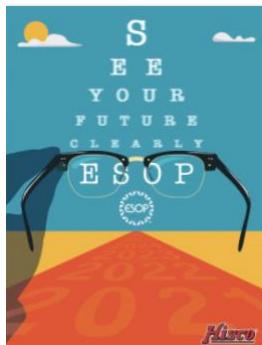




## 2021 AACE and EOM Poster Contest Winners and Runner Ups

### 2021 Employee Ownership Month Poster Contest Winner



#### WINNER: HISCO

We celebrate Employee Ownership Month every October to help remind employee owners, our communities, and our elected officials about the importance of ESOPs. And every year we ask members to submit their entry for a poster that captures the spirit of employee ownership.

A copy of the winning poster is given to all corporate members as part of our nationwide employee ownership month celebration.

### Annual Awards for Communications Excellence Winners and Runner Ups

Categories (Revised for 2021 to address communications needs surrounding the pandemic)

- |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Video                | 5. Virtual and In-Person Events |
| 2. Printed Materials    | 6. COVID Communications         |
| 3. Intranets            | 7. Total Communications         |
| 4. Community Engagement |                                 |

#### Video

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This award recognizes excellence in the use of original video or videos to explain or promote the ESOP concept to employees or the public. This is a challenging category and requires deep commitment on behalf of a company's leadership to make video as a communications tool.

**Companies with 250 or Fewer Employees****Runner Up: Sebago Technics.****Winner: Mountain Hardware and Sports**

The winner in this category produced a video that excels at showing how the ESOP and ESOP culture create a great place to work and how being employee-owned affects employees every day. By the end, the judges said, viewers have a great sense for what it is like to work at this company.

**Companies with more than 250 employees****Runner Up: MyPath****Winner: ProAct**

The winning company's video series immediately had the judges cracking up. They took an often-difficult topic about the value of Employee Ownership and turned it into something anyone can understand and relate to.

Mountain Hardware: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKcBxqeyqEM&t=168s>

ProAct: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYYcJR1Vviamget0wH2s6iUip8IB2Vivu>

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**Printed Materials**

Some people say print is dead. Well, those people have never seen the terrific materials produced by this year's employee owners. We saw everything from T-shirts to socks, and brochures to banners. Print is often overlooked for its necessity in communicating about our ESOPs, but when you have a business where employees don't work at a computer or don't have email, the materials you produce in print become essential.

**Companies with 250 or fewer employees****Runner Up: DVL Group****Winner: Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest**

The winner of this year's award had some very creative printed elements including a magnetic piece that employee owners could add to as they became vested in the ESOP. The judges were impressed with the breadth of print materials this company used to tell and show their ESOP story.

**Companies with more than 250 employees.****Runner Up: Woodward Communications****Winner: Holden Industries**

The judges were impressed with the quality and variety of Holden's printed materials. The judges notes that Holden did an excellent job at illustrating how print was an integral part of their multi-channel communications strategy.

## Intranets

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Internal Company Intranets can be a great tool for ESOP companies. They're private, enabling ESOP Companies to share stock and other information safely. They can display a variety of media, and they're a great way to share a consistent message with employee owners in different locations.

### **Companies with 250 or fewer employees**

**Runner Up: Avail Technologies**

**Winner: Sentry Equipment Corporation**

Sentral Station, Sentry Equipment's intranet was well organized and had a strong focus on communicating about the ESOP. The judges appreciated and liked the idea of having employee owner resources directly in the top level tabs for users. The judges also appreciate the video tour provided with the entry.

### **Companies with more than 250 employees.**

**Runner Up: Acadian Ambulance**

**Winner: USA Mortgage**

The winner in this category really impressed the judges. This category has been around for many years, and their Intranet was by far the best the judges (and TEA Staff) had seen. The intranet itself was good but the "it pays to be employee owned" page really blew the judges away. This incredible learning tool is something to be proud of!

## **Virtual and In-Person Events**

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The events award recognizes excellence in organizing and executing one or more significant ownership events, such as a special celebration, or an ESOP community service day. Given the nature of 2020 and social distancing, both virtual and in-person events qualified. For many ESOPs and employee owners, these events were critical touchstones during the pandemic, and allowed their Employee Ownership culture to remain intact and even grow.

### **Companies with fewer than 250 employees**

**Runner Up: Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest.**

**Winner: Chambers Group**

The winner of the small company virtual and in-person events category did an outstanding job at telling judges the story of their events, the goals, the challenges, and the outcomes. 5 events and multiple "slack events" were well executed, and the judges were impressed with the positive quantitative results of the events.

### **Companies with more than 250 employees**

**Runner Up: Avian Technologies**

**Winner: Morton Buildings**

The winner in this category was very creative and leveraged the difficulty of the pandemic by holding a year-long event themed after the “masked ESOP.” The judges commented that the entry materials, binder, and trifold were well designed and really helped them understand the theme and events.

## Community Engagement

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One of the most important things you can do as an ESOP company is tell your potential job applicants, your customers, your elected officials and your community what your ESOP is and why it works. Let them know that being employee owned is part of your secret for success.

This award for Community Engagement recognizes excellence in how your company interacts with your customers, your community, and your local leaders.

**Companies with fewer than 250 employees, this year's**

**Runner Up: DVL Group**

**Winner: The Williams Company**

The judges were astounded by sheer volume of community work the winning company was able to accomplish during the pandemic. This company really went above and beyond to keep giving and make a positive impact on their community despite the pandemic.

**Companies with more than 250 employees.**

**Runner up: Avian**

**Winner: ITA Group**

The employee owners of this year's winner used over 6000 hours of volunteer time to give back to their community with more than 190 unique events. This is even more amazing given we were in the upheaval and difficulties of the pandemic. Clearly this company prioritizes community engagement, which in turn teaches the community about what makes an employee owned company so special.

## COVID Communications

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The past year was unlike any other, filled with new and unforeseen challenges. This category was specifically created to help highlight how your company adapted to the communications challenges presented by the global pandemic. Any changes you made to adapt to these unusual times would count toward the entry. The winning entries in this category painted a clear picture of the challenges the pandemic presented to their business and how their company effectively communicated to reach their goals.

**Companies with fewer than 250 employees****Runner Up:** TSP Inc.**Winner:** Kreg Tool

The judges were extremely impressed with the winning company's use of technology to maintain constant and relevant communications during the pandemic. The entry painted a clear picture of what they needed to address. The judges made particular note that the mobile app this company created was a very smart way to reach the employees who may not have had access to email.

**Companies with more than 250 employees****Runner up:** Burns and McDonnell**Winner:** VGM Group

The winner in this category impressed the judges with a "Return to Work Playbook" which included clear and detailed information about what the more than 800 employees were being asked to do, and the actions leadership was taking to keep everyone safe. Our judges appreciated that the entry was concise, yet very well and thoroughly presented and tackled an issue that many of our companies are still struggling with even today.

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**Total Communications**

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To take home the AACE award for Total Communications, companies must excel in their overall communications efforts. The Total Communications award is presented to companies who have taken their ESOP and Employee Ownership communications very seriously and built programs with real resources, and their efforts pay off through improved culture, better performance, and a more productive and profitable business.

**Companies with fewer than 250 employees,****Runner Up:** Chambers Group.**Winner:** DVL Group

Now, this is a little fun for me because this year's winning company has entered year after year with extremely impressive communications packages. They have come close to winning total communications many times in the past, but this year their efforts were superb and this company has finally won the ultimate prize in the AACE competition. They really knocked it out of the park with a well rounded and well explained communications plan that they executed with skill.

**Companies with more than 250 employees****Runner Up:** Holden Industries**Winner:** USA Mortgage

The winner did an excellent job in creating and sticking to a theme. All their communications materials fed into a central theme of surviving and thriving. The judges were extremely impressed with this

company's educational microsite and intranet, and they loved the videos and posters submitted this year.

## 2022 Entry Dates and Deadlines

- 2022 Period Under Review: April 1, 2021 - May 1, 2022
- 2022 Entry Deadline: June 1, 2022.
- Judging will take place in August
- Winners will be notified in September

## Interested

To enter, please fill out our new digital entry form, [found here](#). Please note this link is only for the 2022 AACE and EOM Poster Competitions and a new link will be issued for following years.