



It's time to let Richmond know that your business is the best. The RTD's annual contest is underway and your business has been nominated to compete for The Best. Your goal? Get the most votes and win your category!

This quick guide will help you craft messages for Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets. And don't forget to promote your business on your website, email newsletters and in your store.

The graphics included in this email can be used in any of your communications.

Spread the word, get the votes and win RTD The Best. Reach out to your network and ask them to reach out to theirs.

THE BASICS

URL

When you share a post on social media, mention RTD The Best on your website or in your email newsletter, provide a link to the contest so that your fans can cast their votes.

The URL is <http://www.Richmond.com/The-Best>. If you use this link online users can click on it and go directly to the contest.

Sometimes we remove the beginning of the URL in print since users aren't clicking directly on it. If you include a message about RTD The Best in a printed product, like on a sign or handout in your store, you may want to direct users to Richmond.com/The-Best. When typed into the address bar in their web browser, that URL will get users to the contest.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Your social media followers love your business. That's why they follow you and read your updates. Let them know about RTD The Best and encourage them to nominate your business.

If you have a Facebook page, Twitter account, Instagram account, Pinterest boards or a YouTube channel, you have what you need in order to communicate with your fans.

Your regular social media usage will determine the frequency that's best for you. Just keep in mind that the more times you share the link, the more exposure your organization will gain.

And if you have multiple social media accounts, spread the posts across your accounts so that you can catch your fans in more places and at different times. Post regularly!

Most importantly, have some fun. Your personality and the things that have made your business successful are why you're nominated. Be yourself and spread the word.

Types of social posts

It's okay to be direct. You want your fans to vote for your business in The Best, so ask for it! Short posts are okay so show your personality but get to the point.

Examples:

- Thank you for nominating our happy hour for RTD The Best. Voting has started and we need your vote to win. Cast a vote and help us win The Best!

- Have you voted for us in RTD The Best? Cast your vote and help us win the best happy hour in #RVA.

Tap into what your customers are interested in and use interest-related posts that encourage them to vote for your business in RTD The Best. Examples:

- Stop in for a quick oil change before you hit the road for your next road trip. We're nominated for RTD The Best and we'd love to take care of your car, and get your vote.
- Heading out for some back-to-school shopping? Stop here first and find out why our customers think we're one of The Best places to shop in #RVA.

Don't forget to say thank you. Your customers nominated you for RTD The Best and will come back to cast their vote. Your inclusion on the list, and eventual win, is a reason to give back and say thanks.

- Thank you for nominating us as one of Richmond's best restaurants in RTD The Best. Mention The Best at your next visit and receive 20 percent off your order. And don't forget to vote for us on Richmond.com!
- Wow! You nominated us as one of the best physicians' offices in Richmond. We're thrilled to be included and hope that you'll keep voting so that we can win. Mention RTD The Best at your next appointment and receive a goodie bag from our office. Thank you for your support.

Hashtags

The hashtag for our contest is #RTDTheBest. Use it on social media, use it in your store, use it wherever you see fit. (We especially encourage use on Twitter and Instagram.)

We'll include a Twitter feed on Richmond.com that includes tweets that contain #RTDTheBest. When you include the hashtag on your tweets you'll show up in the feed on our website.

Utilize other relevant popular hashtags related to your business and community such as #RVA. If you're not sure which hashtags are right for

you, or which are already out there and being used, search Twitter and utilize free tools to learn more. Examples:

- Hashtagify - <http://hashtagify.me/>

Photos

We've provided a RTD The Best logo in this media kit. You are welcome to use this on all of your posts.

You may also want to feature your products that are related to your nomination. Are you nominated for the best BBQ? Show your fans a plate of those mouth-watering ribs and give them the link to vote for your business. Are you nominated as a top real estate agent? Show photos of current listings or standout previous sales with your posts.

Video

Make one video, use it on multiple sites. If you make a quick video starring your business and the reason you're nominated (your great patio, awesome music, beautiful landscaping, etc.) you can share that video on YouTube, Facebook and more to reach your audience in a different way. Keep the video short, showcase what makes you great and mention the URL for your fans to cast a vote for you in RTD The Best.

EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

Email communication with your customers is a great place to mention your organization's participation in RTD The Best. Share your story about why your business was nominated and how you need your customers' support to win.

If you send out a weekly email newsletter, carve out some space for RTD The Best and keep the link to the contest in there for the duration of the voting period. Or, dedicate an email specifically encouraging votes for your business in RTD The Best.

DON'T FORGET

- Include a link to vote for your business in RTD The Best in your email signature. Every email that you send throughout the duration of the voting period will also promote your business to win.
- Print out a sign and put it beside the cash register, entry way or other prominent location in your store. Every customer will learn that you're participating in RTD The Best and will know to vote for you.
- If you have active advertising campaigns during the nomination and voting periods, update your creatives and message to further promote your inclusion in RTD The Best.

CONTACT US

We want you to be successful and enjoy participating in The Best. We're available to answer questions about promoting the contest and using this guide. Give us a call or send us an email and we'll do our best to help you out.

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