



Writing a Winning Award Entry

Aesthetic PR consultant and awards judge Julia Kendrick shares her top tips to maximise your chances of securing this valuable business asset

Award season is here! It's that time of year when aesthetic businesses of all shapes and sizes crack their knuckles and get down to some serious writing. If you're still wondering whether it's worth all the extra time and effort – consider the impact on your trust and credibility by placing the phrase 'award winning' at the centre of your PR and marketing efforts. It not only looks and sounds good, it also translates to real business benefits: attracting new patients, media attention and broader industry recognition and collaboration. In this niche industry, the competition for those all-important accolades is intense. So how can you maximise your chances?

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Having experienced this process from both a development side – creating award-winning entries for myself and for clients – as well as judging other categories and seeing the calibre of submissions, I've got a fairly unique perspective. In this article, I'll be sharing my top seven tips for successfully creating a winning entry. Best of luck!

1. Prep for success

Most people might worry about the writing stage of an award entry and how to succinctly and powerfully reflect their achievements and stand out from the other entries. However, the key to a successful entry is not just snappy language and a well-

crafted pitch, it's showcasing a multitude of evidence to back up your claims. The evidence-gathering process is vitally important and can take quite a bit of time to pull together, so I always recommend making a head start to ensure you can produce meaningful numbers confidently and quickly when the time comes to getting the entry down on paper. To help avoid feeling overwhelmed during the fact-finding process, I suggest dividing and conquering the tasks among your team to ensure you get everything you need within a fixed deadline. Obviously, depending on which award category you're entering, you may require more specific evidence, but there are numerous overarching points which are useful to strengthen and differentiate your entry, such as:

- Clinic growth (number of new patients, percentage increases)
- Revenue growth (percentage increase)
- Staffing increases and training
- Clinic facilities improvements/increases (e.g. additional premises or treatment rooms)
- Number of new treatment offerings
- Mentions in the media (highlight key publications)
- Average number of treatments

Most award categories are focused on performance or results over a limited one-year time period; however, I would strongly recommend not only gathering the specific year-on-year data for the above criteria, but also to demonstrate past year results versus when you first launched. This provides additional power, perspective and gravitas to your entry – showcasing how well you have done overall, not just in the given timeframe.

2. Laser vs. shotgun approach

Before putting pen to paper, take the time to go through each award category and create a shortlist of those you have the best chance of winning. Go through the details, noting what you are being asked to demonstrate in each entry and check: do you have all the evidence you need? Have you accurately tracked your results? Competition is fierce, so a 'shotgun' approach of entering everything with low-quality and poorly tailored entries will just be a huge waste of your precious time (and will also annoy the judges). Whittle it down to JUST those categories of which you have got compelling data, great results and hard evidence to showcase to the judges; a focused 'laser' approach.



3. Hone your USPs

Many awards categories start off by asking you to describe your clinic, your ethos and your overall approach. Far from being a cursory introduction, this is your first big chance to create an impression with the judges so take the time to craft this section carefully, as you will use it repeatedly across your various entries. In addition, this section of the entry can often be used in the promotional activities of the award – being featured on main websites where you are likely to be seen not just by industry peers, but by members of the public as well – so best face forward! The challenge is to weave ‘standard’ information (such as when you were established, number of staff etc.) in amongst a more compelling overview of your unique selling points (USPs). This is the ideal place to reflect your vision and mission, highlighting what truly sets you apart from other clinics and outlining the personal beliefs or values which you incorporate into your business practice. As always with all USPs and business positioning, it’s not the comprehensive list of treatments on offer which matters the most: it’s communicating how you approach your work, what you do differently and the impact you have on your patients that makes a lasting impression!

4. Read the question!

This step is my own personal bugbear when judging entries: nothing riles me so much as when entrants just ignore the question and attempt to ‘cover up’ with irrelevant information! You would be amazed at how many award entries simply do NOT provide the information clearly outlined in each category section and, as a result, earn their place on the judges’ reject pile. If you’ve done your preparation upfront and carefully selected your entries based on what you can substantiate, much of the work here should already be done. It’s easy to fall victim to ‘snow blindness’ if you’ve been spending hours developing multiple entries – so just take the time to go back and double-check that you’ve properly answered each question and, if in doubt, enlist the support of a fresh pair of eyes to make sure you don’t lose out on any ‘easy’ marks due to a misunderstanding.

5. Showcase the evidence

The more you can provide by way of tangible evidence, the more convinced judges will be of your credibility. Key metrics and benchmarks are the backbone

of any winning entry: judges want you to be able to demonstrate success through specific achievements, as well as beautiful patient results. So ensure you are clear: how many calls did you receive, what was the boost in sales (numbers or %), how many people used it, how many new patients did you attract, how much media coverage did you get (and where)? The more you can substantiate, the better. Without tangible evidence, entries will be considered mostly hot air – so if you haven’t already, start crunching those numbers! When it comes to visual results, treatment-oriented entries tend to request before and after images and this is another easy area for judges to dock points. I have seen entries where requested imagery was simply not provided, or was of such shockingly low quality as to be impossible to accurately identify the effects of treatment (bad lighting, use of makeup, different before/after angles – the list goes on!) Adhering to best practice for before and after imagery is critical to supporting a winning entry, so make sure the images are of the highest possible quality to truly showcase the effects of your work.

6. Get others to sing your praises

The key principle of PR is the power of third party endorsements, so use these within your entries. Make sure you have a bank of written or video testimonials from your patients, partners or media to do the talking for you on the impact of your business or the treatment results you’ve achieved. Not only can you include these in your entries, you can repurpose them as great testimonials for your PR and marketing!

7. Polish and prune

Entries which are vastly over (or under) the word count limits are another big pitfall, so take the time to prune and polish your submission for clarity and brevity ahead of time. Double-check the word count for every section and make sure you have encapsulated your points powerfully and concisely. Poorly constructed, waffled entries not only make for boring reading, they may be automatically rejected if there is an online submission process which chops off entries at a given word count. Understandably, this can result in unnecessary last-minute stress if you have to go back and re-work entries, possibly whilst the deadline looms! Bullet points can be a fantastic way to cut down word count and also allow the judges to see your key points in an easy-to-digest format.

Maximising award participation and wins

Without a doubt, creating a winning award entry can be a time-consuming endeavour, but the value and return on investment for you, your clinic and your brand is huge. Every stage of the process can be leveraged within your PR and marketing to drive visibility and audience engagement – from entry, through to shortlisting, finalist status and (hopefully) winning! Each provides a valuable milestone to engage with both new and existing patients, as well as partners and local media – through your clinic blogs, newsletters and social media. This is especially important if there is a required element of public voting to secure your winning status.

A final tip is to take a ‘plan for success’ approach with your entries. Work on the basis that you will win that award and plan your mini-campaign in advance, to reduce the stress and burden on you and the team in the immediate aftermath and to maximise the exposure as quickly as possible. This could include a marketing email to your patient database announcing the win and kick starting a special offer, a special blog post with pictures of the event, a press release to local media, social media posts or advertising. Finally don’t forget to update your website and all promotional materials with that ‘award-winning’, ‘commended’ or even ‘finalist’ message and upload the award logos as soon as possible – you’ve earned it!



Julia Kendrick is an award-winning communications and PR consultant specialising in medical aesthetics. With over 12 years’ experience, Kendrick aims to deliver a unique strategic approach to help aesthetic brands, clinics and practitioners build and grow their reputation, stand out from the crowd and secure tangible business growth. Kendrick is a regular industry media contributor, congress presenter and trainer.