

Dementia Society of America® Dementia SMART® Recognition

When you want a product or service to meet your needs, especially for those in the Dementia community, it needs to be S.M.A.R.T!

Our care, technology and innovation recognition program serves the Dementia community by helping to foster and promote solutions that embody certain key attributes for the Dementia community. Attributes are not only physical in nature, but also include important aspects of the end-to-end business model, i.e., distribution channels, cost/price value, best practices, and corporate responsibility, etc.

Begun in 2013, the Dementia Society of America, is the nation's leading grassroots all-volunteer nonprofit organization devoted to awareness of all forms of Dementia. Our three mission objects are to educate, enrich and innovate. The elements of innovation cross such boundaries as caregiving, hardware, software and services. All of which may be deemed innovative, but which also must go above and beyond to serve our community well.

Our first Dementia SMART award recipient for 2015-2016 was made to SafeWander™, a product/app invented by teenager, Kenneth Shinozuka, to help his grandfather living with Dementia stay safe in a respectful manner. The product/app allowed for easy awareness of his grandfather's up and about status without being intrusive or restraining, so that those caring for him could know about any possible fall risks or elopement. Kenneth earned a top Google Science award, delivered a popular TED Youth Talk, was received by President Obama at the White House as a rising technology star, and earned early entry into Harvard University.

We look to recognize Dementia SMART solutions that address life's vexing problems.

Evaluation is divided equally among the following five categories:

Simple | Meaningful | Accessible | Respectful | Trusted

Submissions for recognition may be made at any time in writing to the Dementia Society of America, PO Box 600, Doylestown, PA 18901 or you may start the conversation at 1-844-DEMENTIA.



Our Criteria

Simple, a measure of intuitive use.

A good question to ask is: can the intended user(s) operate without training (in-person, video, audio, etc.), or instructions (written, pictorial, audible, etc.) of any kind? The scale is 1 to 5.

A rating of 1 indicates that four or more training/instructions methods are needed to have 100% user competence. A 5 means that no training or instructions are needed. Time to learn can also be considered as an overarching factor, thereby allowing speedy skill acquisition to positively affect the rating of even those processes which require multiple training/instruction modalities.

Example: Operating a doorknob lever would likely rate a 4 or 5, and learning to fly an airplane would definitely rate a 1.

Meaningful, a measure of effectiveness/impact.

A good question to ask is: what problem(s) does this solve? Often with Dementia, the issues that are most difficult for both the person living with Dementia and the care partners, may change. What's a problem today may not be a problem tomorrow – abilities tend to decline over time with a progressive Dementia.

On a scale from 1 to 5, a 1 means that the solution helps only with a fleeting problem – in other words, something that presents itself for just a few weeks. A rating of 5 represents a very meaningful solution, which if properly deployed, might help someone for years.

Examples: adding a bigger, brighter and more noticeable on/off button to start an automatic coffee maker is good, and may work a for a while, but if the person cannot determine how to push a button, making it bigger or bolder does not necessarily make it work better. It would rate a 2 or 3.

Conversely, a directional device that helps someone clearly get from point A to point B, and then adjusts for their abilities by going from an in-car installation to a clip-on-belt portable at a later date, might rate a 3-5.

Accessible, a measure of openness and universality.

A good question to ask is: are there any barriers that make it difficult for the user to find, understand, and receive the services provided by the solution?

From 1 to 5, a 1 equals a great deal of "friction" to find, and put the solution to use. A 5 represents an affordable cost for most, and total access by anyone, anywhere, and at any time.

Examples: a website that has good information for care partners within it, but has so many drop down boxes, visual distractions and no direct access to a site menu – so much so that the user abandons the site within minutes – may get a 1, 2 or 3. Whereas, a gently sloping ramp (or, all on one level parking with no step up curb to the sidewalk) that serves the main entrance to a big box retailer, along with extra wide parking spaces for doors to swing wide, and bright visual signage may rate a 5.

Respectful, a measure of dignity afforded.

Good questions to ask are: to what degree have the creators of the solution paid attention to the language, imagery or setting. How does HIPAA play a role? Does it meet the needs of the lowest common denominator while at the same time not "talking down?"

Examples: a manufacturer showing only older people as users of the product, along with using "non-inclusive" language, may create a feeling of exclusion, and might rate a 3 or below. Conversely, if one runs a national pharmacy chain and wants to be Dementia friendly, demonstrating respect by creating private areas to minimize the likelihood of consultations being overheard by others, could rate a 3 or above.

In marketing materials, is there a narrow focus on only one form of Dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease? Or, are the communications inclusive and attuned to the facts about all forms of Dementia? Two or more mentions of the same subtype of Dementia in any materials/advertisements, unless the submission is specifically and unequivocally intended to benefit only those living with one Dementia subtype, may quickly lower the "Respectful" score.

Trusted, a measure of best-in-class benchmarks.

From the time of the ancient Greek civilizations, goldsmiths and others would use a small tablet of hard stone, such as slate or fieldstone, with a finely grained surface and rub gold or silver across it to leave a colored mark to determine its purity relative to a known (benchmark) metal that they would also carry with them.

Therefore, a benchmark became synonymous with a criterion or trusted standard by which genuineness is judged!

Trusted, continued...

A set of good questions to ask are: what is the financial stability of the company offering the solution? How does the company or organization stand behind their products? How easy is it to reach customer service? Are they concerned with any product liability, and what have they done to protect their consumer, etc.?

One can argue that it is worth taking a risk on a new innovation, even if it has not been on the market for long or had extensive testing by one's peers. But if the problem it addresses for someone living with Dementia and/or their caregivers is self-evident and urgently needed, we will make accommodations in our review. However, it is worth noting that there are some very basic business requirements of good customer relations that one cannot ignore (whole or partial points may be assigned to each criteria met):

- At some point, do live people/operators answer the phone vs is it all automated?
- Returns/credits are accepted as long as the product hasn't been damaged, and it's within a reasonable period of time to have tried the solution;
- Has organization has acquired insurance and/or deployed business practices in order to limit their exposure, and to afford their buyer some assurances of performance?
- Products, components or solutions meet nationally recognized standards. In essence, if they are providing a toaster, it needs to be UL Listed as such.

Award categories for recognition:

Bronze – score 19-21 points. Silver – score 22-23 points. Gold – score 24-25 points.

The Dementia Society of America (DSA), solely makes the decision(s) about which category level recipients receive, any retractions, and/or how many awards are issued annually. The issuance of Recognition or an Award, represents the attributes of the submission only at the time of review. Reviews take considerable effort and may require product samples, site visits, modification requests, or other supporting documentation. DSA will provide feedback to the submitter at its choosing, and may reject or accept any submissions. DSA shall be held harmless for reviews, use of logos, failures to perform, and the actions of others, etc.

