Microsoft phenomenon: The annual award that winds up being awarded only once

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The Grammy Awards will be handed out this upcoming weekend, an annual award that seems to have survived. A not uncommon phenomenon at Microsoft is the annual award that winds up being awarded only once. Because all the excitement is in the announcement, not in the actual award.

> Every year, we want to uniquely call out and recognize a set of people. I'm proud to kick off the XYZ Awards, which we will be given every year, starting this year, which recognize employees who best represent ABC and DEF.

The XYZ Awards were indeed handed out that first year with great pomp and circumstance. And were never heard from again. This is a special case of the more general phenomenon of the introduction of some undertaking to great fanfare, only to have it quietly fade away into obscurity without any formal announcement that it had ended. One might cynically observe that the likelihood of this happening to your project increases the more dramatically it is introduced. If it's just called a *program*, then it might survive. If it's called an *initiative*, then you might want to hold off on ordering new business cards for a while. And if it's called a *bold new initiative*, then you'll want to spend some time freshening your résumé, because your project is doomed.

Update since people seem to be missing the point: I'm not talking about marketing campaigns. Those are meant to die out eventually. I'm talking about stuff like *The Council for Programming Excellence* (which meets only once) or *The DTI Program* (which has a kickoff meeting and then nothing).

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