Podcast #052
How to write a business awards application

Hi listeners and welcome back to the Marketing Menu podcast with Liz & Nicky.

Hello listeners! So this week we're going to be talking all about how to write an awards application because there's a bit of an art to this, isn't there Liz?

There really is! Listeners may have tuned into our podcast #024 when we talked about why entering awards is good for business marketing, but I think it's worth reiterating why.

Yes, it's definitely worth a listen if you're in any doubt about how awards can benefit your business. It's a really brilliant way to raise awareness, even if you are only shortlisted, you don't have to be a winner, because the follow on publicity from a nomination through to the final can obviously be great PR in terms of getting you really noticed. I think it's also important to say that awards are available whether you're starting out or if you're an established company as well.

There seems to be an award for everything.

We tried to do a bit of research, didn't we? We did find one link which listeners may find useful. If you are just thinking about this, you could hop over to awards-list.co.uk where they detail more of the sort of industry awards and national awards, but it's a good starting point. What would you say for listeners who want to discover awards in their area?

Checking your local Chamber of Commerce is quite a good starting point. Your local paper because quite often they'll announce that an awards event is about to take place. Whoever's organising the awards will do a bit of pre-publicity and say, 'right, get your applications in'. So always worth checking the local newspaper and any networking groups and, like you say, even being shortlisted is great for publicity. Quite often they'll give you the logo for the awards to display on your website or on your social media so you can make a big thing about it.

And it's just giving you something else to say.

Absolutely. So what are the do's and don'ts of filling out an application?

Well, I think the first rule is to read this very carefully, the application that is, to make sure you really are going qualify and that you're applying for the right award relevant to you and your experience to date.

That's a good point actually. There's no point in spending hours putting an application together only to find out that you don't actually qualify in that category, particularly if someone's nominated you and then it's up to you to submit the formal application, which has happened to clients of mine.

That happens quite a lot, doesn't it? You get nominated by somebody else, you think ' I never had any idea I was going to be drawn into that' but 'you know, get in there, gets involved. So also check when the deadline is in order to make sure that you have plenty of time to fill in this critical piece of paper so you're going to do yourself justice rather than rushing through it.

A lot of applications actually give you a word count for each question. Now, there can be a tendency to be a bit British and try not to show off, but this really is the place where you need to blow your own trumpet and use as much of the word count as you can. That's what the judges are looking for.

It's almost like a job application in many respects? You have to sell yourself and you can't afford to be reticent about that. Don't assume that the judges are going to be looking you up online to see what it is you do or what your social media accounts are or anything of that nature because they may well have heard of you, but you have to tell them. So don't be shy about coming forward.

And don't assume. Actually, if someone else has nominated you, ask them why and use their words in the application as a testimonial.

Oh, I love that. That's great. That's another way of collecting testimonials too.

I was recently a judge for some business awards and I was amazed at how little some of the applications said about themselves and it was just a wasted opportunity. Again, I think maybe there was a tendency that they thought, 'oh, they'll know who we are' but you have to assume the judges don't know.

So this is a follow-on from reading that application through. You do need to read each question very carefully and answer what it asks, you need to play the game, in many respects, it's a bit like an exam question. It may sound obvious but your answers should address each point. So if they also have information on the awards website with what they're looking for and their criteria, for example, make sure that you include the answers directly and relate that back to the application process.

And finally, be honest, don't be tempted to exaggerate or say something about your business that isn't absolutely true. You will get found out and then you will lose credibility.

So what would you say are the top three tips for listeners when completing an awards application.?

1. Check the application that you actually qualify 2. Make sure you know the deadline date and get the application in by the deadline date and 3. use as much of the word count as possible to sell yourself.

Great. So I'm going to add a fourth one. I'd say give it a go. When I helped a client select somebody for the award, everybody around that table did not believe they were worthy. What struck me is even if you don't think you are worthy, you will be up against people who have exactly the same considerations as you. So be brave and give it a go. So that's great stuff. So tune in next week listeners, and we're going to have some more marketing tips. In fact, we are going to be concentrating on LinkedIn throughout the next month.

We've got a four-part podcast series to bring to you, which is all about the application of LinkedIn and how to make it best work for you and your business.

Sounds fantastic.   Until then, it's goodbye from me, Liz Gordon.

And goodbye from me, Nicky Matthews.