

And the award goes to ...

Kicking off a new series of blogs, Aro PR and Marketing's Managing Director, Billy McKenna, waxes lyrical on why awards aren't simply shiny objects gathering dust in a display cabinet. Instead, if you're strategic about what awards to enter, winning a trophy can add to your business' credibility and help your wider marketing.

No matter the size of your business, winning an industry award is an incredibly powerful means of validating your products and services and showcasing your company's skills, expertise and capabilities. However, application processes are often time consuming and there is a certain knack to navigating a successful path through them.

Find the right one

Over the years' we've helped a number of business apply for a range of awards from EEF Future Manufacturing Awards and UK Private Business Awards to the Queen's Award for Enterprise. The awards circuit can at first appear a bit overwhelming - there are hundreds of awards vying for our attention so we always advise clients that the first step is to do your homework. Research what awards are out there and make sure you apply to one that suits your business and its strategic goals. Go for industry recognised awards. If in doubt maybe look for ones that your competitors or companies that you admire apply for. Also see what awards your industry magazines promote or cover.

Increase your profile

One of the biggest incentives to doing awards is for the recognition it can bring your business. You'll get a bite of the PR cherry if you're shortlisted – and an even bigger portion if you win thanks to all the coverage in trade magazines, social media and the ability to use the winner's logo on your website and other marketing materials. But even if that top prize evades you, you can still get PR mileage by promoting the fact you were an 'award finalist'. Clearly, if you're an award winning business your suppliers and customers will often share your success with their stakeholders as it shows they do business with recognised industry experts, which makes them look good too!

Raise staff morale

Winning, and even being nominated for an award can be incredibly motivating for your employees. To know that all the effort, investment and hard work they've put in over the years' was worth it. For example, a rise of staff engagement was found in 73% of Queen's awards winners.

New opportunities for recruitment

Having the publicity of winning an award can be of great use when looking to recruit new members of your team. Being able to add that your company is awarding winning is always attractive to high quality candidates looking for a job.

Standout against competitors

Winning and even being nominated for an award is a fantastic way to stand out against your competitors to demonstrate your excellence and success. A recent survey from Queen's Award found that 77% of winners had improved the commercial value of the business.

Build network

With most awards, come award ceremonies which are valuable opportunities to network and build your connections with others who are passionate about building and celebrating quality businesses.

To sum up, whilst it might be tempting to apply for every award out there, don't! Be selective. The more worthwhile awards take time to put together successful applications so factor this in. Make sure you have all the information you need so you can build an engaging story to attract the judges' attention.

If you win (or unfortunately do not win) make sure to take time to reflect. Think about what's worked and why or what you could have done better. And don't forget to use any feedback to improve future applications.

Best of luck!

Billy McKenna is the Managing Director at Aro PR and Marketing, a specialist agency for engineering, composites and scientific companies.

Aro's award application service identifies the most relevant industry awards for your business; provides support in drafting the application and manages the process. Aro also provide PR for nominations and wins. For more information visit:

<https://www.aroprmarketing.co.uk/services/awards/>