

# Case Study: NALP

Creating value for associations  
and their members



**The Customer Need.** The National Association of Landscape Professionals, voice of 100,000 landscape industry professionals who create and maintain healthy green spaces, came to us looking to refresh their awards-giving by redesigning their physical awards for their 2015 National Awards of Excellence. NALP had to have something completely new, exciting, memorable and, of course, sustainable.



The original PLANET plaques

**The Solution.** Going in, we made sure Rivanna's process of collaboration was logical, right-sized, and in keeping with the association's goals and philosophy. We warmly welcomed their input and feedback at each major milestone in the creation of a new look and feel for the widely-respected awards. The steps included:

## #1 Customer-Centric Design Refresh

We began with a thorough review of all legacy plaques and awards, to ensure we were breaking new ground. To bolster NALP's new brand, we wanted a fresh, cohesive design that would appeal to their design-centric members. We took into consideration a blending of color, texture, line and balance: as NALP members do when they deliver when they create a great landscape. Our integrated artistic approach underlined the organization's driving purpose and the prestige of the awards. To reflect the association's "outdoor" nature, we suggested plaques of more planet-friendly materials. This included green-certified mahogany. NALP loved the idea of natural, sustainably forested wood. In our subsequent discussions meetings with the association awards team, we recommended a suite of plaques reflecting various levels of recognition. The NALP professionals also appreciated that our new, asymmetrical-design style prominently featured the name of the winner and category of recognition. This reflected the association's philosophy: members come first and their honors are worthy of notice.



**"I ordered a duplicate plaque for my client. The client was thrilled...I would have still ordered even without the picture, but it was a nice addition and the customer liked it as well."**

– Sharon Morris, Focal Pointe Outdoor Solutions.

# #2 Improved Branding for Members

While collaborating on the award designs, the NALP team shared with us color photos of past winners' work in landscaping. The photos were stunning, with talent and detail displayed in every image. We resolved to find a way to incorporate photos of winning projects into the awards program. We were excited to make each piece unique to a winning project. Our design team created a Companion Photo Plaque to display alongside each Award of Excellence plaque. Intended for installation in the landscaper's lobby or reception area, the photo plaque tells the story in a colorful, true-to-life representation that further validates its corresponding Excellence award.

“We [purchased] one plaque with a photo for the homeowner and gave others to the managers responsible for the winning projects as a gift. I just wish we had ordered them all with photos, [they] looked awesome!”

– Kacy Popovich, Rocky Mountain Custom Landscapes, Inc.



# #3 New Products for Members



We again added value by designing a photo plaque specifically for other stakeholders of each winning landscaping project. The new Customer Photo Plaques provided an opportunity for landscape professionals to share their success and express their appreciation to customers and partners.

“I am really happy with [my purchase]. I always order 2 plaques for each winning project. I keep one for myself and give another to the house owner. I have ordered 3 times since 2016. I am going to order more plaques this year, too. Thank you so much for the nice work!”

– Frank Shang, MRD Landscaping.

## #4 A Convenient Way to Pull it All Together

NALP loved the dual-plaque concept and was convinced that these new products would add value for its members. Since the scale of the awards program might have made the logistics of offering new products a little daunting for NALP, we also set up a private-label online store to handle the orders and administration.

**“Great gifts for clients, and recognition in our own office.”**

– Carli Hinkle, Clean Scapes.



**The Result.** The collaboration between Rivanna and the NALP has resulted in the refresh of the NALP’s award program, strengthening of its brand, and adding value for its members. In partnership with Rivanna, NALP has found new ways to celebrate the accomplishments of its members and help them showcase their award-winning landscape projects. The Rivanna-created awards put a whole new lease on their exciting national honoring events. NALP members appreciate that the design and craftsmanship of the plaques well reflects their own commitment to fine design and professional landscape installations. The association appreciates that Rivanna set up the easy-to-use system for awards acquisitions by winners. After NALP announces the Awards of Excellence, winners are invited to purchase duplicate plaques and photo plaques for their award-winning work. Rivanna maintains the online store, which is linked to NALP’s website, and handles all store administration and award verification. After ordering, winners upload photo files via the store and Rivanna returns an artwork layout to them via email. Once the artwork is approved, Rivanna finishes and ships the plaques to the landscapers or, in some cases, to their customers or partners. It’s win-win all the way for NALP members and their clients. For Rivanna, it has been an opportunity to collaborate with the premiere professional landscapers’ association and work directly with their creative members.

**“Award plaques enable us to display some of our best work by providing information about the award and showcasing the jobsite. We usually order multiple plaques - some for our offices, so that we can proudly showcase some of our most noteworthy jobs; some for our customers so they can display them in their lobbies for their employees and/or customers to appreciate; and even some for key people who were involved in the project like employees, vendors, owners and developers. The work we do is very visual (landscaping), and to have the accompanying picture on the plaque is really invaluable.”**

– Amy Snyder, Director of Public Relations, Ruppert Companies