

NAGC Blue Pencil and Gold Screen Awards: Top Ten Tips for Coming Out a Winner!

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Blue Pencil & Gold Screen Award Winner

1. Follow the instructions on the entry application. If there is a requirement to submit three copies of the same publication along with three copies of the completed entry form, then do just that.
2. Be sure that you are submitting your entry into the correct category. An incorrect category selection may delay your entry from being judged or even void your entry entirely.
3. In your entry description and if applicable, highlight how you “did more with less.” Be specific by citing quantities, percentages, staffing challenges, and time restraints.
4. Keep your statements trim and to the point. Eliminate all information that does not illuminate your entry. And, in this writer’s opinion, bullets work best. They are easy to grasp and speed the evaluation process. Judges normally face evaluating more than 500 entries each year. Your entry form preparation can facilitate that process and put you a step ahead.
5. Define your audience. Who did you write this for? Why? Is this something your audience needs? How do you know?
6. What is the purpose of the publication or audiovisual program? Is it intended to change behavior (e.g. smoking cessation), to inform (e.g. latest rules on Medicare), or promote government services (e.g. U.S.A. Jobs Web site)?
7. Was your effort successful? For some reason, this seems to be the piece of information that is least likely to be provided. However, this piece of information can easily make the difference between winning and not winning an award. Present some evidence of your entry’s success. This may consist of statistical data, percent changes, Web site page views, and even anecdotal information. Find something to say to highlight the success of your entry.
8. If your entry is a print publication, is it also available in PDF format on your agency Web site? If it isn’t, think it over. Simply put, you will reach a much wider audience at virtually no cost by doing so. If it is on the Web, add this piece of information to your entry description.
9. What is innovative about your entry? How can you differentiate it from the other 150 entries in your category?
10. Include your entry fee with your application. Enclosing a check, money order, purchase order, or credit card information will assure your entry makes it into the competition within the official deadline. This is the one item in your entry package for which you need provide only the original!