		Email #4			Noms End Email #5	



Last Call for Nominations!

Just a few days left. **Nominations for Best of the Pines 2026 close Sunday, June 21 at 11:59 p.m.**

Show your support for the local businesses you love before it's too late. Only the Top 8 nominees in each category will advance to Final Voting in July.

Nominate in 20 or more categories and automatically be entered to win a $200 Visa gift card!*

**To qualify, all 20+ nominations must be submitted through the same method, either the online ballot or text messaging. Nominations submitted through different methods cannot be combined.*

Are you a business?

We typically see a bump in participation towards the end of the nominations round, so make sure to continue to invite your customers to nominate you! Check out our Nomination Toolkit to download free Best of the Pines graphics and learn how to promote your business.

Then hit "reply" and let us know so we can add your email address to our list!



Hi there,

Have you nominated your local favorites yet?

The Valley Breeze's Voices of the Valley Awards are underway, and nominations are open now through **March 11**. The top five nominees in each category will advance to the voting round starting April 29, when readers choose the best of the best.

Voices of the Valley Awards are more than just a contest — they're a way for our community to come together and recognize the people, businesses, and organizations that make our area a great place to live, work, and shop.

Here's a quick reminder how it works:

Nominate: Submit your favorites in 175+ categories.
Enter to Win: Nominate 10 or more times and you'll be entered for a chance to win $250.
Daily Entries: You can nominate once per category, every single day.
Write-Ins Welcome: Don't see your favorite listed? Add them in.

Click below to start nominating today.

NOMINATE

B2C Emails

Voting Phase

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		VotingStarts Email #1				
		Email #2		And include in any newsletters		
		Email #3				
		Email #4			Voting Ends Email #5	



Vote now for Best of the Illinois Valley!

You nominated, and we listened! Now it's time to make your vote count. The top five businesses in each category have made it to the final round, and they need your support to come out on top. Cast your vote for your favorite people and places across the Illinois Valley and help decide who takes the crown!

You can vote once per category, per day, so come back daily to keep voting for your favorites!

Don't miss out – voting is open through May 31!

VOTE NOW



Giddy up, as Lagniappe presents the 24th Annual Nappie Awards, "A Rhinestone Rodeo!"

This is the last weekend to vote in the 2026 Nappie Awards FINALS! Voting ends this Sunday, May 31st at midnight. We are closing in on over ONE MILLION votes.

We will tabulate the votes next week and start informing winners the week of June 8.

For a list of our frequently asked questions (FAQs), please click here.

Finalists, for downloadable graphics and logos please click here. And for advertising information please click here.

Winners will be announced in the July 15 issue of Lagniappe and a ceremony will be held for the winners on Friday, July 17 in downtown Mobile. So start polishing those boots up now!

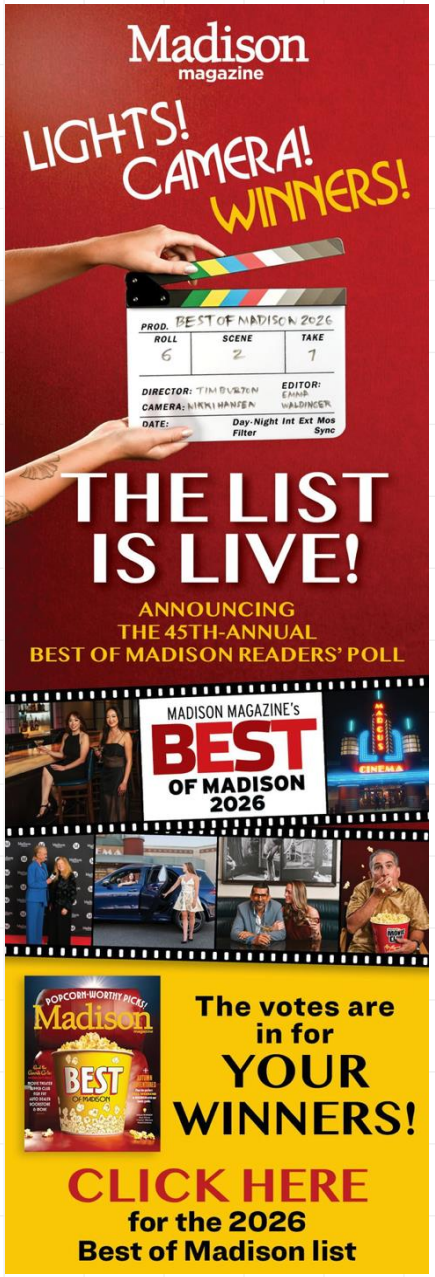
Thanks!
Your friendly bedazzled Nappie Awards Team

Check It Out

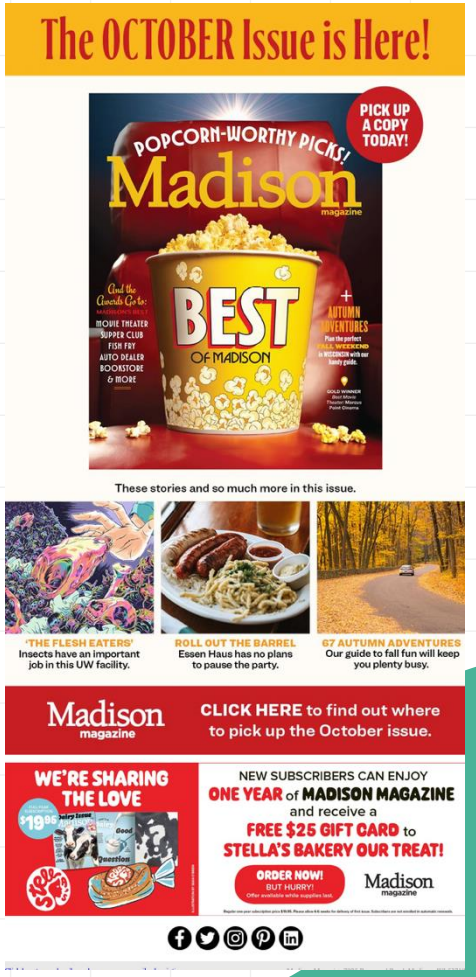
B2C Emails

Winner's Phase

- ☑ Send Winner Announcement to users that opted in to your promotions list
- ☑ Promote event
  (if your party is open)
- ☑ Promote special section or segment
- ☑ Include in any newsletters







B2C Newsletters

St.Louis

TRAVEL

2.26.26

This newsletter is presented by

WashU KEMPER ART MUSEUM

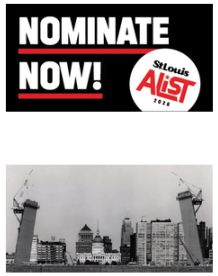
A MESSAGE FROM TRAVEL EDITOR JEN ROBERTS

By the time the end of February rolls around, I am itching for spring. The days get longer, and I start plotting escapes both big and small. This week, we're highlighting the Great Smoky Mountains, an ideal spring break destination, with crisp mountain air, scenic hikes, and never-ending views. We also highlight spring festivals across the Midwest, because sometimes the best way to welcome a new season is surrounded by food, music, and celebration. Here's to shaking off the cold, planning ahead, and welcoming spring's arrival. Safe travels!

KNOW SOMEONE WHO'D ENJOY THIS EMAIL? DIRECT THEM HERE TO SIGN UP.



Courtesy of The Fontaine Hotel Kansas City



A-LIST

Cast your nominations for A-List 2026!

Now through March 14, nominate your local favorites for the A-List Awards, our annual celebration of the region's finest. If you submit 25 or more nominations, you'll be entered to win a $50 gift certificate to a top restaurant.

SPONSORED CONTENT

How St. Louis shaped American cities

Discover the St. Louis innovations that transformed urban life in the 20th century, from its brickmaking boom to the groundbreaking skyscraper that set the standard for all that followed. Mark your calendar.

What do you think about our travel newsletter?



Welcome to the Best of New Orleans Winners Circle! Monthly updates from some of our 2025 Best Of New Orleans Winners





Katie's Restaurant & Bar

Katie's in Mid City has Weekly Specials, Weekend and Brunch Specials, but did you know that every Wednesday it's Steak Night? Steak Night at Katie's includes 3 courses + a drink for just $39. Fabulous cuts, solid sides (with add-ons available) and zero overthinking required. Wednesday Dinner plans = solved! www.katiesinmidcity.com



Ochsner Urgent Care

Ochsner Urgent Care offers same-day, walk-in visits so you can get the care you need, when you need it. From urgent discomfort and sprains to colds, rashes, and hydration therapy, our expert providers are here to help you feel better and get back to the parade route quickly. Learn more at ochsner.org/uc or stop by one of our convenient locations.



Cahill Camp Corral 2026

We are excited to announce that Cahill Camp Corral 2026 registration is now OPEN! Visit our registration page HERE to read more about our #1 ranked summer camp in the New Orleans area, and to see all discounts that you can take advantage of, including our VERY LIMITED TIME "Early Bird" registration period.



Home Malone Mardi Gras Collection

Where locals shop local, Home Malone is your go-to stop this Carnival season. Browse our Mardi Gras front table in-store or shop our full Mardi Gras collection online, featuring work from 200+ Southern-based artists and makers. You'll find festive gifts, party must-haves, and little treats just for you—perfect for parade days and beyond. Visit us in Mid-City or Uptown, or shop anytime at homemalonenola.com.

The WAVE

TOP HEADLINES AND NEWS FROM
GULF COAST MEDIA
PRESENTED BY Target Auction

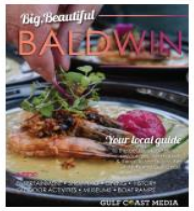


Hi, Baldwin County. Kayla Green here, GCM executive editor
It's Wednesday, Sept. 23.

If you haven't heard, BJs has gas for $1.99 a gallon today through 9 p.m. $1.84 with a BJs ONE+ card. Beware, lines are not short!

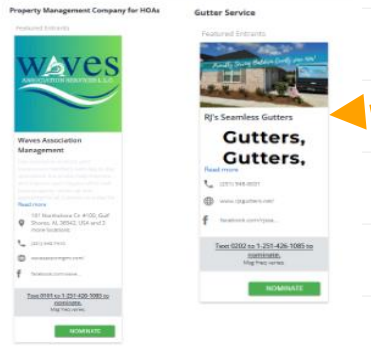
A reader the other day asked if we could provide more information for those of you who are thinking about moving here. I realized I've had our annual newcomers guide, Big Beautiful Baldwin, hidden down at the bottom of this newsletter this whole time.

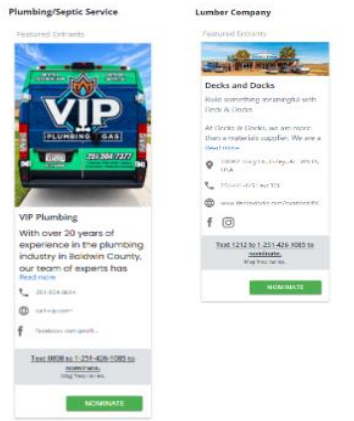
This guide has been named Best Niche Publication at the Alabama Press Association award for three years in a row now. Check it out and let me know if it helps you, or if there's an area you're still searching for.



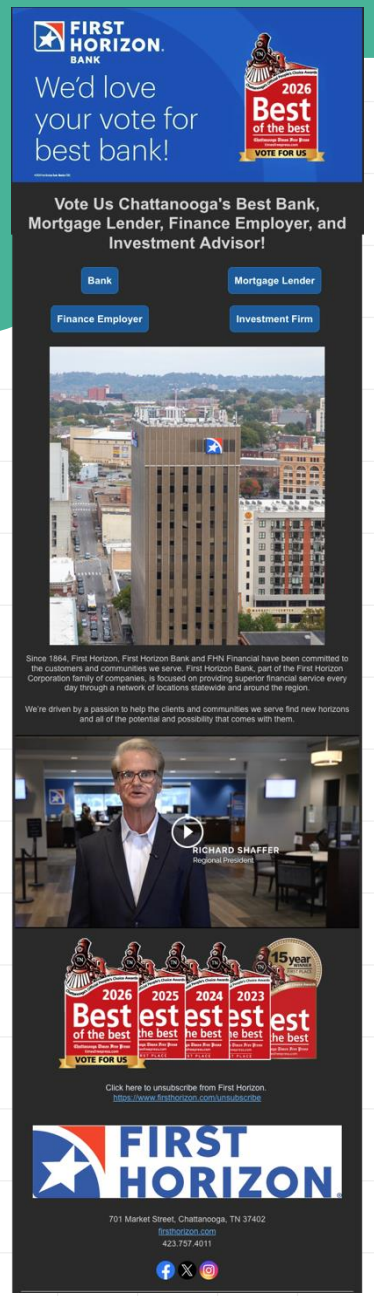
And, of course, keep nominating your favorite businesses, professionals, places, services, restaurants and more in our annual readers choice contest, Best of Baldwin 2027. We love seeing all the community support for each other come in.

There's a survey at the bottom of this newsletter. We'd love to hear from you.

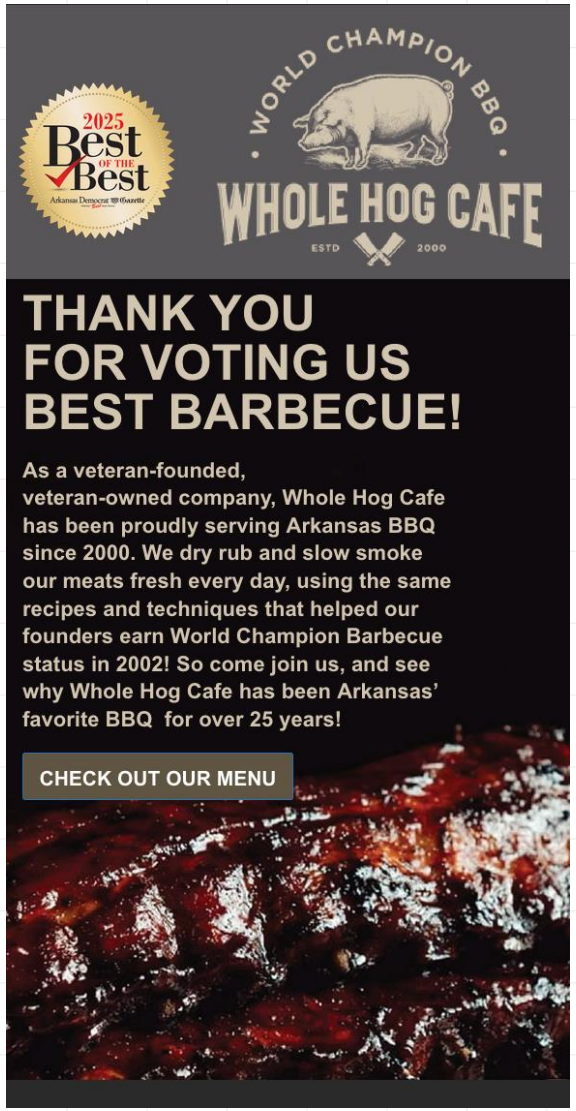




Bonus: Sponsored Emails









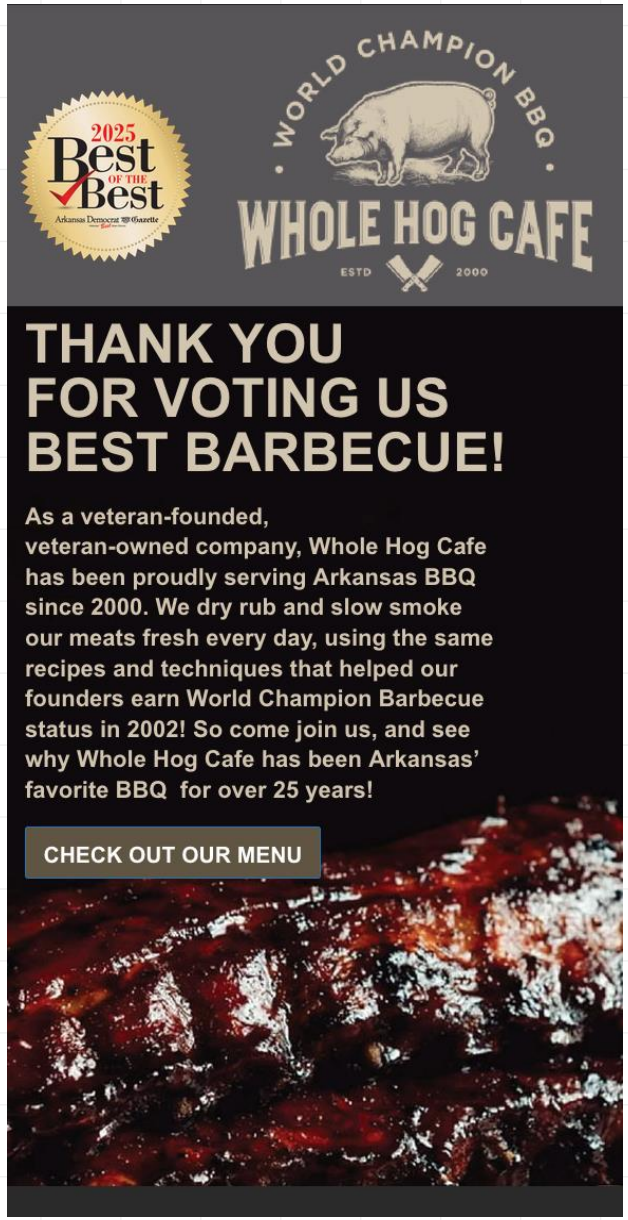
Bonus: Sponsored Nominate/Vote Emails

- ☑ 1 sponsored email included in top tier packaging
- ☑ Send up to 2 sponsored emails per week per phase
- ☑ Inventory of 8-10 per phase
- ☑ Send to 3rd party advertising opt-in list



Bonus: Sponsored Thank You Emails

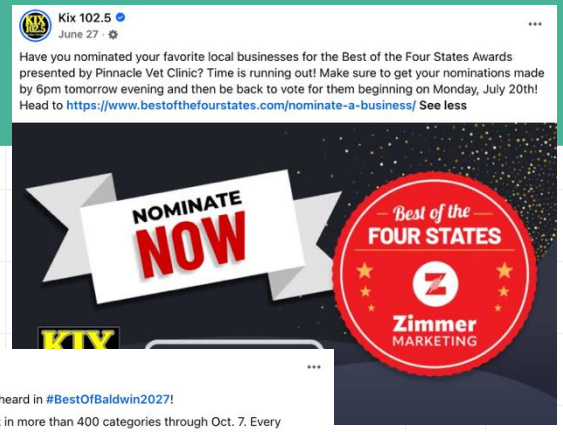
- ☑ Part of Winners' packages
- ☑ Higher volume because you can send these throughout the year
- ☑ Send to 3rd party advertising opt-in list
- ☑ Call to action can lead to a promotion



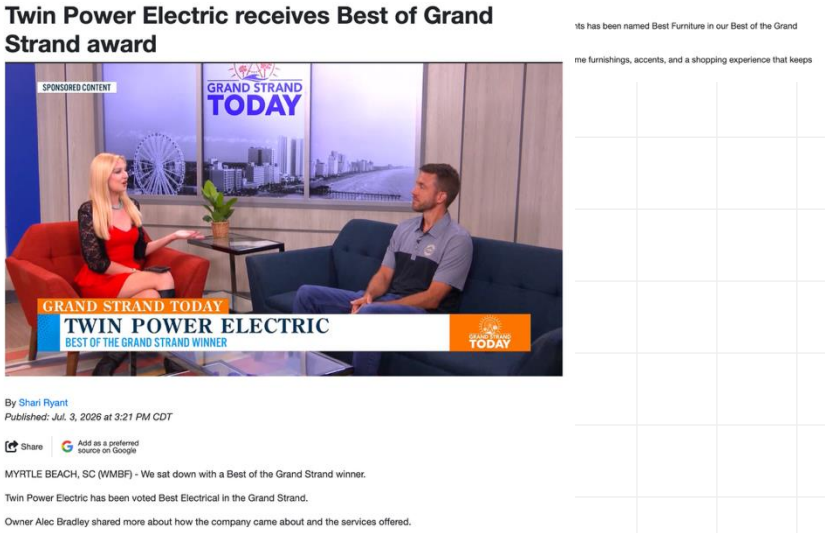
B2C Marketing

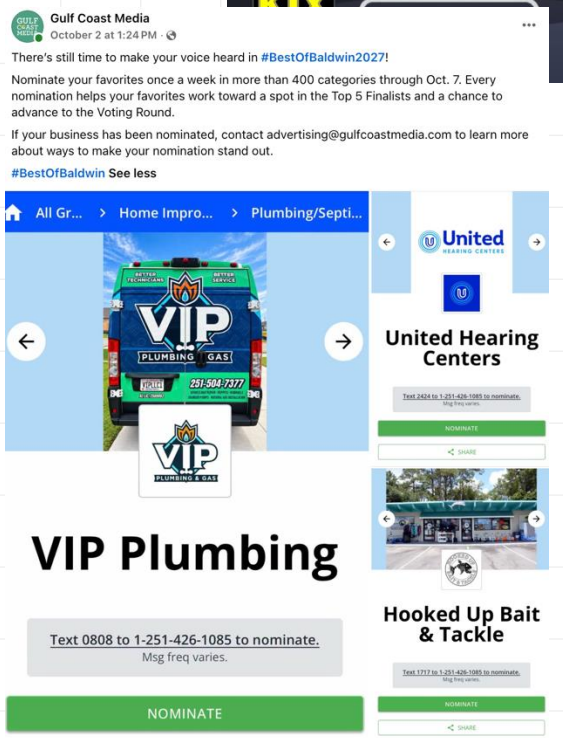












Digital

ROS, Promotional Videos

Homepage Takeover, Pop-ups

Rich Media, Pencil Pushdowns

Core Media

Print Ads, Articles, On-Air Talent Promotion

Social

Post on all social mediums and promote each phase

Come Back for Day 3!

Day 3: Best Of Revenue Accelerators

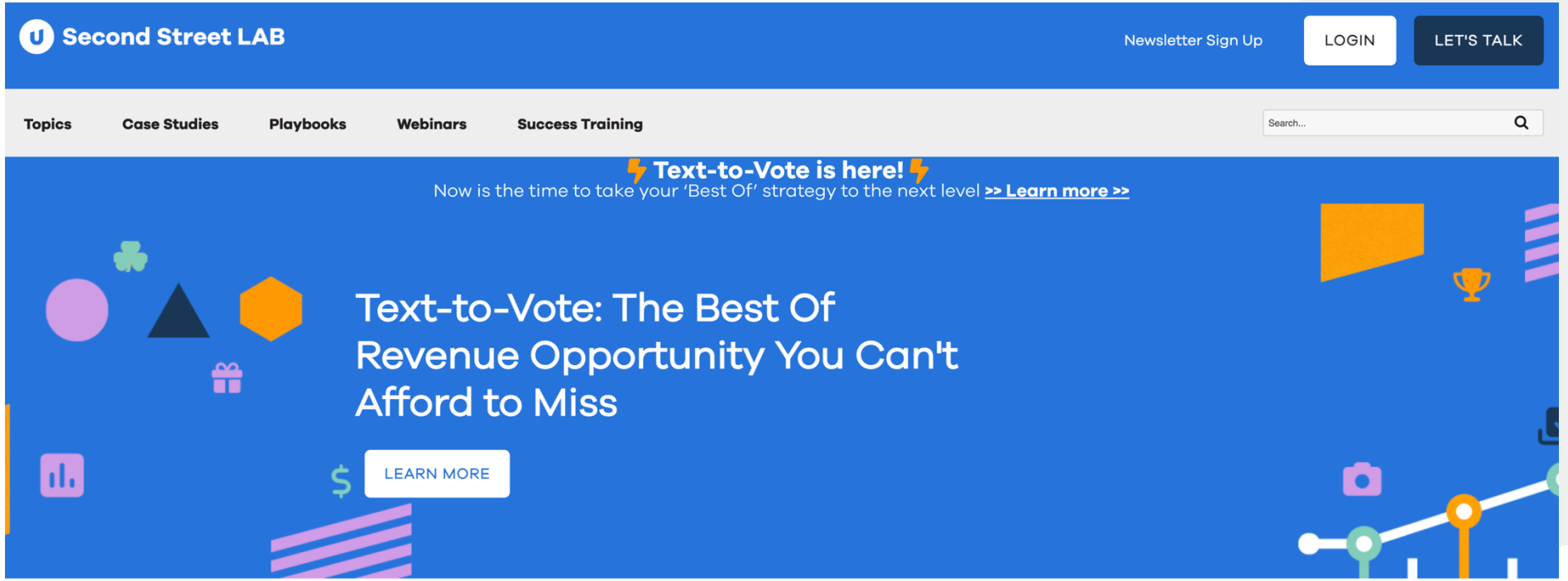
Thursday, October 29 | 12 PM CDT | 1 PM EDT

Take your Best Of revenue strategy to the next level with proven approaches for text-to-vote, eCommerce opportunities, tiered packaging models, and more. We'll cover how to position added value, overcome pricing objections, and help sellers confidently make Best Of a priority revenue driver.



https://uplandsoftware.com/secondstreet/resources/webinar/best-of-ballot-series-2026/

Resources







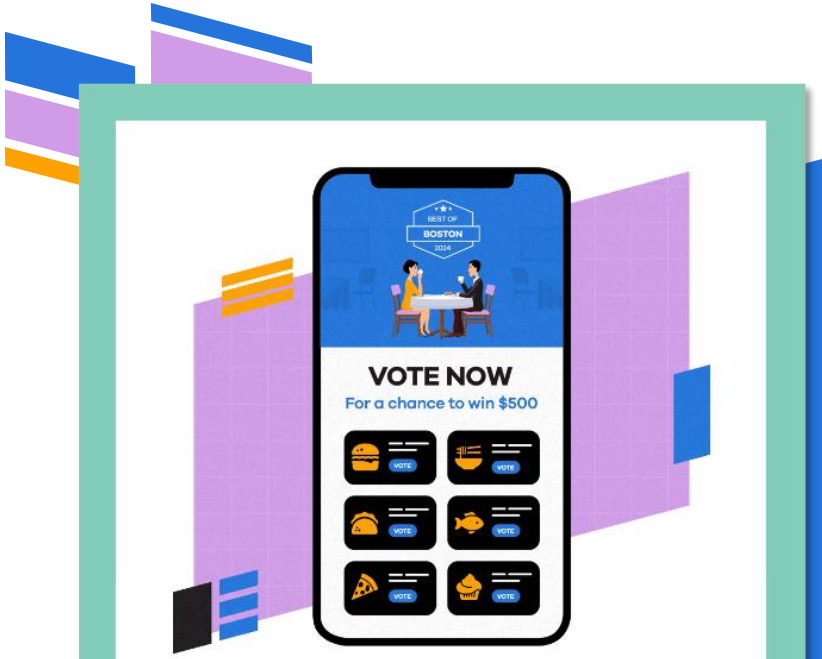


lab.secondstreet.com



Start nominating for the 2026 Second Street Awards NOW!

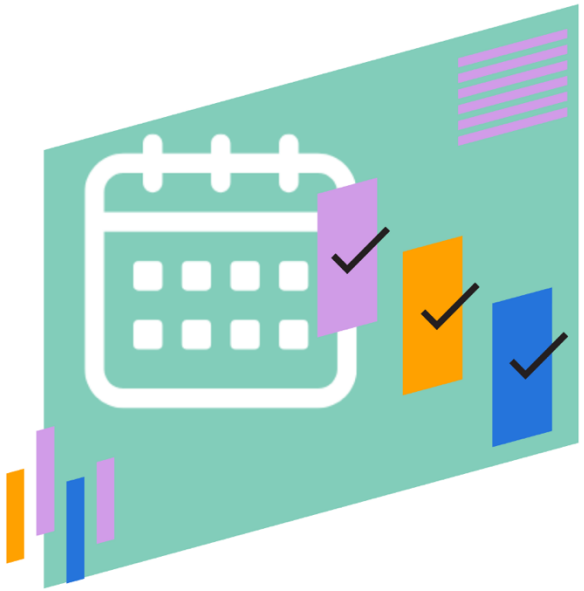
https://secondstreet.secondstreetapp.com/Second-Street-Awards-Nominations-2026/



Ballot Best Practices Guide

How to drive more revenue and engagement with 'Best Of' ballots

Second Street



Best Of Ballot Resources

Calendar, Sample Sales Sheets, & Revenue/Growth Calculator

Second Street

lab.secondstreet.com/playbooks/

Thank You!



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Kristen Wehe
kwehe@uplandsoftware.com