



On 10 January 2012 IABC hosted two tweetchats for the Gold Quill Awards, where advice, common mistakes, encouragement and resources were provided by a group of former judges, chairs, coordinators and entrants. In case you were unable to attend, here is a recap from the Twitter conversations:

#### **Resources:**

- Hear 2012 Chair Dave Meyer & discuss the program and some benefits of winning via podcast: <http://cafe2go.x.iabc.com/2011/11/21/cafe2go-76-iabc-gold-quill-2012-chair-dave-meyer/>
- IABC offers free mentorship program where entrants are aided by past judges, winners, coordinators. Info at <http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/enter/mentorship.htm>.
- Access Gold Quill Award winning case studies through IABC's online [Discovery](#) library at [http://discovery.iabc.com/browse.php?type=case\\_study](http://discovery.iabc.com/browse.php?type=case_study).
- IABC and Towers Watson presented a FREE webinar 12 Jan, access the recording at [https://us.reg.meeting-stream.com/towerswatsonpennsylvaniainc\\_011212/](https://us.reg.meeting-stream.com/towerswatsonpennsylvaniainc_011212/)
- View sample winning work plans from past years on the Gold Quill web site: <http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/resources/>

#### **Advice:**

- The best entries I've judged took me on a journey through the challenge to solution & result. I understood the issues. @twimtwits
- Just because you don't have a huge budget, you can still enter -- and win. Inspire us with your ingenuity in these tough times. @IABCGQChair
- Don't be afraid to share, in your entry, how this experience has changed you, and your passion for your work. @dmarkschumann
- 2 best ways to gain insight into how to succeed in Gold Quill: 1. Enter (just for the practice even!) 2. Judge! (Local, regional int'l awards) @Jenniferwah
- "delivering comms plan on time, on budget" is NOT a measurable objective! It's your job! @focuscom
- If you're not certain about entering, just have a go at writing a work plan for a start. It's a great exercise in itself. @MelissaDark
- When preparing the entry, write it in reverse, starting with your results - that always keeps me clear and authentic. @dmarkschumann
- When entering GQ ask yourself: did this make a difference? and how it makes a difference NOW! @timtwits

- Looking at each section of the #IABCGQentry: 1. Problem/opportunity. Ask "What difference will it make to the biz if we do/don't do this?" @Jenniferwah
- When starting a project (or #IABCGQ entry!), I ask myself: "What's the action or reaction I want my audience to have?" (to words, project) @Jenniferwah
- Help judges understand your audience and their needs. How did that help you choose comms solution? @gacross
- Love it when an entry dares to admit when something was missed and corrected, that is real life. Ex: entrants who tell us what they knew they should have done (e.g. specific type of research) but couldn't & how they worked around that. @dmarkschumann
- Let us know what is special, unique, daring about the work and how you push the boundaries.
- Don't forget to give the judges context about the company/client. Who are they and what do they do? its relevant and we may not know @gacross
- Objectives work best if framed as "what do I want my audience to think, do, believe or understand as a result of my comms?" @gacross
- Ask a friend/colleague unfamiliar with the project read the workplan. Are strategy, bus value, and measurement clear to them? @SeaToshi
- Manage the limited workplan pages, font size: read instructions carefully, address exactly what they indicate. @SeaToshi
- How to impress the judges: Don't forget the basics, edit your workplan and supporting work samples. More isn't always better. @SeaToshi
- The best entries I've judged took me on a journey through the challenge to the solution and result. I knew I understood the issues. @timtwits
- Can't stress enough about measurement but it's relevant measurement not just hits, print-runs or column inches. @timtwits
- Make sure your work plan and sample match, if you make claims in one judge needs to see it in the other. @timtwits
- Audience matters! Include more (demographics, insights) to reveal if your solution was right one. @Jenniferwah
- Use what it would have cost the company if we hadn't done the comm program as a measurement metric. @PatriciaBurton
- Audience definition requires judges to know how you used what you know about audience to design your solution. @gacross
- Ask yourself: What is the action or reaction I am seeking with this project, these words, this initiative? @Jenniferwah
- Assume the judges don't know your business. Work Plan should give ample context. Ask a "stranger" to read. @SFwordman
- Audits can be a communication process in themselves if the process changes the awareness and need for new behaviors. @gacross
- Cat 16 = management of electronic/digital, Cat 18 = skills. Mgmt vs. execution mostly. How you led vs. what you did @IABCGQChair

- Objectives typically answer the question, what do you want your audience to think, do, believe, understand. @gacross
- Follow the instructions to the letter. @Jenniferwah
- Quality work is essential (Gold Quill Awards represent best comms in the world) but results are essential as well. Need both. @IABCGQChair

### **Common Mistakes:**

- Most common mistake: failing to set measurable objectives! 2nd most common mistake: failing to measure! @focuscom
- One work plan entered in multiple categories. Address unique & appropriate bus value, audience needs, etc. @SeaToshi
- Submitting work for which the measurement is planned, but not yet completed. Submit when metrics are collected. @SeaToshi
- Evaluation "My boss really liked it!" Need specific outcomes! @gacross
- Lack of measurable objectives up front. Lack of audience analysis. @MelissaDark
- It's all about the bells and whistles. Shiny, lovely, creative with no apparent need to fill. @gacross
- Expertly-executed communication that doesn't have any solid purpose or business reason behind it. @MelissaDark
- Mixing up activity with meaningful results 1 million twitter followers / 1000 column inches !=results. How did you help? @IABCGQChair
- Failing to let us inside your mind. @dmarkschumann
- Providing a MASSIVE work sample that is too complex and too difficult to navigate. Quality over quantity! @MelissaDark
- Failing to tell a story, assuming I know the audience, focusing too much on tactics. @dmarkschumann
- 90% of issues = missed directions. @IABCGQChair

### **Benefits:**

- Every entry is judged by a team of world-class professionals, and you get feedback on your entry! @IABCGQChair
- Winning a Gold Quill was a great help to the client in validating project and was good for my consulting practice. @gacross
- When working with clients, the award is a validation for the journey they sponsor; for me, the process is the learning. @dmarkschumann