

# •• 10 TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A WINNING AWARDS ENTRY ••

The entry deadline for the Parking Today Media 2019 American Parking Awards is January 11, 2019, so the sooner you send in your entries, the better. Here are 10 tips on what to include, and what to leave out, to maximize your chances of success.

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## 1 Keep it simple

Be clear and specific. Ensure your entry is easy to explain concisely, give some background and outline your objectives and strategy. Give specific examples – facts, not fluff – and avoid jargon.

## 2 A clear format

Structure your entry. For example, say what the issue was, what you did and what the outcome was. Be consistent, logical and tell a story. Creating a narrative can help keep the judges' attention.

## 3 Answer the question

For example, if you are entering the award for excellence in technology and innovation, telling the judges what systems you have invested in is great, but they will also want to see the impact this has had on the business. Make sure you check the criteria for the category.

## 4 Evidence

Provide solid evidence against the criteria. Spell it out – avoid vague generalizations. To give your entry the best possible chance be sure to include parking measures such as car park counts or traffic measurement, as well as business measures, such as customer service or profitability. Evidence should be objective and ideally obtained from a third party or by independent study.

## 5 Stick to the word count

Judges have many entries to review, so keeping your entry within the word limit will work in your favor. Include any relevant supporting documents. The message will come across far more clearly if you can describe the project with energy and passion in a few short words than if you submit huge amounts of generic supporting material that is unlikely to be read.

## 6 Keep timescales in mind

If you are still in the middle of an initiative, make sure you can demonstrate some results, rather than simply speculating what the impact might be in the future. Preference will be given to completed actions rather than prospective results.

## 7 The business case

Try to relate your initiative to the requirements of the business – how did it support the business and what was the return on investment? Tell the judges what business problem you were trying to resolve and how your solution helped in commercial terms. Be sure to include how the project improved customer satisfaction, solved a persistent problem, or improved the overall customer experience.

## 8 Be passionate

Ask someone objective to read your entry. If they are not impressed, our judges won't be either. Tell them why you are passionate about your project and why they should care about it. If your project has saved money, what is that money worth to your organization? Provide context so the judges can understand the scale of what you have achieved.

## 9 Proof read your entries

Make sure your entry has been carefully read by at least one other person not directly involved in compiling it before you send it in. Spelling mistakes and typos can ruin an otherwise sound entry. You'll be surprised how many judges have bemoaned entries that are simply confusing and complex.

## 10 Start now

Give yourself plenty of time to put together a solid entry – keeping in mind that it only takes a couple of hours to put together a good submission. Make sure you plan your submission by reading through the category criteria.