



TOBY® Award Tips for Local Competition

This guide is a tool developed by TOBY past winners, TOBY members, and TOBY judges, to assist you in preparing for the Houston BOMA Local TOBY competition. You may be a first-time TOBY entrant or are re-entering and would like to improve your chances of winning a TOBY. Entering your building/project into the Houston BOMA TOBYs does not require a binder. We do require an online submission of your building. Judging is based on the Houston BOMA judging sheet that is made up of a tour and a presentation that can be done verbally, picture boards, power points, videos, or any other creative way, as long as it addresses the items in the Judging Score Sheet. If you are successful in winning a local TOBY, you should be proud of it. This highly respected award shows your tenants, owners and team that they are all part of an award-winning building. The following are guidelines for the local process:

TOBY PLANNING PROCESS

- TOBY is a yearlong process. Keep a “TOBY” folder to collect letters of praise, event fliers and any other item that may be important for your TOBY entry. Photos of events; customer appreciation, team building and of the property can be used in your presentation.
- Be a good friend to the community. Consider hosting a vendor fair for local businesses to sell services and items to tenants. It serves several purposes: tenant appreciation, a chance for tenants to network and mingle and it provides exposure for local businesses provide a nice event for tenant appreciation; Have a blood drive or food drive or donate time and money to local charities, or local police and fire departments.
- Invite the police and fire department to use your property for training. Not only does this add to your TOBY resume but it also allows local authorities to become more familiar with your property in case of an emergency.

- Recognize tenants on anniversary dates, special recognitions they may have received and special holidays or events. I.e. special recognition to Veterans on Veterans Day or doing something special to remember 911.
- Share your TOBY goal with the entire team including your service providers. Involve the entire team in the process. Keep an open forum for suggestions from the team. Not only is it great for TOBY, this will foster a sense of pride for you and your team. Once winners have been announced, reward the team for their efforts, win or lose.
- Start early. If you start early, it will be much easier to complete and refine. Look over the scoring sheet and decide which team member will do what. The entire TOBY process provides the added benefit of refreshing yourself on building details, learning new information about your property, and reviewing existing processes/procedures.

PREPARATION FOR TOBY TOUR

- Walk the entire property and create a punch list. Use the months before the inspection to slowly prepare. Avoid waiting until the last minute; judges can tell, the quality will be inferior and your staff will feel overwhelmed which can lead to negative feelings about the TOBY process.
- Map out your tour. Identify your tour route and walk with multiple team members to identify any areas to be “refined” before the tour. Follow the judging score sheet for the tour, it does not have to be in order of the score sheet, and it would be helpful to provide an Agenda to inform the judges when using a different order.
- Create a checklist of to do’s for your entire tour route and assign tasks and due dates to the responsible parties. Meet with the entire team as biweekly or weekly depending on your timeframe to discuss progress and any issues that may arise.
- Time your tour including the presentation to ensure you are staying within your allotted timeframe.
- Be prepared for judges to look in every crack and crevice. They may not look everywhere, but it will set a high standard for the team and install a sense of pride if your team has ensured all areas on the tour route are “judging ready.”

- Ensure all back of the house areas are presentable. A new touch of paint in mechanical rooms, piping and equipment always makes a good impression. If it's not in the budget, find a way to make it happen.
- Confirm all required safety notices/signage are posted, protective gear is provided, regular inspection logs updated, and all permits/licenses are up to date.
- Landscape improvements, both indoor and outdoor, are best done the week before the inspection so everything looks fresh.
- Clean and organize personal workspaces a few days before the inspection (all staff) and ask janitorial crew to complete finishing touches in common areas.
- Practice, practice, practice! Assemble your team and practice the tour frequently so that everyone can become comfortable with their speaking parts. Invite others outside of your team to be “mock judges” and provide feedback on areas of improvement. Individuals not familiar with your building can offer a fresh perspective and often spot things the team may not notice.
- Be sure to include key members of your team on the tour (particularly the Chief Engineer) to help answer judge's questions. This will also represent good team collaboration. Have each team member that is going to speak prepare his or her own script so it is in their own words and they take pride and ownership in what they are assigned to cover.
- Designate a “sweeper” to follow the tour group to ensure all parties stay on the tour path and monitor tour timing. Have door openers so doors open to welcome the judges as they move thru the tour, very impressive and makes the tour appear seamless. Pick topics you can discuss with the judges between stops on the tour so there are no awkward silences. It also gives you an opportunity to give them more information and guide the discussion.
- After your tour is complete, recap with your team immediately and discuss ways to improve the tour should you want to repeat next year. Consider a happy hour or special thank you to the team for their hard work.
- Encourage the team to maintain these high standards all year long. This will make future entries easier and inspire a sense of pride!

TOBY PRESENTATION

Community Impact

- Be sure to focus on things that impact community issues, not tenant relations. You may include ways that you promote the community to your tenants such as festival announcements. Anything that is charitable and for a good cause would be in this category.
- Participate in Earth Day. Schedule an E-waste Day for your tenants. The community will be happy to see that you recycle electronic waste as well as paper and fluorescent light bulbs.
- Include information about fundraising efforts, fire and police department training, vendor fairs with local business, blood and food drives. If you hold blood drives, quantify how many pints of blood donated. Any dollar amounts contributed?
- Since TOBY requires you to be a BOMA member, include details on BOMA involvement. If you or a team member is on a BOMA committee, board member, fundraiser volunteer, etc., let the judges know. This does impact the community. Also mention if team members participate in other professional organizations to show they are well rounded, IREM or Toastmasters, Engineering Association etc.
- Show how your building supports the local tax base by stating how much real estate taxes contribute to the base. If not for real estate taxes, tax burdens would have to be paid by the area businesses.
- Include information on people you employ and this adds to the health of the local community. Specify your janitorial contractor, security contractor, on site café's and retailers, as well as other contracted services.
- Part of Community Impact also accounts for transportation alternatives, i.e. carpooling, biking, etc.

Tenant Relations

- For this area, you should outline all your tenant events, programs and tenant amenities.
- Talk about tenant surveys and the results and actions taken because of tenant survey feedback.
- How are tenant requests handled?
- Tenant Communications
- A Tenant letter is required. More points for a letter versus just an email.

Energy Conservation

- All TOBY entries must have buildings benchmarked through Energy Star. If you have not done this already, it should be first on the list!
- Talk about staff education related to energy conservation. Be sure to mention BOMA 360 or the BOMA BEEP program if applicable.
- Discuss building operations and what staff has done for energy conservation. If you have a building automation system in place, this is the place to mention it. If your building's energy usage (either electric or gas) is lower than the local BOMA EER, it is great to mention.
- How do you train tenants, building personnel about energy conservation?
- Do you participate in any 'green' programs such as LEED?

Environmental & Regulatory

- Talk about recycling procedures, lamp and battery disposal, indoor air quality (how you change filters and test air), ADA issues (what you have done to comply), and mold/moisture prevention.
- Talk about how you get your tenants involved

Emergency Preparedness and Security Standards

- Talk about your fire and life safety program. Do you include local authorities?, Talk about fire and life safety systems, security standards (use of guards and after hour entry procedures such as card key, proximity readers, keys, etc.) severe weather emergency procedures and business continuity procedures., Disaster Preparedness & Recovery Plans in place?
- Talk about training for you, your staff and your tenants. Talk about fire drills and date last conducted and how training was done and documented.
- What have you added during the year? Make sure to include any training received through BOMA and classes provided through your employer.

Training for Building Personnel

- Must show or include an org chart in your presentations
- What type of training and ongoing training do you have and for building personnel?
- Mention any BOMA training, any BOMA or other real estate designations

Team Building

- Recognition - anniversaries, awards, luncheons
- Education, shadowing, tuition reimbursement
- Fun Events

Questions?

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