

HOW TO CREATE AN AWARDS ENTRY

I have sat as chairman of the judges on many of the awards here, and I often get asked what the judges look for in an entry. Although we wish to see a variety of approaches suitable to the individual project there are some basic guidelines that might help you compose your entry.

The entry should be clear – it is better to give one example in detail and list others than attempt to cover too much ground in too much detail.

Give a background – the judges will not necessarily know about your sector or business, so a brief summary of these will help them place you in context. This might include size, turnover, recent issues in the sector, nature of business and so on.

State the challenges – all nominations really consist of a challenge or series of challenges that have successfully been met, whether than be business expansion or fundraising or retaining high levels of customer service, or a new technology.

Tell the story – once the challenges are identified you need to tell the judges how you met or overcame them. This is the most important part of the entry, it explains the actions, the issues and the reason that this is a potential winning entry.

Use pictures – it may not always be appropriate, but graphs and pictures can help illustrate points. We don't want too many, but one or two make the point more fully than text alone.

Use figures – figures give an objective view. They let the judges see the work that has been done and reinforce the story.

List the outcomes – what has changed/happened? What has worked? Why was it a success? Were there additional benefits? And who benefited? It may be that wider stakeholders were involved or were affected. One recent submission had done a lot of work with the Prince's Trust, but scarcely mentioned the positive impact the main project had on this.

Support by testimonial – if there are people who can independently support your nomination who were stakeholders, this can be very useful for some sorts of category. Especially those where a client might be appropriate.

Summarise and make the case – why should you win? This is the point to say and not be shy!

Word count – this is the end of the entry as such, so please a word count.

Finally, a word on appendices – these can be added and are external to the entry, but I advise adding these only where it clarifies technical issues in the main body, or is supporting information that helps expand an idea or outcome. The may or may not refer to this section, and it will not be taken into account in weighing the result.