



Top tips for a winning entry

This is our third year as sponsors of the Inspiring Hertfordshire Awards and as judges of the overall Inspiring Business of the Year award, we thought it would be helpful to share our tips for putting together a winning entry.

Choose the right category

There are 19 categories to choose from and you can enter more than one of them. Think about which ones fit your business and you feel most passionate about – entering these will be easier. Getting recognition for these categories offers endorsement and validation to your existing and potential customers.

Put your best foot forward

Make sure your achievements are right at the beginning of your entry. You want the judges to be in no doubt why you deserve the award. Make sure they know from the outset exactly how much your business has grown, or reduced its environmental impact, or benefitted the community. Don't just tell them – show them the evidence.

Involve your team

They will have valuable input, plus the process can be an incredible morale boost. Having the team focus on how they have worked together to solve problems in order to achieve great things is such a motivating experience for everyone.

Tell your story from the heart

Share your journey to success through all of the hurdles you've overcome, the lessons you've learned and the hard work you've put in. Build tension and suspense to keep the judges hooked. Don't use business language and jargon, use emotion and your own words – it's what the judges will respond to and remember.

Make every word count

Read and re-read your entry, correct all grammar and typos and remove any unnecessary words. Get someone who doesn't know your business that well to read it. If they get it - so will the judges!

Thank your customers and suppliers

If you are shortlisted in your category, email your customers and suppliers and thank them for making it all possible. It's a great bit of PR whether you win or not – being shortlisted is a fantastic endorsement in itself.

Celebrate

Invite your team or clients to the awards night and if you win, celebrate your success with them.

Milk it

Tell everyone that you were shortlisted or have won. Put it on your website, social media, proposals, marketing material, letterhead and email footers. Send out a press release and photo to local and industry press. Display your trophy and certificates for your staff and customers to see.

Invest in your entry

The awards are free to enter, but that doesn't mean there isn't a cost. It goes without saying that putting together a winning entry takes time. However, with all the potential benefits, such as a boost in staff morale, stronger client loyalty or a competitive edge when hiring staff; there could be an excellent return on your investment.

The entry process itself can help you to refocus. We bet it's not often that you take time out to look at what you've achieved and where your business is heading. What's more, if you do involve your team, it brings everyone together and reinforces what's really important to the business and your goals.

Your next steps

Go to <http://www.hertschamber.com/categories-and-entering-2019> for details of the 19 categories and how to enter.

Attend the free **Entering is winning** workshop on 12th February to learn everything you need to know about putting together a winning entry. Register here or scan below.

<http://www.hertschamber.com/event/details/332>



Entry deadline is 15 March 2019

Good luck!

Hillier Hopkins
representatives for
the Inspiring
Hertfordshire
Awards

Neil Cundale
Principal

Elizabeth Wicks
Senior Audit
Manager

Karen Winrow
Marketing Manager

+44(0)330 024 3200
hi@hhlip.co.uk

Hillierhopkins.co.uk

Offices

London
Milton Keynes
Watford

