

Meet all application deadlines.

You can't write a thoughtful entry at the last minute; you just can't. Use a calendar or planner, make a schedule, and stick to it. If you miss the deadline, even by just one day, you will not be considered.

Start to gather application materials early.

Give yourself plenty of time to complete each step. Applications that have been rushed look sloppy, and incomplete applications won't be considered.

Photos.

Shoot early in the morning or in late afternoon when the light is filtered at a smaller angle. Also, we recommend that your pictures depict various stages of construction and/or tell the "story" of your entry and the project's individual challenges or innovation.

- Use a combination of shots for wide view and then some detailed shots or consider cropping and blowing up the areas of key importance.
- Be on the look-out for safety violations or lack of safety in the photos you send with application. Judges will mark you down for this.
- If photos were taken on a cloudy day, take the time to brighten them before printing.
- Pictures should be printed in color and at least ½ a page in size for easy viewing. *Full page is recommended.*

Read the question.

It's amazing how often the person submitting an award entry doesn't bother to read the questions. This is the criteria that you are being judged on and it's likely each question is being judged independently. Make sure you read each question carefully and cover every aspect in your answer.

Stay on point.

Make sure your answer addresses the question directly. This is not a chance for you to veer off into a different direction to profile something you want the judges to know. Stay on topic and know the judge is grateful when he/she has a submission that can be graded with ease.

Use bullet points effectively.

Bullet points are an effective way of ordering your key project areas and highlighting important points. Judges can absorb bullet points more quickly than long paragraphs and they improve a submission's overall readability. Don't overuse and keep your bullet points brief by only including information that is absolutely necessary.

Don't skip questions.

Sounds obvious, right? You'd be surprised how many people skip questions. Make sure you answer all of the questions on the application -- an incomplete form adversely affects your score. A great tip is to copy all of the questions into a document and then use this to draft your answers. Ignoring or brushing over a question could cause your job to lose points.

Follow directions to the letter.

Make sure every bit of required information is submitted with your original entry. Judges probably won't be able to contact you if something is missing or incomplete. Use page 2 of the Job of Year Application as a checklist of information needed to complete an application. Make sure to use it and tick off each item before you send your application off.

MORE TIPS 

Stick to the maximum page limit.

These limits are designed to ensure judges have enough time to get through all the entries in the allotted time. The page size should be a standard 8.5x11. Photos do NOT count towards the page length. If you embed photos in your narrative, you can go over pages to compensate for the space the photos took. (Remember, photos should be at least ½ page in size for easy viewing).

Tell the truth.

Never lie in your award application because the truth will always come out. If you are caught being untruthful in your award application it can cause considerable damage to your reputation and embarrassment if the award is taken from you. It's best to avoid a potential PR disaster by always telling the truth in your award application.

Tell a story.

Have mercy on the poor judge who has 15, 20 or 30 applications to read. You can make your entry stand out by deploying brand storytelling techniques. *Brand storytelling is the art of shaping a company's identity through the use of narratives and storytelling techniques that facilitate an emotional response and establish meaningful connections.*

Quantify results.

When you quantify something, you're putting it in numbers. Your entry should have some well-calculated and real numbers to help you tell your story.

Get your staff and co-workers involved.

The bigger the award, the more information you'll need. Ask why you should win a particular award. Get your co-workers involved and have them help you collect evidence, metrics, examples, testimonials or anything else needed for your application.

Aim for perfection.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar are all taken into consideration. Your final submission should be devoid of errors. Work with an editor or a proofreader to ensure your application is perfect.

Read your submission aloud.

Before you send off your award entry, stand up and read it using your normal speaking voice. You'll be amazed at how the act of getting on your feet and using your full voice uncovers clumsy sentences and other errors affecting the readability of your submission.

Winning nominations all have three things in common; they are well organized, easy to navigate and clearly articulate to the judges WHY the nominee should win in that specific category.

It's YOUR JOB to convey all of the pertinent and persuasive information judges need to make an informed selection.