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What makes a winning submission for IFMA Awards of Excellence?

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Each May, IFMA Boston celebrates the best practices and exemplary individuals within the A/E/C industry with our Awards of Excellence program. Over the past ten years we have awarded more than 80 awards and reviewed hundreds of submissions. As we kick off this 11th year of the Awards of Excellence program we thought we would give you some insight on what makes a winning submission.

In reviewing the winning submissions over the past couple of years there are several trends that we found, and thought we would share them with you.

A Book is Not Necessary

Over the years, many have felt that more is more, when really less is more. The winning submissions have been as short as 500 words and as long as 1,500, but the average length of the written submission is 800 words-it's more about packing a punch within those 800 words! Provide a brief history of the client and/or project-set the stage. And then the majority of the winners have broken down their submission into parts, i.e. history, challenges, process, results, etc.

State the Challenges

Every project, regardless of its size and type, has a set of challenges and specific client goals. Outlining these goals and illustrating the process to the solution of these challenges has proven successful for our winners in the past. Also, keep in mind that these challenges should be focused on the space, its usage and the workforce/users, as opposed to aesthetics.

Can You Measure It?

These awards are facility management based, so while many of the winners have striking spaces with beautiful details, it's the measurable results about the space and the users of the space that matter in the submissions. Were you able to reduce square footage, provide energy savings, implement a new way of working, experience cost savings, increase productivity, etc. If you can measure it, the judges want to see it!

Did Someone Say

Communication?

A steady trend in the submissions is communication. How was it utilized in the success of the project? Did you implement a new way to communicate throughout the project? How did you engage the client and/or the users in the process?

Anecdotes

In focusing on the details, don't forget to interject some anecdotes and stories throughout the submission. It has tended to help the judges see deeper into the project, its team, and the final result.

Were They Happy?

Was the client happy with the process and/or end result? If so, include testimonials. How better to illustrate the success of the project than from the client itself.

Supporting Documents

Across the board, the winners in the past have utilized all five photo uploads. It helps provide a visual to the written submission. It also is necessary for the Awards presentation the night of. Many of the winners have also utilized the additional document uploads. This can be used for organizational charts, metrics, schedules, drawings, schematics, etc. And lastly, we have found a trend in walk through videos over the past couple of years. If you have a video of your project, provide a link to it within your written submission.

Don't Make it Fancy

While having an online submission system is great for 2 a.m. uploads and easy judging, it has limitations in its formatting capabilities. The more formatting you have in your submission (bolding, varying fonts/sizes, indents, etc.) the more difficult it is for the judges to read. To make it easy for the judges, try to keep your formatting to a minimum—they are interested in what you are saying, not how you are formatting it.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Is there a cost of submission? No, there is no cost to providing a submission to the Awards of Excellence.

Do I have to be a member to submit? Anyone can submit a nomination for a project and/or a person for our individual awards; however, anyone that is nominated for an individual award must be an IFMA Boston member in good standing.

What is the deadline? The Call for Nominations is released in the last week of February and the deadline is March 26th. This provides the judges time to review the submissions, ask for clarifications, meet to determine the winners, order the physical awards, etc.

When is the Awards of Excellence event? This year, the event will take place at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel on Thursday, May 22nd.

Will I be notified ahead of time if I've won? In the past we have notified our individual award winners so that they are sure to be in the audience the night of the event; however, we do not notify the best practices winners ahead of time. All best practices winners are announced the night of the event.

What are benefits of submitting a project? Once a project has been nominated, the submission is reviewed by the judges and is eligible for an award, but they are also used to create an article about all of the nominees for the New England Real Estate Journal and the IFMA Boston blog. The night of the event, all nominees, with some project details, are announced the night of awards and visuals of the projects are displayed throughout the cocktail reception and dinner.

May I nominate more than one project? Yes you may.

May I nominate a single project in more than one category? There are instances when a project has a large sustainability component, but also tells a compelling project story. If that is the case, you may nominate the project in the suitable sustainability category and in the small, medium or large category. If you do this, you need to submit it twice and mark the appropriate award category for each. It also would be appropriate to tailor each of the written submissions to the particular category.

What is the difference between the nominator and the nominee? The nominator is the

individual/company that is submitting the nomination. The nominee is the individual or company that is being nominated and will be the individual/company listed on the physical award. Typically the "owner" of the project is nominated; however, a team member may nominate themselves for the award. So be clear in the nominee cells as to who should receive the award, and have their name announced the night of, if the submission were to win.

Who should I list as team members? We know that it takes a village to plan, execute and complete any project and thus many to thank in the process. On our submissions form we have cells available to list all of the major team members that took place in your project. These team members will be incorporated into the awards program the night of.

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