Queensland Tourism
Awards 2012

HINTS & TIPS FOR
ENTERING THE AWARDS
and
WRITING A SUBMISSION

Queensland Tourism Industry Council
April 2012
WHY ENTER

There are many reasons to enter the Awards:

- Assists in annual business planning process
- Your entry provides you with an accurate record and overview for your business
- Benchmark for best practice in tourism
- Raise standards within our industry, leading to a better experience for our visitors
- Recognises and rewards high achievers
- Winners are identified as the outstanding tourism business in their category
- Great for staff morale and empowerment
- Only way to enter the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards
- Showcase your success to your peers
- Accredited businesses – much of the work has already been done
- Have a great night out!

IMPORTANT DATES

Please make note of the following dates:

Closing date for Nominations
Monday 21 May 2012

Site Inspections
June to August 2012

Closing date for written submissions
Monday 27 August 2012

Judging
September 2012

Queensland Tourism Awards Gala Event
Friday 23 November 2012 (Brisbane)

Qantas Australian Tourism Awards
Friday 15 February 2013 (Hobart)
CATEGORIES AND CRITERIA

• 28 Business categories (listed on the Queensland Tourism Awards website)

• 3 Individual categories
  – The Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual
  – Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group (QLD only)
  – Young Achievers Award (QLD only)
  – Winners from Categories 1 – 26 compete at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards

• Winner of the Marie Watson-Blake Award is recognised at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards.

• The Hall of Fame award is a prestigious award given to those businesses which have shown outstanding performance in their chosen category. These businesses have won in their selected category for three consecutive years. After their induction into the Hall of Fame the business becomes exempt from entering into that category for the next two years.

NEW IN 2012

Please be aware that every year the Awards criteria is reviewed nationally. This may result in revised wording to ensure the categories and questions remain current and relevant. It is important that you download the criteria every year to ensure you are answering the correct questions. Answering the wrong questions will result in the judges marking you down and could be the difference between being awarded finalist or winner.

Categories

Two new categories are being trialled in 2012:

Category 27 - Health & Wellbeing Tourism
This category is open to specialised tourism services or facilities whose primary purpose is to provide health, wellbeing and/or restorative services to enhance the visitor experience. Entry is open – but not limited to – health and day spas, resorts, retreats and well-being centres.

Category 28 – Local Government Award for Tourism
This category is open to all local government authorities and recognises excellence in tourism planning, the provision of tourism facilities and services, marketing, event development and management, and the overall contribution made both locally and overall to Queensland’s tourism industry.

The names of two categories have also changed:

• Meetings and Business Tourism  ➔  Business Tourism
• Tourism Wineries, Distilleries & Boutique Breweries  ➔  Tourism Wineries, Distillers & Breweries
Criteria

• Question 1c has been removed in categories 5, 6 & 7
  – How do you foster a greater understanding and appreciation of ecotourism?

• Question 5c has been removed in all categories, however this information regarding information should now be included throughout your submission as part of the other answers.
  – What innovations have taken place during the qualifying period to improve the nature of the visitor experience and minimise possible impacts on the environment?

• There has been a section name change in categories 1 – 26 for question 5
  – Categories 1 – 25 Q5. Sustainability and Innovation → SUSTAINABILITY
  – Category 26 Q5. Sustainability and Innovation → INNOVATION

Rules

• Submissions may now be written with Calibri font
• There are to be NO hyperlinks in your submission
• There is no longer a limit on the number of tables that can be used in a submission

RULES FOR ENTRY

To ensure consistency and fairness in judging, the Rules for Entry must be strictly met. Failure to follow the Rules for Entry may attract a deduction of up to 10 points.

• Qualifying period – 1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012

• Enter a category that best reflects your core business – entrants may only enter one submission in the following categories
  – Attractions
  – Festivals & Events
  – Tour &/or Transport Operator
  – Accommodation

• Ensure that you understand the formatting rules

• Penalty points may apply if rules are not followed

• Eligibility for your chosen category must be clearly demonstrated in Q1a

• State the question and then your answer

• The cover page of the submission should be clearly marked with:
  - name of the entrant;
  - category entered;
  - state/territory tourism awards entered; and
  - an image(s) representative of the product entered.

*REFER TO THE RULES FOR ENTRY DOCUMENT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
SITE INSPECTIONS

The purpose of the site visit is to assess the business being nominated and for verification of claims that may be made within your submission.

- The site visit will be prearranged – the judge will contact you directly
  - Make sure you let your staff know to expect a call
  - First contact is part of the inspection
  - Judges will also check your website and marketing material prior to visiting

- All categories except 14 - Tourism Marketing and the Individual categories will receive a site inspection.

- Entrants in categories 3, 4, 8, and 25 will be visited and evaluated for verification purposes only and therefore no points will be awarded for the visitation.

Do’s and Don’ts of Site Inspections

- Do’s
  - Give clear directions
  - Treat the judge like a guest to your property
  - Give them a chance to “experience” your product
  - Make sure you are available to spend time with them
  - Make sure they see your property at its best
  - Be enthusiastic
  - Make sure your website is current

- Don’ts
  - Change times or dates at short notice
  - Don’t delegate the visit or “apologise” for your business
  - Ask the judge for feedback on your competitors

JUDGING

The Judging Process

- 1 Chairman and 18 judges nominated based on tourism experience and/or business experience - Full list of judges including profiles can be viewed at www.queenslandtourismawards.com.au.
- Voluntary role involving Site Inspections, Judges briefing & Judging days
- Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest forms signed
- Panel of 3 read all submissions in a category
- Each question scored – comments invited – feedback provided to entrants
- Auditor collates scores
- Chair and Auditor sign off on results
- Judges decision is final!
What are judges looking for?

- A financially sound, well managed business
- Demonstrated business excellence
- A business plan and marketing plan
- A business that knows its customers and has a service culture
- Awareness of your industry and marketplace
- Efforts to meet and surpass industry standards
- Active contribution to tourism
- Evidence of a strategic rather than opportunistic approach
- Use of measurement tools
- Evidence of innovation and passion

Scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judges score well for...</th>
<th>Judges Score low for...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logical, succinct answers</td>
<td>Hard to read entries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts and diagrams that explain at a glance</td>
<td>Meandering answers and waffle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures which tell a story</td>
<td>Missed questions or part of questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great ideas and innovation</td>
<td>Questions that are not answered at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of humour</td>
<td>Lost points because of broken rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes that back up an answer</td>
<td>Promising submissions that lose steam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVOIDING COMMON MISTAKES

- Questions not answered fully
- Activities listed but no success or outcomes
- Answers must relate to qualifying period
- A picture paints a thousand words! Use high quality images and make sure you caption them

PLAN TO PLAN YOUR SUBMISSION

- Decide on the submission team
  - Who are the knowledge holders?
  - Elect a project “champion”
  - Should you prepare in-house or outsource?
  - Commit to use workshops & assistance programs offered

- Choose a methodology
  - Who will answer what questions?
  - When will you meet?
  - Involve your team!
**TIPS FOR QUESTION 1 - PRODUCT**

a) Provide a **general overview of the nature and history** of your attraction.
   - State your location and use an image and or map
   - Make sure you capture the feel of your product
   - Introduce your pride and passion

b) Describe your **services and facilities**.
   - Separate and consider non-tangible (services) vs tangible (facilities)

c) What **tourism experiences** do you offer?
   - Consider what people participate in
   - Link to packages/products
     - eg Nature / culture / heritage understanding

This question sets the tone for the rest of the submission. It is CRITICAL that you ENGAGE the judges here.
a) **Describe the key features** of your **business plan** for example goals, strategies, outcomes

- Include your vision / mission
- Consider using 3 column table and apply SMART goals – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely
- MEASURE OUTCOMES!
- If you did not reach a goal – explain why

### Example of Measured outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Demonstrate continued financial viability through achieving 5% revenue growth to $50,000 in 10/11. | • Increase repeat client rates  
  • Increase the average spend per guest  
  • Control expenditure through account management, cash flow analysis, debtor control. | • Repeat visitation represents $10,000 in revenue and 20% of overall business in 10/11.  
  • The average spend increased by 8% to $95 pp in 10/11.  
  • Expenditure maintained at $25,000 or 50% of gross revenue. |
| Increase membership by 10% from 100 to 110 members in 10/11.         | • Conduct Media/PR campaign  
  • Expand the ambassador program  
  • Value add memberships and promote benefits | • Full membership increased by 25 – an increase of 25% on 2010/11  
  • Revenue increased by 13% |
| Increase visitation by 15% from 5,000 people to 5750 in 10/11.       | • Implemented social media networking strategy and staff incentives  
  • Diversify market segments to expand scope of operations. | • Visitation increased by 12% to 5,600 in 10/11. |
### Example Matrix for Business Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Area</th>
<th>Goals/ Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies/ Actions</th>
<th>Outcomes/ Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Training &amp; Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TIPS FOR QUESTION 2 – RISK MANAGEMENT

b) **Describe the risk issues** you have identified for your business and **summarise the risk mitigation strategies** you have in place.

- Business risks as well as operational risks
- Examples of risk include
  - Visitor and staff safety, equipment, weather, chemicals, flood, fire, water, permits, licenses, fraud, insurance, power outages, fuel prices, access issues, intellectual property, staff turnover, funding, cash flow, theft, strong AUD, global financial crisis
- Use a table to demonstrate – what is the risk, what is the likelihood of that risk, what are the effects/impacts from the risk and what do you do to prevent or minimise them occurring – see table below.

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*Include a case study in this answer*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>RANKING</th>
<th>IMPACT / EFFECT</th>
<th>MITIGATION STRATEGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing risks – competition, low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Reduced visitation</td>
<td>• Conduct regular competitor analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awareness of products</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased competition</td>
<td>• Partner with like operators to package and market together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Secure contracts with key wholesalers and inbound operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of permit to operate in National</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Tours cancelled</td>
<td>• Guides complete training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reputation damaged</td>
<td>• Permit conditions respected and adhered to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Job losses</td>
<td>• Business licences are all relevant and current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIPS FOR QUESTION 2 – INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT**

c) Demonstrate your involvement in, and contribution to, the tourism industry. Explain how it contributes to the success of your business and the tourism industry as a whole.

- 4 part question
- Consider all aspects of industry – local, regional, nationally
- Famils, advertising, trade/consumer shows
- Provide mentoring / training programs for industry
- Entering awards
- Provide sponsorship
- Lobbying / commenting on legislation
- Contribution to Strategy or Plan
- Participate in Accreditation
- Make sure you quantify the benefits

**TIPS FOR QUESTION 3 – MARKETING**

a) Who are your target markets and how did you identify them?

- Consider the following – origin, age, income, employment status, gender, travel party, interest.
- Use graphs or pie charts to illustrate your answer.
- Try to provide examples of research, feedback, data, focus groups, emerging market, current market changes…. How do you know?
TIPS FOR QUESTION 3 – MARKETING STRATEGIES

b) Describe the marketing strategies used to attract each target market and detail the success/outcomes of those strategies.

- Consider using 3 column table
- Refer to target markets mentioned in 3a)
- Product, price, place, promotion
- Print/Digital/Broadcast
- Trade / Consumer Shows
- Media/PR
- Show measured outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Market</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Outcome/Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fishing enthusiasts</td>
<td>• Media famils</td>
<td>• 7 media groups resulting in $197,000 publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhanced Website – added BOOK NOW button</td>
<td>• 5 group bookings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased use of Facebook to engage with previous clients and attract new ones</td>
<td>• 23% bookings online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Facebook friends – 3,500</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– 28% increase from 09/10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55% previous customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45% potential customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>• Nurture relationships with key ITOs, wholesalers</td>
<td>• Product contracted with 3 additional Inbound Tour Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work with Tourism NT in-market</td>
<td>• Tours featured in 5 UK wholesalers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• UK Corroboree Trade Show</td>
<td>• 8% increase in UK bookings compared to 2008/09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pie charts and/or graphs recommended

Printing a brochure is not an outcome, the revenue generated from it is.
TIPS FOR QUESTION 3 – MARKETING

c) What is your **distinctive difference** and **how do you promote** it to your **target markets**?
- What are the unique selling points for business?
- What makes you different?
- Relate to target markets
- Different message for each market?

Consider presenting a competitor analysis

d) **Demonstrate** how potential visitors are provided with an **accurate and responsible depiction of what to expect from the experience/product**.
- Marketing collateral include website – wording / imagery
- Training
- Word of mouth from other clients via Social Media and/or TripAdvisor
- 3rd party endorsements
- Media & Sales Kits
- Booking form / itinerary
- How do you keep information up to date?
- Examples that clients expectations were met

TIPS FOR QUESTION 4 – CUSTOMER SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

a) **Explain** how you **achieve and maintain** quality **customer service**.
- Describe your customer service philosophy
- Link to Tourism Accreditation
- Formal & Informal Training programs
- Staff Meetings
- Comment sheets / outcomes
- % of repeat business or referral
- How many of your customers find you through word of mouth?
- Complaints handling procedures

Include TripAdvisor rating

b) **How do you identify and provide** for people with **specific needs**?
- Specific needs not just special needs
- Refer to your target markets
- Enquiry level, booking form
- Sometimes it’s obvious
- Information sourced from booking agent
• Needs include:
  – Families/children; Business travellers; Physical, intellectual disability; Smokers; Dietary; Special interest; Language

c) State the number of people working in the business and explain how you identify and determine professional development needs.

Three part question
• No of people – include full time, part time, casual, volunteers
• Identification
  – Staff Interviews
  – At induction
  – Introduction of new equipment eg computers, vehicles
  – When incidents arise
• Determine
  – Training Needs Assessment, Training Plan and budget
  – Internal/external programs, on-the-job coaching, succession planning
  – Regular appraisals / annual staff reviews

d) Describe the range of training/skill development programs undertaken.

• Accounts Team Leader - Supervising Skills – November 2011. Outcome - increased productivity, improved relationship with staff, gained confidence and respect
• Marketing Manager – Search Engine Optimization – Jan 2012. Outcome – website ranks no 1 for key search words, more unique visitors, 12% increase in online bookings
• 6 x Staff – 4x4 Famil – March 2012. Outcome – experience of new product, better customer service, job satisfaction, ability to share knowledge
• Owner/Operator – participated in 2011 October Business Month. Sessions included Recruitment, Workforce Planning and Upskilling Staff in Small Business. Outcome – increased confidence in dealing with HR issues, solid and committed team who are multi skilled and enjoy work

TIPS FOR QUESTION 5 – SUSTAINABILITY

a) Describe and demonstrate your commitment to environmental sustainability

• Is there an Environmental Sustainability Plan
• Dedicated staff member
• Telling the story
• Accreditation programs
• Carbon Footprint
• Avoid – Reuse – Reduce – Offset - how you adapted your business accordingly?
• Measurement tools do you use?
b) Describe how your business benefits and respects the local community values and culture.

- What is your local community culture?
- Job creation, contribution to economy, complements other businesses, assists in regional development, services required to support operations, activity for locals, local sponsorships, charitable gifts, apprenticeships
- Educates visitors on the cultural significance, respectful, display permits, adhere to guidelines, promotional material
- Employ locally, buy local policy
- Promotion of other tourism businesses
- Supporting local cultural traditions including indigenous tourism programs
- Supporting local volunteer programs that invest back into the local community
- MEASURE!

**TOP TIPS**

Ultimately the Tourism Awards recognise excellence and professionalism in our industry. In reviewing your submission, the Judges initially seek clearly documented, relevant answers to each question. However the best entries usually include some additional ingredients including passion, innovation and flair – the ‘wow’ factor! Ideally, the way in which you present your business should encourage a judge to feel that he/she would love to experience your product.

1. **Complete your answer to each question**
   Each part of each question needs to be dissected to ensure that it has been fully answered. Similarly a question might include three components and marks are easily lost when one or more components are not addressed. Don’t forget to read each question very carefully.

2. **State all the key elements of your Business Plan**
   Goals and strategies should be well defined and your submission should indicate a clear understanding of the difference between these elements. Outcomes should be measured where possible – ie. Demonstrate the results achieved. There needs to be a logical and strong link between each element of the Plan.

3. **Convey your marketing activities strategically**
   The marketing section seems to be consistently difficult for many businesses. The question regarding target markets is often not answered clearly. Market segmentation is the key and determines your related activities. Marketing, promotion and advertising are often confused, so it’s important to show that you understand the differences between these terms.

4. **Ensure that you are entering the category most appropriate to your product/experience**
   This can seem a little confusing sometimes, but remember you must be able to demonstrate your eligibility for the category you choose to enter, so please give it careful consideration. If in doubt, contact QTIC for advice before you commence your submission. Otherwise you run the risk of automatic exclusion from the judging process.
5. Don’t be reluctant to mention your competitors
You can really enhance your submission by highlighting your unique selling proposition (USP), but to do so effectively, you must be able to articulate the comparisons between your offerings and those of your competitors. (Keep in mind that this is not about being critical of other businesses, but rather the additional experiences, facilities and value that gives your business the competitive edge.)

6. Think laterally
Make the most of your opportunity to show the judges that you adopt a creative and dynamic approach to your business – that you are thinking beyond ‘the basics.’ For example, risk is not just about OH&S issues, but also the need to mitigate against fraud, IT issues, external market factors and the like; innovation is not about replacing furnishings, but being clever and responsive to the market; sustainability might include food miles; special needs will include disability, but what about group rates; contributing to the industry is not just about attending workshops or participating in promotions, but also includes those voluntary tasks that you might undertake to assist the industry in a broader sense.

7. No appendices or hyperlinks
Remember that your submission must stand alone as appendices are not allowed. This highlights the need to convey all information in a way that is precise and easy for the judges’ to read and understand. Graphs and charts are useful and sometimes provide a welcome break from long, continuous sections of text.

8. Passion
Passion is so important, it’s an idea worth repeating! Convey your commitment through your words and your images - these might include owners, staff and customers as well as experiences, facilities etc. The best submissions are not only about a professional-looking document; they are also ‘up-beat’, capture the judges’ attention and provide a great read!

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**AWARDS CONTACT**

If you have any further questions please contact:

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