

How to Write a Winning Award Submission



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Why Enter Awards?

Awards play an important role in our industry, acknowledging innovative products and inspirational people. Winning or even being shortlisted for an industry award is a praiseworthy achievement. In both cases it is industry acknowledging how and why your business, products, services and employees differ from those of your competitors.

Not surprisingly, winning awards is good for business. [Business.com](https://www.business.com) says:

“For startups, winning awards can help increase brand awareness and boost credibility. As a business scales, awards promote loyalty and trust while providing a competitive edge. Awards also boost employee morale and improve employee retention as team members celebrate their organization’s success.”

Existing customers retain their trust in your company and those considering doing business with you (for the first time) see your win or being shortlisted as independent validation of your excellence. In addition, there is often an interesting knock-on effect, in that your customers and partners will want to promote the fact they are working with an award-winning company.

On another note, there is a considerable benefit in the act of just making your submission. Done properly, the submission process gives you the opportunity to examine your business objectively and compare yourself to your competitors.

Moreover, there is a certain feel-good factor about going up against larger companies: head-to-head with enterprise-level organisations operating in the same markets as you. Just by thinking about what it is that makes you stand out from the crowd you will be doing a review of your business and might find ways in which to improve in certain areas.

Surprisingly, awards are an often overlooked tool in the marketing toolbox of most companies, and yet it is possible to secure a huge ROI – where the investment can be as little as a few hours work.



How to Write a Winning Award Submission

There are many types of awards, ranging from local/regional business awards to national ones like the King's Award for Enterprise. There are also industry-focused awards like the recently launched Instrumentation and Electronics Awards, organised by publishing company Datateam.

Most awards have multiple categories - and you may have a product that is eligible for more than a single category – and are free to enter. However, try not to adopt the mindset that because there is nothing to lose you might as well apply for several categories and that each submission can be a copy and paste from a press release, brochure or webpage. A little more effort than that is required if you want the judges to take you seriously.

Picking the Best Category

It is important to make your submission against the most appropriate category (or categories) and to understand what the judges are looking for. If you do put the same product forward for multiple categories, be sure to tailor each submission.

For convenience, let's consider how to tailor a single submission against the 'Internet of Things Product of the Year' category in the 2025 Instrumentation and Electronics Awards. The organisers say the award will go to "...a company that best demonstrates true innovation within the Internet of Things. This product should be different from anything else in the market."

A strong submission would be one that explains why your IoT device is considered *innovative*. Is it the design, the application, or both or something else?

As for stating how it is *different from anything else in the market*, does your product draw less power than its nearest competitor, for example? Does it work with multiple wireless protocols (Bluetooth, WiFi, LoRaWAN, etc.)? Is it a smaller form factor? If no single feature can be considered a differentiator, you may wish to combine features. For example: "This is the most compact, low power IoT device that can be connected using multiple communication protocols."



Qualify Your Claims

Importantly, you must include facts and figures. For example, if you claim low power, how many Watts are we talking? If you claim compact, what are the product's dimensions?

Most of the facts and figures you need will be present in the product's datasheet, press release (if one was issued) and in your product literature. However, whilst you should draw on these resources for technical accuracy, do not simply copy and paste material from a single source. Instead, supply those sources as supporting documentation.

Also, what will really impress the judges is a testimonial from one of your customers. For instance, include a testimonial from a customer that is benefitting from using your product, and have them say how good your product is (and why).

To extend our IoT example, is your product making your customers more productive and efficient, and therefore saving them money? Remember: Any product is just a means to end, so tell the judges what that end is.

Tell the Full Story

To really stand out you need to tell a compelling story, and as with any story you need a beginning, a middle and an end. The opener needs to be engaging and confident single paragraph statement. It could, for example, begin with: "We believe our <product name> IoT-enabled <product type> should win IoT Product of the Year, because it is the most compact, low power... etc".

Your submission can then go on to provide the facts, figures and testimonials to qualify your opening statement. This is the middle of the story.

Also, the judges will want to hear about the development of your product. What were the development challenges? What were the solutions? Did you invest in new design tools or manufacturing processes? In other words, even though the award might be acknowledging an innovative product, let the judges know what your engineers did to make it all possible.

Your submission should conclude with a rephrasing of your opening statement.



Supporting Information

Most awards allow you to provide supporting information. You should take full advantage of this.

Supporting information might include data sheets, press releases, articles and case studies, for example. White papers in particular are useful resources.



On a personal note, the use of the expression “close runner up” is well justified when it comes to industry awards. I have twice been on the judging panels of industry awards, and I can honestly say it is the presence or lack of supporting information that helped me choose between two or more submissions that had made equally compelling arguments for winning.

Taking that extra little efforts to supply useful supporting information will help you to stand out, and it helps the judges too. Adhere to word count limits and anything else the awards organiser may have stipulated. Also, keep your submission(s) professional - by which we mean well-written.

And once you have drafted your submission, ask a colleague to proofread it for: 1) accuracy, 2) that it meets the judging criteria of the category and 3) that there are no glaring typos.

Better still, ask an independent third party to check your submission. This can be someone who knows your industry but not necessarily your company or products. Let them judge whether or not you have put forward a strong argument for winning an award.

Checklist (Ten Top Tips)

If you take nothing else away from this guide, we strongly recommend you follow the following top tips for making a strong award submission.



Outsourcing

Above, we mentioned that surprisingly few companies bother entering awards.

And having judged awards myself, I can testify to the fact that many that do enter make little effort to truly convey why they should win.

We also mentioned that making a submission does not require much effort. However, it is possible that some companies struggle putting their case forward. Indeed, an award submission is a different kind of content creation.

In some respects, making an award submission has elements in common with writing and distributing a press release. You cannot be certain of the outcome, but you do know that the better the content (and the story it tells) the more attention the press release will receive from editors, and this will result in better media coverage.

As mentioned, there are benefits to asking an independent third party to check your submission. Or you might consider asking a third party to write the submission on your behalf. Like the judges, they will be taking an 'outside-looking-in' view of your company and products: and will possibly tell a better story because of that.

Writing award applications on behalf of companies is something Declaration does under all four of our standard marketing support services. Indeed, to date, we have not made an application that has not been at least shortlisted, and we have helped two clients secure Queen's Awards and a third secure an Elektra Award (in the Manufacturer of the Year category).

Contact us on +44 (0)1522 789000 or via email to declare@declaration.co.uk if you would like to know more about our services. Or visit www.declaration.co.uk

We hope you enjoyed this guide, and good luck with any and all awards you go for. Be in it to win it.

