

Ten Tips for Embracing Award Opportunities

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1. Awards are your unique marketing opportunity – so apply!

Awards are a key part of your marketing strategy. They help you get external validation and can be a gamechanger when being considered for a board position. Even if you think there is little chance of winning the award, apply anyways if it's an award you qualify for. There is huge value in going through the process. At the end you will have a body of work that will help you apply for other awards or that can be used to promote your business.

2. Collaboration is crucial

Tap into the people you've met through the many women's business networks if you want someone to nominate you for an award. The WEB Alliance is a good source of networks to start with. If your employer is the nominator, talk to your Human Resources department, a colleague or your supervisor if you want to be nominated.

3. Select your category carefully

Ensure that you fit the category you are applying for. For example, if you are young, award categories for future leaders are a good fit. Once you have decided on a category, tailor your application to the questions in the category.

4. Tell your story

Everyone has a story. The judges want to hear your story and your voice. Bring forth your uniqueness and what differentiates you from others. Telling an authentic story will make you stand out. People can connect to overcoming adversity or realizing on a vision. Write as if you're speaking directly to one of the judges, or writing them a letter.

5. Don't be shy

Acknowledge your accomplishments and create a clear message to convey your achievements. This is your opportunity, so do not undervalue yourself.

6. Be professional in your submission

Your application should reflect your professionalism. Talk to someone who has submitted an award nomination to get tips and suggestions. Check your submission for grammatical errors, typos and oversights. If English is not your first language, get it edited by someone with English as a mother tongue.

7. Follow the guidelines

Organize your nomination form and address each question clearly. The judges usually work on a point matrix. Do not miss out by submitting inadequate information. Properly answer all the questions. Don't be confused by the similarity of questions, try to understand what it's getting at.

8. Do your due diligence

Pay attention to what is being asked in the application. Take the time to read each question and think about what the judges are looking for. Schedule time to complete your application professionally. Pay attention to maximum word count requirements.

9. Use feedback to fine tune your submission

Even if you do not win, ask for feedback from the organization and judges. It will help improve your chances next time. Keep on trying. Once you have completed one application, it is easy to fine tune and copy and paste for other award nominations.

10. Celebrate your nomination

Nominations and awards are opportunities to celebrate. You can get lots of mileage even if you do not win. Use press releases and social media to spread the word. Leverage your nomination by using it in your communication with clients and other stakeholders.

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