

### Spectra Awards Winning Entry Tips

(Adapted from *Tips for Winning a Gold Quill* from IABC/International)

*Tips from Penny Poole, ABC*

Asian Development Bank

Metro Manila, Philippines

#### The Winning Work Plan

A vital point to keep in mind as you are preparing the work plan is that *each section receives an equally weighted score*, so that a single bad or even mediocre score will bring down your average.

**Need/opportunity— This** is where the appropriate background is painted to provide the context for the project – and must be clearly written.

**Audience— If** you list an audience as “the general public” you can be sure you will receive a failing score. Tell the judges how well you know about that group whose behavior your project seeks to influence.

**Goals and objectives— Goals** generally describe what you want to accomplish in the big picture sense. Objectives are measurable and specific targets.

**Time, budget and other resources— Don’t** hide or fudge your budget. If you have a small budget and managed it cleverly and creatively, you will score very well. You will lose valuable points for not including this data.

**Measurement— Show** a clear link between your objectives and your results. You may use anecdotal evidence for your measurement, but you must be specific.

#### The Winning Sample

Label your material to help the judges navigate your entry. Highlight support material, such as audience research, that you would really like the judges to consider. Use sturdy packaging. Your entry may be judged by several people who will unpack and repack it. Presentation counts – treat your sample with the same care you would assembling a fine meal.

#### Other Ideas

Ask a communicator you respect from another industry (who knows nothing about your project) to review your plan for clarity.

## IABC/Chicago Spectra Awards

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### *Tips from Lane Stockbrugger*

Brown Communications Group  
Regina, Saskatchewan

**Focus.** Have a very clear focus in your mind of what you intend to talk about.

**Appendix.** Provide the details, the tables, charts, graphs, news releases, strategy backgrounders and other documents that helped achieve the success. Provide the context to the entry.

**Details.** Leave no stone unturned as you develop your entry. Search and reflect on the project to remember the variables.

**Dialogue.** Talk with your team. How did each member contribute? It will spark the work that went into the project, the successes and the struggles along the way.

**Outsider.** Write it and review your entry as an outsider. What will they need to know to understand the problem you were faced with, and how you addressed it? Have at least one individual review your entry.

**Clarity.** Audiences and objectives must be clear and concise.

**Visualize.** Include visual cues where appropriate that speak to your entry.

**Measurable.** Enter only those projects that have measurable results.

**Timing.** Don't leave the entry to the last minute or even the last week. Once complete, allow 48 hours for shipping to the awards coordinators.

*Tips from Crista Martin,*  
Harvard University Dining Services  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Gold Quill entry is an outstanding challenge and an opportunity to take a hard look at your programs and evaluate them from multiple perspectives. You will have to evaluate them strategically, financially, and emotionally, and justify each viewpoint.

**First:**

Choose a campaign or project about which you are passionate, and let that emotion come into your entry and work plan. It's a real trick to share your enthusiasm and extensive details in a few short pages, so edit and re -edit until you get the tightest, most powerful message you can.

**Second:**

Display lots of examples. For a full campaign, don't leave anything to the imagination. Pick the best samples you have, but display a well-rounded picture.

**Third:**

Have several people read through the entry and check off against the criteria to make sure you've made your argument and provided all the requested information.

**Fourth:**

Consider entering some of the smaller regional competitions. They have very similar entry requirements, and offer a great "bunny slope" before you hit the Gold Quill Hill!

***Gold Luck!***