

Top Ten Tips

The award season is upon us again and at the HPMA we always look forward to this time of year. The Excellence in HRM awards is a key opportunity to recognise outstanding contributions to human resource management and there are 12 categories, including the prestigious 'HR Team of the Year' and 'HR Professional of the Year' competition.

We would encourage as many people as possible to make an application and get recognised for all your hard work and commitment. To help you with this we have produced the following top ten tips for a successful application process!

1. **Answer the questions** – this may sound obvious but ensure that your enthusiasm has not made you go off at a tangent when answering the specific questions on the general application form and that you have told the panel the correct information in each area.
2. **Avoid jargon and acronyms** – the NHS is renowned for its use of jargon and acronyms but these are not always clear to even other NHS staff as often they are locally developed. Also bear in mind that not all of the panel are always NHS staff so do make sure you avoid these.
3. **Keep to the word limits** – it is clear to the panel when entrants have used many more words than the set amount so ensure that you can convey your key points in a clear and concise way.
4. **Think about your audience** - remember the panel do not know you or your organisation so you need to think about your audience and how you convey the initiative or work that has taken place.
5. **Specify the business need** – it is important to ensure that you have clearly described the business need and how the initiative you are describing addressed this need. You may want to include some basic data that sets the context of the initiative e.g. 'There was a 35% vacancy factor in this area'
6. **Quantify the benefit** – this may be by showing financial savings of some kind or other supporting data. However it is important for the panel to know that it has really benefited the organisation. Place any benefit in context for the panel e.g. £100,000 savings sound impressive, but that £100,000 could be 5% or 95% of a budget and one sounds much more impressive than the other!
7. **Focus on Patient/ Client** – many entrants last year failed to demonstrate how their project made a difference to patient/ client care. Sometimes further thought needs to be given to this area but this is a key part of the judging criteria and showing this could make all the difference.

8. **Think big** – show how your initiative could be taken across to the benefit of other NHS organisations. If you are already working in a collaborative way then tell the panel about it or if not describe how it could be transferred.
9. **Show the passion** – it is important to be clear in the words that you use but also make sure that it is clear to anyone reading the entry how exciting the initiative is. Being clear and concise does not mean boring!
10. **Proof read your work** – if your entry is difficult to read, full of spelling mistakes or just does not make sense it will be hard for the panel to judge the content. Sometimes it is helpful to get a colleague who has not been involved in the initiative to read your answers and feed back their understanding to you.

And finally **Good Luck!** As a previous award winner I can tell you personally that there is no better feeling than being selected from your peers for an award and it is more than worth the extra work put into a good application.

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Log onto www.hpma.org.uk/html/excellence.php for an awards flyer and entry form now!