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10 Tips for Embracing Award Opportunities

STEP INTO THE RECOGNITION YOU DESERVE

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Too often, talented and capable women hold back from applying for awards – not because they lack achievements, but because they question whether they're "worthy" of the recognition. If that sounds familiar, you're not alone.

This guide is here to remind you that your work **does** matter – and it **deserves** to be celebrated. These 10 tips will help you feel more comfortable stepping into the spotlight and embracing the award opportunities that can elevate you and your business.

1. Awards Are a Powerful Marketing Tool

Applying for awards isn't just about winning; it's about gaining visibility, credibility, and momentum for your business and your personal brand. Awards offer powerful third-party validation that can boost your profile with customers, funders, and even future board opportunities. **If you meet the criteria, apply!**

The process itself is valuable: it helps you reflect on your journey, gather key accomplishments, and create a story you can use for other awards, marketing materials, and public speaking opportunities. Think of it as an investment in your future and your leadership voice.

2. Collaboration is Crucial

You don't have to go it alone. Nominations often come from the people who already see your value. Reach out to someone in your circle who knows your work and believes in what you do. This could be a past or current client, a mentor, a colleague, or someone you've connected with through a local business group or industry association.



If you're employed, consider speaking with your supervisor, a team lead, or someone in Human Resources. Many people are happy to support your nomination – they just need to be asked! To make it easier, offer to provide details about your work or draft a few bullet points to help them get started. Select your category carefully

Ensure that you fit the category you are applying for. For example, if you are young, award categories for future leaders are a good fit. Once you have decided on a category, tailor your application to the questions in the category.

3. Tell Your Story in Your Own Voice

Your story matters, and it's what will set you apart. Judges aren't just looking for a list of accomplishments; they want to understand who you are, what drives you, and how you've made a difference. Share what makes your journey unique, including the challenges you've faced and the vision that keeps you going. Don't be afraid to be personal and authentic. Imagine you're writing to just one person – help them connect with you, your purpose, and the impact of your work. That's what makes your application memorable

4. Own Your Achievements – Boldly

This is your time to be seen. It's not about bragging; it's about clearly communicating the impact you've made. Take a moment to reflect on what you've accomplished, the challenges you've overcome, and the results you've delivered. Create a clear, confident message that captures your strengths and contributions. You don't need to downplay your success – **you've earned it**, and others will be inspired by it.

5. Be Professional in Your Submission

Your award application is a reflection of your work, so aim for clarity, care, and confidence in how you present yourself. If you're unsure where to start, connect with someone who has experience submitting nominations who can offer helpful tips and encouragement. Before sending it in, take time to review for clarity, typos, and grammar. If writing isn't your strength or English isn't your first language, consider asking someone you trust to review it with fresh eyes. It's not about perfection. It's about making sure your story shines through.

6. Follow the Guidelines Carefully

Award applications often follow a scoring system, so answering each question clearly and completely is key. Take time to organize your thoughts and respond to each section as directly as possible. Even if two questions seem similar, look closely – they're often asking for different aspects of your story. Don't sell

yourself short by skipping over or under-answering a section. The more clearly you align your answers with the guidelines, the easier it is for judges to recognize your impact.

7. Understand What's Being Asked

Every award application is different, so slow down and give yourself the space to really understand what the judges are looking for. Read each question carefully and think about how your story and accomplishments align with the criteria. Plan ahead by setting aside dedicated time to complete your application thoughtfully and thoroughly. Be mindful of details like word limits and formatting – they matter. A well-prepared submission not only reflects your professionalism, but it also makes it easier for your impact to shine through.

8. Learn and Grow from Every Experience

Whether you win or not, seeking feedback from the judging panel or award organizers can be incredibly valuable. It offers insight into how your application was received and where you can improve. Use that input to refine your submission for next time – because each application is a step forward. Once you've written one, you'll have a solid foundation to adapt and reuse for other award opportunities. Don't be discouraged if you don't succeed right away – **keep going**. Your story matters, and with every try, you're getting closer.

9. Celebrate Your Nomination

Being nominated is an achievement worth celebrating – and a powerful tool for building your brand. Share the news through your website, newsletter, social media, and client communications. A press release or a simple announcement can go a long way in boosting your credibility and reminding others of the great work you're doing. Even if you don't win, the nomination itself signals excellence and can open doors to new opportunities, connections, and clients. Let your audience celebrate with you – it's a milestone worth sharing.

Your Story Deserves to Be Told

Awards are more than titles – they are opportunities to acknowledge your growth, your courage, and your contribution. Even if you don't feel ready, the very act of applying can be a powerful step forward. So take that step. Share your story. Apply with pride.

You are more than worthy and the world needs to see it.

