

SMALL BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

TIPS ON WRITING TO GET RECOGNIZED

Congratulations, either you were nominated or have self-nominated yourself for an award because your business is deserving and you believe you have met all the initial criteria! When applying for awards, the key to recognition and winning is in the written response to the questions being asked.

It is important to note that the selection committee is comprised of Chamber Member Business Volunteers who have worked an entire year to develop the criteria and standardize the process. Understanding the process will allow you to be specific and “tell your company’s story”.

Following is the judging process:

1. Applications are sorted into the appropriate category for judging.
2. Chamber staff removes any reference to the names of the company or any individual to insure judging is a blind process. This keeps the process from being biased by any judge.
3. Judges independently read and score each application numerically and return their score sheets to the Chamber administrator of the program to be tallied.
4. Score sheets are tallied and a final meeting of the judges occurs to verify totals and to reread and score in the event of a tie.
5. Winners are chosen based on the highest total score and at that point the name of a company is revealed to the committee members only.

SO WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

Here is what the judges look for:

1. Be specific! Remember, you must provide your answer **ONLY** in the space provided. Also, the judges **DO NOT** know who you are so they have no opportunity to make assumptions!
2. When describing your business, tell the judges how you got started, your growth and your success. Remember, they are looking for Business Excellence. While reviewing your response ask yourself: “Does my answer tell my story?” If it doesn’t, re-write it!
3. What sets you apart? This is your opportunity to brag about why you should win. Is it customer service, value, your employees, your management style, or something else? Again, the judges are looking for specific examples. Don’t beat around the bush!
4. In responding to the question of what has led to the success of your company, again **BRAG** about what you do best and how you did it. Judges don’t want to re-read about something that has been said in a previous answer. If you believe something to be true, be convincing in your story by using good examples. Remember, no strategy is not a strategy!



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5. When responding to the questions regarding contributions to the community, it is important to note that one of the nominating criteria is a demonstration to community stewardship or strong community involvement. It is imperative that the response you provide cite specific examples demonstrate how you are involved with the business community and the community-at-large. A question to ask is “what impact has my business had on my community and how has this occurred?” Prior to answering this question make notes of where you, your staff, and your company have a presence; then ask what makes your presence significant. Remember, BRAG about what you do and why it is important.

THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES JUDGES SEE:

1. Respondents do not answer the question asked
2. Specific examples are not given
3. Incomplete thoughts and sentences
4. Incorrect word usage and multiple grammar errors
5. Responses written to reflect the accomplishments of an individual or owner and NOT the business



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