



## Tips for entrants in the Mildura Business Excellence Awards

Approach

### **Be proud**

Remember the awards recognize and reward excellence. Sometimes the judges discover examples of excellence during the site visit that was not referred to within the submission. Something you do unconsciously, even consider basic, may in fact be an example of excellence when you consider the industry standard.

### **Write as if the reader doesn't know anything about your business**

It is easy to make the assumption that others know as much about our business as we do.

### **Use question one to set the scene**

Even though question one does not earn points it is important in setting the scene for the reader of your submission and has a huge potential to influence, engage or conversely to alienate them.

Prioritise

### **Use the score attributed to each question as a guide**

Some questions are worth only 5 points whilst others are worth 25. If space or time is limited allocate your time or space within the document (number of pages allocated to a question) accordingly. Each page is effectively worth approximately 8 points.

### **Think of the inverted pyramid of writing**

Always make the most important points first or early on.

Thoroughness

### **Answer all parts of the question**

Write questions a) and then the answer; write question b) and then the answer etc. If you believe a part of the question does not apply to you, do not leave your answer blank. Call the Awards Co-ordinator to see if they can provide another perspective. If not, write why you believe the question does not apply to you.

### **Go back and review your answer**

Ask yourself – “have I answered **the** question?”

When you are passionate about your business it is easy to read the question, understand it and know the answer, but as you write, lots of other information makes its way into your answer.

**Put essential facts and figures in your answers and not in the appendix.**

### **Check your submission for consistency**

For example the target markets identified should be the same as spoken about when answering the business planning and marketing questions.



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### Know the rules

#### Follow the rules of entry or risk losing points

The difference between a win and runner up placing could be one point. Don't risk losing any points, make sure you are familiar with and carefully follow the rules of entry of any competition or recognition program. The rules have been developed to ensure a level playing field and will be contained within the Entry Kit or on the website.

#### Checklists

Use provided checklists to ensure your submission complies with all the rules and requirements.

### Evidence

#### Substantiate your claims

Ask yourself, "how can I prove my claim to the judge?"

Evidence could be: images, written testimonials (quotes) from clients/colleagues, and samples of cross-referenced documents in the appendix.

#### Use images to support/reinforce the point you are trying to make

Be selective about the images you use and where they are positioned. Their role is to reinforce the written word and provide visual evidence of claims made

### Integrity

#### Be accurate, be factual, and tell the truth

Don't be tempted to 'embellish' your story.

### Quality

#### Proof read

Don't allow the judges impression of your business to slip because your submission is filled with typos. Proof reading techniques include; having a fresh set of eyes read through the submission, reading backwards to find typographical errors or read aloud to check flow and structure.

#### Checklists

When provided use checklists to ensure you include the correct number of copies and attachments when you lodge your submission.

### Layout

#### Try to make your submission reader/judge friendly, consider layout

For example the use of tables, charts, graphs, quotes, flow charts, scanned documents and diagrams can assist to convey or simplify a message.

Long slabs of text are likely to camouflage your key points, whereas a short 'yes' will not illustrate excellence. Point form is a good technique for focusing your answers and making them easy to read. Find a balance that highlights the strengths of your business.

Consider using: 12 point font, or 1½ line spacing.

Avoid shiny paper.

Make sure any coloured text is read eg avoid yellow or pale colours.