



Business awards

– a great investment

Throughout Western Australia there are many award programs for small businesses to enter - region or industry specific, or Statewide

Entering awards programs can provide a range of benefits; it isn't just about fame and fortune, there are also significant marketing and business management advantages to be gained.

Top 10 reasons to enter awards

1. Incredible **exposure** for your business; winning awards is a marketer's dream –the opportunities for promotion are huge.
2. Winning, or becoming a finalist, builds **credibility** for your business in your local community and industry and sets you apart from your competitors. Customers also like the assurance of buying from an award winning business.
3. They are a great way to **boost morale** and bring your staff together, particularly if you involve everyone in sharing their knowledge to write a winning submission.
4. Your submission is like a **business plan**, it is a perfect vehicle for you to analyse your performance over the past 12 months and identify areas of growth.
5. Gathering information helps you to **systemise** your business and formally record what is often only in your head.
6. It reaffirms why you started the business in the first place and helps you to rediscover what makes your business **unique**.
7. The structure of an award submission gives you the tools to display financial information in easy to view graphs and tables which are perfect for ongoing **business management**.
8. Asking questions like 'what has your business done for the local community?' and 'in what way is your business innovative?' provides you with great material for future **PR campaigns**.
9. The **prize!** Aside from the accolades that come with winning, there can often be a significant prize which is obviously a bonus.
10. Finally, once you have written one award submission you can tweak the same material to enter **other award** programs.



Small Business
Development Corporation



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Your local small business awards

Many towns and regions throughout WA host their own annual small business awards. These are often coordinated by the local Chamber of Commerce or Business Local service provider and are a great way for your business to gain recognition, and to showcase your products and services locally. While each awards program is slightly different, the majority will require a written submission.

To find out more about your local small business awards contact the organiser in your region, or call the Small Business Development Corporation on 13 12 49.

The Western Australian Regional Small Business Awards

This state-based program, managed by the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC), recognises excellence in WA's regional small businesses and helps to build strong, resilient local communities. Only businesses that have won a corresponding (or similar) award in their regional area during the current year are invited to apply. A complete list of eligible award programs is available on the SBDC website smallbusiness.wa.gov.au. Since its launch in 2002, this program has celebrated the success and achievements of hundreds of regional small businesses.

2016 Award categories

- Home-based business
- Franchise Business
- Aboriginal Business
- Business Local Achiever
- Start-up Business
- Community Engagement
- Business with 0-4 Employees
- Business with 5-10 Employees
- Business with 11-20 Employees



"Being a finalist in this award has helped give my business greater recognition. I am proud to represent the Peel Region and to make people aware that it is possible for a small business in a country town to be a finalist in such a prestigious award."

Malar Fraser - **Drakesbrook Antiques and Collectables**, Waroona

Finalist - 2015 Western Australian Regional Small Business Awards



Awards process

Businesses enter their regional awards by preparing a detailed submission based on a series of questions focussing on all aspects of their operation.



Submissions are judged locally by a panel. The winners of each category are announced at the regional awards event.



State winners in each of the nine award categories are announced at a gala event held in Perth in November.



Winners from each category have the opportunity to represent their region at state level by preparing a submission to the WA Regional Small Business Awards.

Frequently voiced concerns

Awards submissions take so long to write and I don't have time

There are many great reasons why you should enter awards. While we agree that submissions do take time to write, you should view it as an opportunity to think strategically about your business. Many small business operators get bogged down in the day-to-day running of their business, writing an award submission is a way to step back and think objectively.

My little business can't compete with the big guys

The size of your business isn't important, it's about your passion and the uniqueness and success of your business. So, whether you employ 20 people or are a sole operator, it doesn't matter as long as you are running a successful business. There are categories to suit a variety of businesses; if you're a small home-based business you won't be competing against a business with 20 employees.

I'm really good at running my business but can't write very well

No one is good at everything. If you know that your writing skills leave a bit to be desired then seek help. Write the majority of the submission yourself by simply answering the questions and using the suggestions on the following page. Then ask your local awards coordinator about attending an 'awards - ready' workshop offered by the SBDC, to help you present your business in the best possible way. Finally, ask a family member or friend to proof-read and tweak what you've written

I'm confident in my writing ability, but I'm worried about layout

While presentation is important, it is what is written that's really important to the judges. Keep your layout simple, visually appealing and easy to read.

Top tips for writing award submissions

- Read the **guidelines carefully**, many awards programs are very strict about basic rules, such as word count.
- Read **every question** before preparing your answers. Contact the awards coordinator if you have any queries.
- Allow **plenty of time** to complete your submission, it's not a quick process. Start compiling information at least a month in advance and allow a couple of weeks for writing. Trying to write a submission and run your business is not easy, so allow yourself adequate time.
- If you are entering online, first draft all your answers in a **Word document** then copy and paste into the application form. Remember to regularly save the document.
- Prepare **notes** for possible responses to each question. Try to keep your answers to individual questions as different as possible. Avoid repeating the same stories and facts throughout the submission.
- Draw on your **current business and marketing plans** for inspiration. If you don't have plans this is a perfect opportunity to create them.
- Look at your **business through fresh eyes**; sometimes when we are immersed in our business we forget that what we consider ordinary might be extraordinary to others.
- Providing **specific details** of how you achieved your business goals is a great way to demonstrate your business growth.
- **Innovation** is very important in small business. Show the judges how you have adapted your business during difficult times, or made a change based on customer feedback.
- Describe how your business differs from your competitors. What is your **unique selling proposition (USP)**?
- Ensure you include **good quality photos** that clearly depict your business or target market enjoying your product or service.
- Use **graphs and tables** to convey information, for example your profit/loss, target market analysis, competitor analysis.
- **Include customer testimonials.** It's always good for judges to hear first-hand what your happy customers think of your product or service.
- Ask family, friends and colleagues to **proof-read your submission** and provide honest feedback. Allow plenty of time for editing to include their suggestions.
- Make sure you **answer all the questions.** This may sound obvious, but many people miss a question - usually because they are rushed. In some award programs incomplete answers will result in disqualification or lost points.
- Stick to the **word limit** for each question.
- Make sure you submit your entry by the **closing deadline.**

Who is the Small Business Development Corporation?

The SBDC is a Western Australian government agency that has been delivering relevant, practical support to small businesses since 1984. Our primary role is to offer free, confidential advice and guidance to small business owners at all stages of their business development from start-up to succession planning. We also provide a broad range of business resources, business workshops, business licensing information and a dispute resolution service.

Led by the Small Business Commissioner, our team also works at State and Federal levels to advocate on behalf of the small business sector.

For more information about our services visit
smallbusiness.wa.gov.au

13 12 49