



# 10 TIPS FOR BETTER AWARDS

## WHY BOTHER WITH AWARDS?

Love 'em or hate 'em, awards are the life blood of the creative and comms industry. Before entering any awards, think about where they fit into your wider strategy and goals?

- Are you trying to raise your profile in a certain industry?
- Do you want to be seen as a great employer?
- Is the business trying to grow a service or specialism?
- Want an excuse to have a night out with the team?
- Or do you just want to be seen shoulder to shoulder with a peer/competitor?

Regardless of your reason, awards take time and effort. With squeezed time pressures and an increasing number of awards schemes out there, you need to know how to put your best foot forward.

## 1. EMBRACE A WINNING MINDSET

Before you start the campaign or project, think about what you aim to achieve and what stats, facts and data you might need to prove you've achieved it. How will you obtain that information?

Judges can often tell when objectives have been retrofitted to match the results.

## 2. PICK YOUR CATEGORIES WISELY

Some categories are an obvious choice, others less so. Just because the campaign falls into a particular industry sector, that doesn't mean you shouldn't consider other specialist or discipline categories such as strategy, data, media relations, evaluation. These often get less entries too!

## 3 TAILOR YOUR ENTRY FOR THE CATEGORY

It's easy to copy and paste one entry for multiple categories, but if it's a specialist category, it is important to expand on that the specialism in the entry. Yes, the creative might have been mind-blowing, but if you are entering a strategy award, make sure you really expand on this.

## 4. TELL A STORY

You don't need to go chapter and verse about everything you did, but help the readers to understand the 'why' behind the work, the insights found and decisions made and, more importantly, the 'so what?'. What difference has this work genuinely made.

## 5. SHOW REAL RESULTS

After the coverage has died out, or the event has been taken down, what happened? What is the legacy or lasting effect?

If the overall goal was to drive sales, then tell us how much you sold. If you wanted to educate more people, tell us how many more people understand the issue as a result of your work.

## 6. BE REALISTIC AND HONEST

"This campaign reached the entire global population. Twice." Highly unlikely.

Was there another agency or organisation heavily involved in the work? Were results influenced by another piece of activity. There's no harm in referencing them.

## 7. BE BRUTAL

Cut out the unnecessary, filler stuff. Get a fresh pair of eyes to read the entry, or maybe even write it.

Great that you are proud of the work (because you've lived and breathed it for 8 months), but ask yourself if an outsider would be impressed?

## 8. BE BRAVE

Just because a campaign or initiative didn't have an A-list celeb involved, a Hollywood budget, or a household brand name, that doesn't mean it wasn't effective.

In fact, oftentimes those very targeted, niche campaigns, with smaller budgets require extremely smart thinking and disciplined execution.

If your work can demonstrate real insight, great ideas and tangible results, that can make it award-winning.

## 9. GIVE YOURSELF TIME

This is of course a luxury in agency life, but giving yourself time to draft a strong entry can make a difference in quality and accuracy. Whether its to review stats or check with the client, it all needs time. Extra bonus starting early might save you some ££ with an early bird entry fee!

## 10. READ THE CRITERIA!

Sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised just how often entries miss vital, sometimes basic requested info.

Is budget required? Are AVEs an automatic 0 score? (they should be). What dates should the work cover? Will there be interviews as part of the judging process? If so, who will attend?

Check, check and check again.

## DON'T FORGET...

- Research and build a calendar of awards at the start of your year
- Understand where there are any busy periods so you can plan the right resource (remember my tip about time...)
- Get an idea of how many you might want to enter and the associated costs so you can prioritise according to your strategy and budget
- Check out previous winners

## NEED HELP WITH YOUR AWARDS?

The Drum, CIPR Excellence, PRCA, The Pros, SABRE and Purpose Awards. You name it, I've judged it.

If your award entries could do with some added input from someone who's been on both sides of the fence, both winning and judging, then get in touch.