

**Towers Watson and IABC Webcast:
Become a Legend Through Award-Winning Work
January 14, 2010
Questions and Answers**

1. I'm submitting a program into multiple categories. How many binders of support materials do I submit? One total or one per entry? Thank you.

You need to submit one binder of support materials for each category that you are entering as they are all judged separately across the globe. So, one per entry.

2. If a program can fit into two categories in one division, is it appropriate/acceptable to modify the entries somewhat for each category and then enter in both (obviously with the understanding that you are paying for entries)? Is this looked down on by IABC judges?

You may submit the same entry in as many different categories as apply to that entry. You must tailor your work plan to fit each category and pay a separate entry fee for each category you enter. However, you may use a single entry form to submit your entry to multiple categories. IABC judges do not look down upon this, as they understand that work can fit in many categories. They simply expect the tailored work plan to fit each category.

3. There are also national peculiarities in respect of conditions, regulations, budgets etc. Should we mention/explain them in our entries or should we rely on our judges' international experience?

As we said on the call, insofar as these issues materially affect the submission, then by all means include them. Help the judges to understand the critical success factors for your entry and the relevant context.

4. Technical question: If entry from Russia is in English, should it be sent to the Europe/Middle East Regional Coordinator?

As the entry is in English, please send your entry to the Europe/Middle East Regional Coordinator.

5. Is there a template format to submit a work plan? Or, just free form in MS Word?

There is no template for the work plan. Just make sure you follow the rules for writing your work plan at <http://www.iabc.com/awards/gg/rules/#plan>.

6. Are the entries compared to each other or are they judged based on content and how well the entry follows the guidelines?

The entries are judged against a standard, not against each other.

7. Can the entry be written in point form?

Consider what will best tell the story of your campaign or program – use the headings specified in the Call for Entries brochure; and, if you decide to use bullet points, make them good ones!

8. How are you able to provide evidence in your work sample. Can this be attached as an appendix?

The work sample IS the evidence! Use the work plan to TELL us what you did and the work sample to SHOW us. You should be able to get all the evidence you need into these two elements of your submission.

9. Can you explain more about this: Include work that was produced and measured in 2009. You may also submit work produced before 2009 if the work and/or measurement extended into 2009.

It simply means that you must have carried out at least part of the work done for your submission during the calendar year 2009. So, you may have started a program in 2008 – but as long as it continued into 2009, or the measurement – e.g. a survey- was carried out in 2009, then it is eligible.

10. So, can we submit for a product that was produced for the most part in 2008, if measurement extended into 2009?

Yes, you may submit work produced before 2009 if the work and/or measurement extended into 2009.

11. Our entry is not one that necessarily has measurable results. Does that hinder our chances of getting recognition?

Yes I'm afraid it does. The Gold Quill Awards are about providing evidence of success – that could be quantitative or qualitative evidence, but it must be linked to clear objectives for the work. It doesn't have to be measured in dollars and cents, but there does have to be some indicator to show that you achieved what you set out to do.

12. Is it not important to move the sales, profitability line?

Sure, but that's not the only indicator of success for a communications campaign, or a piece of creative communication. You may want to persuade a specific community that domestic violence is totally unacceptable behaviour; or you may want individuals to react more quickly to a possible stroke; or you may want your customers to buy more of your cheese (all of these are real Gold Quill Awards winning entries).

It is important to move the line if that's what the communication is intended to do. There are lots of other ways that communication can have an impact -- influencing opinion, forwarding a cause, changing attitudes, etc. -- that don't fall under the category of monetary gains. Money isn't the only bar that needs moving, it's just the easiest one to count.

13. If I'm unsure which category best meets my entry, is this an example of how I should use a mentor?

You should consult the category coordinators for the categories you are considering. You will find their contact information at <http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/categories/coordinators.htm>.

14. Will we receive feedback on our entry regardless of whether or not the entry is a winner?

Yes, that is one of the greatest benefits of entering - receiving feedback on your entry. All entries will receive feedback.

15. How long is the judging process and when are the winners announced?

The judging process is two tiered stretching over a few months. Winners are announced in April.

16. With the tremendous cutbacks in staffing and funding due to the current economy, have the "rules of the game" changed in terms of the award process. After all, it's hard to keep up editorial standards when staffing and funding are reduced 50-80% over a 1 year period. How do we build this "fact" into our award submissions?

The rules of the Gold Quill have not, and will not, change as a result of the economy. If anything, it's more important than ever for communicators to prove their worth by accomplishing real results on lean budgets. It's not necessary to have a massive budget to make a big change, and that's precisely the power of good communication. Communicators have a prime opportunity to show the world the value that their talents bring. Doing more with less is the new standard of business. We need to show how we work smarter vs. harder, spend wiser vs. more. So standards have to be maintained whether times are good or challenging. Find out about doing more with less – search online for 'lean communicator'

17. Can you explain what was included in the work sample of for the cheese entry - how much detail is required? Do web pages have to be live or can a screen shot be submitted?

Work samples should include relevant detail for the project -- screenshots of websites, CDs with HTML and video files, or even links to live sites (just make sure the links will be live by the time the judges get a chance to review them!). Entry guidelines are fairly specific as to how much detail can be included, and it varies by category. Just remember that the judges only have a limited time to review your entry -- less is often more. Show the highlights, not the whole story.

18. I have a couple of entries for projects that were quite large (intranet launch, newsletter redesign). We gathered feedback from our employees on every portion of these projects. I feel like I need to get all of these details captured in the Solution Overview section because they were so important to gaining buy-in from our businesses. But how much information is too much? Thank you.

The Gold Quill Awards provides the ideal structure for assessing this question – you can summarise, edit and re-edit, and use graphs and charts to get a lot of information into the work plan. Also download the judges' evaluation forms and use the evaluation questions to 'stress test' your submission. If you answer all the points on the evaluation form, then your information is just right! If you don't, then it doesn't matter if you have too much or too little information – it won't get a winning score.

19. Thank you! Is there any way to view a completed, assembled submission including the work sample?

You can view 2009 winning work plans at <http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/judging/>; work samples are not included.

20. Great stuff... but I'm a little confused about the statement in the case study "Results were more than just numbers — real actions measured" and what was highlighted as demonstrating the results was "site grew to more than 550 fans," etc. Can you elaborate on your key point on that again?

The point made in the case study was that results are more than page views, hits, news releases published, ad dollar equivalencies, etc. Measure results that actually make a difference -- number of fans measures how many people are actively engaged in the fan club, and the qualitative result can be gleaned from quotes from the actual fans' interactions (what they wrote, how they felt, how attitudes changed as a result of the program, etc.). It's not enough to "look busy," you need to actually get people to do something tangible and meaningful to the project.

21. When including telemarketing as an element of a program - what would be required as the sample - is the entire script necessary, or just results?

Great question. If the script was designed to produce specific results, and the figures show that it worked, then it would be valuable to include it in the work sample. Remember, you need to TELL the story of your program in the work plan, and SHOW the judges what you did in the work sample. That should guide your decisions in terms of what to include.

22. Would it be an advantage for us to submit in both our official languages (French and English). In that case, could we have 2 4-pages identical applications, the only difference being the language?

No, there would be no advantage – it's one program therefore one entry. Choose which language you think will best serve to tell the story of what you did and how you measure your success. By all means reference the fact that the program was bilingual in the work plan – it is evidence of commitment to your key audiences.

23. Can you please specify what awards are given at the local level and what awards are given at the blue ribbon level?

Many IABC chapters and regions have local awards programs. Check with your local chapter or region for information. At the international level, IABC offers the Gold Quill Awards. Entries for this program are first judged at a local level across the globe, then finalists are judged for a final review by the Blue Ribbon Panel comprised of international judges.

24. In entering the Creative section, such as writing, how do you apply the Measurement/Evaluation to it?

Creatively! Seriously, you need to think carefully about what indicators there are to show that what you did was successful. Why was the work commissioned? What was it trying to achieve – change of behaviour among key audiences? Enhancing the reputation of your client/company? If so, what can you measure to show that – reader feedback? Web page downloads or views? Cost saving from other work being avoided? And so on.

25. Do you have advice for submissions created by teams? Is it useful to split up the work plan or does a lack of singularity of voice hurt the entry?

Allocate the work however seems best to you in order to get it done on time and to a high standard. Then ensure ONE person is responsible for the final edit to look for consistency of voice.

26. Very basic question...Could you explain how we know which Quill to apply for: Bronze, Silver, Gold?

You are learning about the Gold Quill Awards which are managed by IABC World Headquarters and judged internationally. The Bronze and Silver Quills are put on by local chapters and/or regions.

27. You referred to the Gold Quill templates on the IABC website ... which forms are you referring to? The judging evaluation forms?

You can find helpful forms on the web site.

Evaluation forms and winning work plans:

<http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/judging/>

Rules for writing your work plan:

<http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/rules/#plan>

28. To which category should process work be submitted?

Contact a category coordinator for more information:

<http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/categories/coordinators.htm>

29. Is an entry to the Ovation Awards (Canada's local competition) eligible to be part of ABC accreditation evaluation process, like a Gold Quill entry?

Yes. It will not count as an automatic pass, but you can use the Ovation Award submission as part of the accreditation portfolio process.

30. What if it is an intranet so there is no link?

For intranets or "limited, secured access" sites, provide instructions on how to register for the site, along with an account name or password. If access may be a barrier to evaluation, or if there's a chance the site may change after submission, consider submitting a "Tour of Work Sample" video (of five minutes or less) on a CD-ROM.

31. What if you're working on an internal communications campaign and your web pages are on the Intranet and not available externally?

For intranets or "limited, secured access" sites, provide instructions on how to register for the site, along with an account name or password. If access may be a barrier to evaluation, or if there's a chance the site may change after submission, consider submitting a "Tour of Work Sample" video (of five minutes or less) on a CD-ROM.

32. Can you ever appeal a decision? I submitted an entry a number of years ago. I scored high on meeting and measuring outcomes and on tactics used. The examiner said I did not receive the award because the design was not as modern "as it could have been". This was despite the fact that the campaign more than hit the measurable targets. I was a bit disillusioned and have not entered since. Could I have appealed this?

No, I'm afraid not – the judges' decisions are final. You can, however, re-submit and by the sound of it you should consider doing so because your entry came close to being a winner. If you'd like to discuss this in more detail contact us at recognition@iabc.com

33. I have a project for an intranet launch. It seems to fit in two categories under Division 1 - Employee/Member Communication or Electronic & Digital Communication. Is entering one better than the other?

Consult the category coordinators for these categories. You'll find their contact information at <http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/categories/coordinators.htm>.

34. I'm thinking about submitting a website as my sample, but it's continually being updated - do I need to indicate the updates or do I need to work w/ my IT dept to submit only the content from 2009? Screen shots won't work as there is a video component.

I'm sure you can show the judges what you did by combining screenshots and video components on a disc. Add a link to the live website so that the judges can see the context.

35. In addition to including information about measurement, are we required to actually include the measurement itself - i.e. a printout of survey results? My plan was just to summarize survey results in the work plan.

I guess it all depends on whether you need the full results to demonstrate the success of your work, or whether the summary will do that. But you must include evidence to support the measurement, and it should be tied specifically to the objectives you set.

36. Do regional Gold Quill winners automatically get entered in the national competition?

There are no "regional" Gold Quill Awards. You may be thinking of local awards at the chapter or regional levels (e.g., Silver Quills, Bronze Quills, Ovation Awards, etc.). Entries to these programs do not automatically transfer to the Gold Quill Awards.

37. What about web sites on INTRANET sites re: live links? They wouldn't exist due to firewall, and not possible to give outside special access.

If access may be a barrier to evaluation, or if there's a chance the site may change after submission, consider submitting a "Tour of Work Sample" video (of five minutes or less) on a CD-ROM.

38. If you do not judge works against each other, what happens when there is a tie between two submissions?

Should two entries receive the same winning score, both entries would receive a Gold Quill Award. As we do not just judge the entries against each other, but judge them against a standard, potentially every entry could be a winner.

39. You've mentioned the results measurement several times; we are considering entering in the communication creative - publication design category. Is measurement still an important part of this category? The item we are considering entering doesn't really lend itself to a quantifiable set of measurements.

You do need to show that the objectives you set for the design were met – the indicators could be qualitative or quantitative (or both!). Did you get reader feedback? Did you sell more copies? Did the new design correlate with specific behaviour changes among employees/customers? There must have been a reason for doing the new design, so think through how you would show that the brief was answered.

40. If a web landing page was developed and only used for a limited time and is no longer live - is that a hindrance to the entry?

If it forms all, or a critical part of the work sample, then yes, the judges would need to see it or they would not be able to evaluate it. If it was used only for a fixed period, explain why in the work plan and include screen shots or a disc-based replica of the page in the work sample.

41. When and where will the Gold Quill Awards ceremony be held this year?

The Gold Quill Awards gala at the 2010 World Conference in Toronto will be on Monday, 7 June from 7:30–10 p.m.

42. In a situation where a product (i.e. a web site) targets multiple audiences, would it be acceptable to submit an entry that identifies how that product specifically addressed a need of one audience?

Yes, that is perfectly acceptable. Be sure to demonstrate your understanding of the critical characteristics of the target audience and the tell us something about the rationale for targeting that group and not others. And make sure you've got the measurement tied to your goals and objectives!

43. If our submission/program is linked to the Olympics, are there any regulations or guidelines we should be aware of (so as to stick to IOC guidelines?)

That's a matter for the IOC really, but your entry should be compliant with IABC's ethical policy (available from iabc.com) so you would need to show that you've stuck to IOC guidelines if you are using the Olympic logo etc

44. Does anyone have any "work sample" submissions electronically to view? Thanks.

You can view 2009 winning work plans at <http://www.iabc.com/awards/gq/judging/>; work samples are not included.

45. How to present any unintended additional benefits of a project?

Great question! While the Gold Quill Awards are all about proving that you achieved your intended objectives, life isn't often that simple and serendipity can play a huge role. Make room in your work plan to explain what the unintended benefit was – but don't try to retrospectively fit objectives and measurement to them...

They should be described in section 6 of your work plan, "Measurement/evaluation of outcomes" and called out as extraordinary outcomes.

46. Globally, what is the key role now of internal communications in business, esp. given the hard times?

That is a terrific question, but goes way beyond the scope of the Gold Quill Awards entry and judging process. Many would argue that, given the hard times, internal communications plays a more vital role now than ever. Companies that dismiss employee engagement and retention during a recession (i.e., those that assume employees have nowhere else to go) will be vulnerable to quick departures when the turnaround comes. (And we know there will be

turnaround at some point.) The first employees to leave will be the most productive top performers. Viewed another way, informed and engaged employees are more productive and less distracted by external worries. Internal communications enables them to produce more with less.

Another thought – maybe the key role of internal communications now is to challenge the established way of doing things. Check out John Smythe’s book “CEO: Chief Engagement Officer” which is all about turning traditional organisational hierarchy on its head to drive improved performance.

47. What is the difference between the `customer relations` and `employee/member communication` categories?

Customer relations is for programs aimed primarily at external audiences, and employee/member communication is for internal or membership-based programs.

Entries in these categories can be differentiated based on their audiences. Entries in “customer relations” primarily address and engage external stakeholders (customers), whereas “employee/member communications” primarily address and engage internal stakeholders or membership-based programs (employees).

48. Libel has always been a big impediment to anyone who is in the media. Considering the difficulties one encounter if there are sensitive issues included in a communication and is obviously perceived as a matter of public interest, how can we go about providing information even those that are deemed against anyone for as long as it is the interest of the majority that is protected? Alienating someone is always a possibility since people are either pro or anti and that is precisely, in my view, the point of communicating -- to state clearly ones position.

If I understand your question, you are asking about the responsibility of the individual vs. the general public. Your question touches upon ethics, and I’m reminded of IABC’s Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators (<http://www.iabc.com/about/code.htm>). Specifically, the first article reads, “Professional communicators uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by practicing honest, candid and timely communication and by fostering the free flow of essential information in accord with the public interest.”

49. What would be a person’s liability when it comes to weblogs?

A complete answer to your question should be sought from someone with legal expertise. For communicators, however, it’s wise to remember that any blog is public information and as such, is open to unforeseen consequences—both positive and negative. Accuracy and tact count for a lot.

50. Can measurement of timeliness and accuracy of information be used for the evaluation?

Yes, it should relate to the goals and objectives in the work plan. Why is timeliness and accuracy important for the success of this particular communication program or process? If you can answer that question, it may be great evidence that you had a quality implementation of your plan. Make sure you make the link to the outcome of the timeliness and accuracy. What was your audience then able to do that otherwise would have cost your business.

51. Evaluating the success of entries in the government relations category will often be dependent on what defines success within a particular country’s government system. How does the judging process ensure that entries are evaluated within context in different jurisdictions?

We have judges from around the world that can be asked to clarify cultural issues and regional specific challenges. Many of the judges will have international experience and all are senior level professionals. It is still important for the entrant to set the context for their entry by describing the business need in terms of the internal and external environments that they operate in. Make it easy for the judge to understand why you set the goal and objectives that you did.

52. How did they measure positive blog mentions?

Blog mentions must be linked back to the audience description and highlighted in the objectives. Who said positive things and who was reading it? Would it be an indicator of a change in attitude or influencer of the intended audience? The mention has to be described in the context of why it matters. In the case study used this year the mentions were from and too the key target audience the entrant was intending to influence.

53. Are we limited to just a one-year window? I have a program that is currently moving into its third year ... it was easy the first year but gaining awareness and participation in each of the next two years was / is increasingly challenging ...

You can enter multi-year programs; the rules state that you may submit work produced before 2009 if the work and/or measurement extended into 2009.

We have a two year window that a program may span. (for example, you may submit work produced before 2009 if the work and/or measurement extended into 2009). That being said, the limits of the implementation and plan could be within a single year of a multi-year program. What was the goal and objectives for this year and how can you judge your progress. The entry period may be the focus and you can provide relevant pre-existing information to set the context for the current entry.

54. In the work plan, do I need to reference examples contained in the work sample?

Yes, absolutely! The two elements of the submission must be integrated to achieve the crucial balance of SHOW (the work sample) and TELL (the work plan). I don't think you could achieve that if the work plan did not reference the work sample!

55. How do you measure the effectiveness of, say, an article or graphic published in a magazine or newsletter when all you have to rely on is reader feedback -- and that is not abundant. What would you recommend for measuring this type of communication?

Do a survey, run some focus groups, count observable behaviours that are linked to the objectives set for the article or graphic. Someone must be paying for the magazine to be produced – how do they know they are getting their money's worth?

56. With evaluation of a large scale public education campaign, there are several ways to measure outcomes. However usually a large scale survey measuring attitudes/behaviours pre and post the campaign is the best way. Unfortunately, this survey is planned for after the closing date for entries. So should I mention this in the entry and just focus on other measurements which show the outcomes were achieved.

You have a couple of options here – wait until next year so that you can include the post-campaign survey. Or, if you already have measures to show outcomes were achieved then by all means enter with that data. But don't rely on saying 'and we will measure this next year' because judges won't accept that as evidence of objectives being achieved.

57. Thank you for your session. Will there also be a session on the Excel award - for the Communication Leadership award.

The deadline for the EXCEL Award nominations passed on 8 January 2010. Should you have questions about the 2011 program, please e-mail recognition@iabc.com.

58. In providing written evidence from a client for an agency entry, is the preferred format a letter from the client which will be submitted with the entry?

Yes, please provide a letter from the client stating that you have permission to enter the work.

59. What do you recommend for measurement in the crisis communications category? Especially when the goal may be an absence of media coverage/employee concern?

It always comes back to identifying the need and opportunity. Provide the context for judges about the impact of what was avoided, and demonstrate how you avoided it. The metrics will have to support this (though it is difficult to measure the absence of something) but it's important to show the impact and value of your work.

60. "General: out of interest, how many entries were received worldwide last year?"

Nearly 1,000.

61. In terms of outcomes, what value would you assign to multiplier" effects in the news media

If you're referring to advertising value equivalents, it's not a sufficient indicator on its own to demonstrate results.