

OVATION's Judges Corner

Did you submit for an OVATIONs award and didn't quite make the cut? Here are some tips from our 2005 OVATIONs judges on making your submission a winner.

This year IABC/Toronto received more than 115 entries for the OVATION awards. At the OVATIONs gala, IABC/Toronto President Alix Edmiston stated that "The quality of the projects submitted to this year's OVATIONs were of such high standards that following 2 levels of judging, we were forced to go to a Blue Ribbon Panel to pick the top winners."

It is the first time ever that IABC/Toronto's OVATIONs used a Blue Ribbon Panel which consisted of IABC/Toronto's most seasoned accredited members. Blue Ribbon Panel's are synonymous with Gold Quill and Silver Leaf awards, but are rare to the OVATIONs.

What Type of Project Makes an OVATIONs Winner?

OVATIONs judges look for many things including clarity, consistency and most importantly compelling communications. I asked three of our seasoned judges Kathryn Boothby, ABC, Felicia Shiu, APR and Janice McNally, ABC to provide some tips on what makes a winning submission.

Top 10 Tips to make your project a winner:

1. Follow submission guidelines – it's heartbreaking to have to disqualify a project because the page count is too long or the binder is too large. If a component is too large to fit the 1" binder limitations, consider taking a photograph or two and add a label with a description
2. Clearly state measurable goals and objectives - setting measurable goals, with strategies and tactics that are well-conceived allows the judge to understand how your programs fits together.
3. Clearly define your audience – it is not enough to say women across Canada...what age, are they married, do they have children if so what age range are the children, did you target major cities...which ones, English speaking women only or French/English or other language groups.
4. Ensure that your evaluation/measurement refers back to your originally stated objectives – you have to be able to show how your strategies and tactics fulfilled your objectives.
5. Proofread – remember that writing is an important aspect of communications and that grammar and spelling count. One typo
6. Avoid industry jargon that the judges may not understand. Ask someone outside of your line of work to read the Work Plan to ensure that it is written in clearly understandable terms.
7. Ensure that any electronic materials run on a regular PC before inserting them into the submission package – what can't be viewed, can't be judged. DVD's

are not as common as we'd like to think in the office environment – where judging normally occurs.

8. Clearly mark Work Sample components so that the judges know how they fit into the program/plan.
9. Judges do not know your organization as well as you – write the introduction with that in mind. IABC/Toronto's judges must go through hundreds of submissions. A compelling, well-written document makes judging easier on the eyes and brain.
10. Use IABC Resources – including OVATIONs Award Winning entries booklet (can be ordered on-line) and the OVATIONs Submission Seminar – details will be provided this fall. IABC/Toronto resources will provide you with some great ideas and shows you the standard of excellence against which your program will compete.

Winning an OVATION Award not only provides you with recognition from your colleagues in the industry, but it also provides your organization with an opportunity to showcase your quality of work to internal and external peers.