HOW-TO GUIDE FOR IABC AWARDS
The Midas Touch

How to prepare a Virtuoso Award Award entry for:

Division 1: Communication Management
Division 2: Communication Research
Division 3: Communication Training and Education

Note: This guide was developed by IABC International for the Gold Quill Awards and for use by IABC regions and chapters. This version has been customized for IABC London's Virtuoso Awards.

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IABC AWARDS

IABC's awards programs are symbols of excellence in strategic communication recognizing smart thinking, flawless execution and proven results. Whether policy-based or marketing-driven, award winners deliver meaningful work that contributes to business results and aligns to IABC's Global Standard to ensure consistency and credibility resulting in building the reputation of the communication profession.

The **Global Standard** is defined by communication professionals around the world embracing a shared career purpose and six core principles as the building blocks of their work. Informed by a passion for engaging audiences with strategic communication, the purpose and Principles focus our work and form a global standard. Applying that standard enables us to cross all borders, align with diverse cultures and effectively serve organizations of all types and sizes.

IABC London's Virtuoso Awards showcase communications excellence in Southwestern Ontario and highlight how global standards are upheld by communicators in our region.

This How-To Guide shares what evaluators look for in an award-winning entry and how to complete an award-winning entry. With this guide, you'll be able to match your work against the criteria used by our trained evaluators.

The Basics

You can enter your work in one of four divisions and 25 categories. The award divisions include:

- Communication Research Management
- Communication Management
- Communication Education and Training
- Communication Skills

You may enter work in multiple divisions and categories; however, each work plan must be customized to the category description. Please read these descriptions carefully to determine which category or categories best fit your project.

The work plan reviews six sections of IABC's strategic communication planning model against IABC'S Global Seven-point Scale of Excellence:

- Business need/opportunity
- Stakeholder analysis
- Goals and objectives
- Solution overview
- Implementation and challenges
- Measurement and evaluation

Each entry consists of two components: The work plan and the work samples.

- **Work Plan**
  - A work plan is like an executive summary of your communication strategy. This is your

opportunity to tell your story and point out the strengths of your work

- o The work plan must be presented using the major headings found in the score sheet. You are allowed up to four (4) pages for the work plans.
- o Margins must be at least half an inch (1.27 cm) on all sides, and fonts may be no smaller than 10 points. Work plans exceeding the maximum length will be disqualified.
- o Make sure to follow the directions and answer all questions clearly and concisely.
- o Complete the required information including your name and organization, the division and category that you're entering, and the title and time period of the entry. A short description of the project must also appear. These elements are not scored, but evaluators keep them in mind when considering the context of the project.
- o [See the work plan template](#) to see formatting requirements. It is a good idea to use this template as your starting point.

- **Work Sample**
    - o For all divisions, the entry must include at least one and up to 5 (five) work samples that are a representative copy of the materials that support your project.
    - o If no work samples were included, the entry will be disqualified.
    - o Make sure to organize/label your work samples to help evaluators know what project elements they are reviewing.

- **Scoring**
    - o A score of 4 is professionally sound and appropriate work for a communicator.
    - o To achieve a score of 5, the work must truly stand above average.
    - o To achieve a score of 6 the work must be innovative and achieve significant business results.
    - o To achieve a score of 7, the work must be extraordinary, something that resets the bar for the highest level of communication.
    - o Within this Guide **you'll find rubrics for each section.** The performance dimensions on the rubrics represent the IABC Seven-point Scale of Excellence and are by which the evaluators base their scoring. The rubrics explain what criteria is needed to achieve each of the seven points.
    - o **To win an Award of Merit, an entry must score between 5.0 and 5.11. To win an Award of Excellence, entries must score between 5.12 and 7.0.**
    - o Best of the Best awards are given to the top scoring entries in each division. In order for a Best of the Best to be awarded, there must be at least two entries in the division that have earned an Award of Excellence.

Eligibility

For full eligibility requirements, please visit the Virtuoso Awards website.

All entries must align with IABC's Code of Ethics.

You must have direct involvement in the work that you're submitting.

Why Enter the Virtuoso Awards?

Whether you win an award or not, the program offers an array of benefits to all entrants:

- Gain industry recognition for excellence in communications.
- Profile industry innovation and best practice.
- Open up speaking and publishing opportunities.
- Build your personal reputation as a thought leader.
- Enhance the reputation of your team and organization, both internally and externally.
- Build a business case to fund a key initiative.
- Inspire your team. Bring them together to produce show-stopping work and share the glory when it's complete.
- Challenge yourself to new heights of innovation, creativity and strategic thinking.
- Build a portfolio of work that opens doors to new opportunities.
- Get feedback from highly qualified communicators.

Questions? Please email iabclondonawards@gmail.com for answers.

MEET THE SEVEN-POINT SCALE OF EXCELLENCE

IABC sets the award scoring criteria based on the IABC standards of excellence. Performance dimensions within each criterion represented by a question are assigned to a point on the IABC Seven-Point Scale of Excellence. The criteria and performance dimensions align to the domains, tasks and knowledge used in the Global Communication Council's certification program.

7	**Outstanding:** An extraordinary or insightful approach or result.
6	**Significantly better than average:** Demonstrates an innovative, strategic approach, takes all elements into account and delivers significant results.
5	**Better than average:** Demonstrates a strategic approach and aligns the communication solution with the business need to deliver meaningful results.
4	**Average:** Competent approach or results, professionally sound and appropriate.
3	**Somewhat less than satisfactory:** Several key elements that are critical to the strategy or execution are missing, incorrect or underrepresented.
2	**An inadequate approach or result:** A significant number of critical elements are missing.
1	**Poor:** Work that is wrong or inappropriate.

The awards score sheets provide information about how scores are weighted for each section.

DIVISION 1 COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

The Communication Management division covers projects, programs and campaigns that are guided by a communication strategy. Entries to this division can be submitted by any type of organization, from governments to retail companies to services such as utilities and health care. Entrants must demonstrate how their project applied a full range of planning and management skills, including research, analysis, strategy, tactical implementation and evaluation. Entries may include a wide range of communication materials.

HOW TO PREPARE A WORK PLAN

SECTION 1: The Business Need or Opportunity

Evaluators need context to assess whether the communication solution supports the business goals. Without the relevant background information, it's difficult to determine whether the strategy addresses the right issues and audiences. A good description of the business need linked to the communication opportunity sets the stage for the rest of the work plan.

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant explain the context for the entry by clearly establishing the business need and the related communication opportunity? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Explain the business and communication environment including specific challenges that have occurred?
- Align the communication/research/training opportunity and the business need by explaining how the project helped the organization?
- Use research to substantiate the need and inform the direction of the communication strategy?

How this section is scored

- It must be evident that the communicator has a clear understanding of the business needs and organizational mandate.
- It should be clear why the project was carried out.
- It should solve a problem, fill a need, or help to leverage an opportunity.
- Ideally, the need was identified by formal or informal research, and communication work positively influences business performance, now or in the future.

Avoid:
- Inclusion of generalizations and vague needs such as, "Management thought it would be a good idea."
- Assumed needs such as producing a newsletter because the audience needs information.
- Providing needs that don't support the business of the organization.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Clearly define and demonstrate an understanding of the business need.
- Speak to how the opportunity was identified and why it matters to the business.
- Explain how the communication/research/training project addresses the need.

- Provide enough context about the organization and its environment so that it's clear how the program contributed to business success.

Entries are scored up for:
- Formal or informal research that demonstrates the need.
- A clear explanation of specific changes or challenges that may have occurred.
- A multi-faceted explanation of the strategic alignment and why it matters to the business or how it will make a difference.

Entries are scored down if:
- There isn't an explanation of how the project will help the organization.
- The need is assumed.
- There isn't enough information about the organization and its business goals to allow evaluators to fairly evaluate the solution.

Section 1: Business Need and Communication Opportunity

7 **Insightful, outstanding results**	6 **Innovative, significant results**	5 **Aligned, meaningful results**	4 **Professionally competent execution and results**	3 **Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	2 **Inadequate, significant elements missing**	1 **Poor, wrong**
Multi-faceted explanation of how the need is strategically aligned to the business, stakeholders, industry/profession, and community The data supporting the need comes from more than one source Thorough research of business need includes history, current situation, size and scope show significant understanding of situation and how to proceed with solution(s)	Superior explanation of the current business state including challenges and urgency driving the communication opportunity Superior explanation of how the opportunity addresses the need A thorough explanation of research, benchmarking and analysis of the business communication environment against the needs and opportunity	Business needs are clear and strategically defined based on mission, values, goals, and brand Opportunity aligns to the organization's strategic direction, key performance indicators and business need Clear explanation of how opportunity positively impacts business performance now or in the future Challenges facing the business are explained The need is identified through formal or informal research. Research methodology is appropriate	The business needs are clearly defined and demonstrate an understanding of what they mean to the business Speaks to how the business need was defined Speaks to why the opportunity matters to the business Speaks to how the opportunity helps the business Speaks to how the business need and communication opportunity were identified	The business need is not well defined It is not clear why the project was undertaken Not clear how need and opportunity were defined Communication opportunity is not aligned with the business need Opportunity is generalized or vague such as management thought it would be a good idea	There is no background on the organization and its business goals to set the context The business need is assumed	No explanation of the business need No explanation of the communication opportunity No explanation of how need or opportunity identified

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SECTION 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Effective communication doesn't occur until the audience receives and understands the message. The work plan must demonstrate an understanding of the audiences. If the entrant doesn't explore the audience preferences, attitudes, demographics, psychographics or other characteristics, it's difficult to determine whether objectives, messages, approach, media or channels are on target.

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant define, segment, and analyze the critical characteristics of the audience in relation to the business need? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Share relevant audience characteristics such as prior knowledge, education, geography, demographics, psychographics, preferences, attitudes, opinions, motivations or issues?
- Include research that identifies the characteristics, mindset, preferences and needs of the audience?
- Use this research to provide insight to the strategy?
- Discuss how relevant factors will influence the communication strategy and tactics?

How this section is scored

Audience analysis should be based on formal or informal research. Look for information about demographics, psychographics, mindset, what the audience thinks and why. Entrants must show that they've taken the audience's needs, wants, preferences, opinions and behaviors into account, and that they've used the information to design their program. The better the entrant describes the audience, the higher their score will be.

Avoid:
- Making vague assumptions such as "We thought they might like . . ."
- Stating an audience collectively with no identifying characteristics such as the general public.
- Stating characteristics or behaviors that seem irrelevant to the project or audience.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- List audiences (primary, secondary and tertiary if appropriate), and describe their characteristics, preferences, and needs in enough detail to show how your understanding led to choices of strategy, tactics, media and channels.

Entries are scored up for:
- Research that defines the audience characteristics and needs (formal research is best, but informal analysis can be cited).
- A discussion that shows how the audience is linked to strategy and tactics.
- Comments about relevant factors, such as prior knowledge, education, geography, psychographics, motivations, opinions, understanding, and other issues.
- Thorough explanation of how audience research influences the solution.

Entries are scored down if:
- The audience isn't defined.
- Broad audiences such as employees or the general public are listed without defining needs or characteristics.
- Audiences are listed but no analysis is provided.
- An opportunity to segment and target specific audience groups is missed.
- An obvious audience in relation to the defined need is missed.
- The wrong audience is identified based on the defined need.
- There are vague, unsupported assumptions about audience needs.

Section 2: Stakeholder Analysis

7 Insightful, outstanding results	6 Innovative, significant results	5 Aligned, meaningful results	4 Professionally competent execution and results	3 Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing	2 Inadequate, significant elements missing	1 Poor, wrong
Truly unique approach to audience analysis that raises the bar of the professional standards	Audience segmentation clearly separates groups and identifies appropriate characteristics

Clear explanation of how the audience characteristics influence the solution

Thorough explanation of how audience research leads to decisions within project

Formal research conducted to define audience characteristics | Superior explanation of characteristics allow appropriate decisions on strategy and tactics

A description demonstrates how the audience is linked to strategy and tactics

Informal or secondary research defines audience characteristics and needs

Speaks to how audience research leads to strategy and tactics

Audiences segmented in way that influences solution | Audience characteristics and mindset analyzed in relation to the communication opportunity

Audiences are listed with characteristics and needs that lead to choices of strategy, tactics, media, and channels

Speaks to how audience(s) and characteristics identified

Appropriate research methodology | Audiences are listed with vague, unsupported assumptions about characteristics

Characteristics included are irrelevant to the project or audience

Misses an obvious audience in relation to identified need

Inappropriate research methodology | Broad publics or stakeholder groups listed without defining needs or characteristics

Wrong audience identified based on need

No mention of audience research | Audiences not listed |

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SECTION 3: Goals and Objectives

The ability to set meaningful, measurable objectives that are relevant to the business need is critical to measure the success of the program. Effective work that delivers results helps to create value and build credibility for the value of communication as a primary business driver. **The answer to this question is critical, because poor objectives will lower the score in other parts of the evaluation**.

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant set measurable objectives that are relevant to the business need and will measure the effect of strategic communication on the business? To what extent does the entrant:
- Distinguish between objectives, tactics, and an approach to the issue?
- Align the communication goal and objectives with the business need?
- Establish measurable, relevant objectives that are stated as communication outcomes?
- Align objectives with the stakeholder analysis and the business need?
- Ensure that objectives will produce an effect on the stated business needs?

How this section is scored

Goals and objectives must be aligned with the business needs identified, and **stated in measurable terms as outputs and outcomes.** If you only state objectives that are output-based the highest score you will earn is 3.5, providing that the objectives set are in direct relationship to the business need.

Goals generally describe what you want to accomplish in a broad sense. Objectives are measurable and set targets. Progress must be reported in the Measurement section. Objectives clearly define the desired outcome, or what success will look like. They are:
- Measurable in quantity, time, cost, percentages, quality or some other criteria.
- Realistic, meaningful and believable.
- Aligned with the needs of the business.
- Stated from a communication perspective.
- Can be a combination of output-based statements (volume, increases), and outcome-based measures (attitudes, opinions, behaviors and business results).

Avoid stating objectives that:
- Don't seem to flow naturally or logically from the goal or need.
- Seem to be a long shot.
- Seem worthy and measurable, but don't address the need.
- Are vague, irrelevant or not measurable such as, "Our objective was to win the hearts . . ."
- Are task-based tactics or process-based (stage a special event) rather than results-based.
- Are too numerous.
- Aren't aligned with audience or business needs.
- Are numerical but not substantiated with research.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- State an overall big picture goal (one or two) that doesn't need to be stated in measurable terms.
- State specific measureable, meaningful objectives demonstrating the effect of communication on the business.

Entries are scored up for:
- Clearly stated goals linked to the business objectives and the identified need.
- Objectives that are stated in terms of impact on the business and the target audiences.
- Objectives that are outcome-based and likely to deliver meaningful results to the business.
- Insightful approaches to setting strategic goals and objectives

Entries are scored down if:
- Objectives are production or deadline-focused, or based on process (tactics) such as "produce a newsletter."
- Objectives are not related to the problem identified.
- There are no measurable objectives.
- There are too many (unfocused) or soft objectives that are not supported by research. For example, the objective states "Increase readership by 1 percent" but the increase is not measured and mentioned in the work plan.

A special note on Communication Management objectives

Output and outcome objectives

Output-**based objectives** measure volume or increases against media vehicles and communication channels like website visits, articles distributed, ads produced, meetings held, content analysis, blog posts, tweets, downloads of publications and so forth.

Examples:
- News media will carry 100 stories.
- The publication will be downloaded 10,000 times per year.
- The number of visits to the website will increase by 15,000.

Outcome-**based objectives** measure what the audience will gain by way of awareness, understanding, recall, different perceptions, and quantifiable change in attitudes, opinions and behaviors. Was the message heard? Was the audience engaged? Did they read the information? How many phone calls or requests for information were received? Did the communication strategy influence the audience to buy something—either a product or an idea? Outcome-based objectives have a greater impact on the business need.

Examples:
- Audience awareness of the product will increase from 10 percent to 50 percent.
- Employee understanding of the business goals will increase from 25 percent to 65 percent.
- Positive perception of the organization will improve from 30 percent to 50 percent.
- Sixty-five percent of employees will actively practice the customer experience standards daily.

- Product sales will increase by 10 percent and market share by 2 percent.

Tactics, approaches, and supporting strategies are often confused with objectives. These elements describe the vehicles, channels and activities used to achieve results, and are reported in the Solution Overview or Implementation and Challenges sections.

Examples:
- Redesign the employee newsletter.
- Stage a town hall meeting.
- Create a new social media campaign.
- Stage a special event.
- Distribute the brochure to 15,000 customers.
- Conduct training session

SMART Objectives

The SMART formula can help you determine whether the objectives are sound, and while this process is not the only way to evaluate the strength of objectives, it is a good guideline.

Specific: Describes a desired outcome
Measurable: Quantified as an output, outtake or outcome
Achievable: Challenging but within the range of influence
Relevant: Contributes to business goals in a meaningful way
Time-framed: Includes a completion date, if appropriate

Section 3: Goals and Objectives

7 **Insightful, outstanding results**	6 **Innovative, significant results**	5 **Aligned, meaningful results**	4 **Professionally competent execution and results**	3 **Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	2 **Inadequate, significant elements missing**	1 **Poor, wrong**
A thoroughly explained and insightful approach to setting strategic goals and objectives leading to outstanding business results	Appropriate objectives are segmented by audience "Stretch" goals and objectives set that are attainable, yet challenging Explains how all stated, measurable objectives are aligned to business need Targets stated for objectives are based on research or benchmarks with a clear explanation	Objectives stated using the SMART formula Objectives are outcome-based and likely to deliver meaningful business results Goals are clearly linked to the organizations mission, values, goals, strategic direction and brand	States overall big picture goal(s) – do not need to be measurable. Specific outcome-based, measurable, meaningful objectives appropriate for the business need and category entered Objectives demonstrate the impact of communication on the business Objective targets are realistic	Understanding of goals, objectives and tactics not demonstrated Objectives production, deadline-focused, or based on tactics such as produce a newsletter Objectives all output-based Objectives do not include preset targets to indicate success Objectives not realistic or achievable	Objectives not measurable Section 1: Business need and communication opportunity doesn't provide any detail to evaluate if goals and objectives are appropriate Objectives do not focus on the identified goal(s) or business need	No goals or objectives

SECTION 4: The Solution Overview

The solution overview offers insight into how you approached the project. Looking at the communication environment, business and audience needs, and relevant research, the evaluator should be able to easily determine whether and how the information informed the strategy.

Evaluator questions

Given the business need and audience analysis, how effective is the communication approach? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Demonstrate strategic thinking?
- Clearly explain how the business needs, audiences and objectives are aligned with the strategic and/or creative approach, tactics, vehicles, media and communication channels?
- Demonstrate that the audience analysis was taken into account when developing key messages for each group identified?
- Provide an executive summary of the tactical execution plan listing the audience, tactics and timeline?
- Demonstrate that the communication solution is aligned with the business needs?

How this section is scored

Evaluators look for a summary of the solution, the logic that supports it, and details about how the plan was implemented to assess how well you demonstrated strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.

Ask yourself:
- Did I discuss the approach and the process, and is it well thought out and implemented?
- Are key messages defined? Are they appropriate?
- Did I define what is relevant to the audience and likely to trigger a response?
- Did I discuss why I chose particular tactics, media and distribution channels?
- Is the strategy aligned with the business needs?

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Describe how the plan was developed and implemented.
- Explain the entrant's rationale and strategic thinking.
- Include key messages and a high-level tactical implementation plan.
- Be aligned with the business need.

Entries are scored up for:

- Well-explained rationale linking audiences and objectives to tactics and vehicles.
- Sound explanation supporting choices, which may include evaluating other options.
- Discussion of the links to business needs.
- Inclusion of stakeholder input.
- A plan that is clearly appropriate.
- Highly creative or innovative approach.
- A summary of the tactical implementation plan listing the audience, key messages, tactics or communication vehicle and timeline.

Entries are scored down if:

- The plan fails to explain what was done or why.
- The plan doesn't seem likely to achieve the objectives.
- Presents a dated approach to a standard communication problem.
- Key messages are missing.
- The plan doesn't address the business need.
- The tactical implementation plan is sparse or missing.

Section 4: Solution Overview

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Solution increases the highest level of professional standards of creativity, innovation or resource utilization Thorough explanation of potential for outstanding results An effective communication solution not heard of before	Unique and effective approach to meet business need Key messages well thought out, creatively stated, and linked to audience segment Explanation of potential for significant results Explanation of how scarce resources to produce significant results Explanation of how the solution is likely to deliver results for multiple business needs Demonstrates innovative approach to collaboration or facilitation Addresses solutions for potential ethical issues	Thorough explanation of how solution links to business need, audiences, and objectives Key messages aligned to audience <u>and</u> organization's business priorities Stakeholder input included Solution is highly likely to achieve stated objectives Summary of tactical plan lists audience, key messages, tactics Explains appropriate rationale and strategic thinking Research results inform the solution Potential ethical issues identified	Describes how plan developed and was implemented Entrants role explained Includes key messages that reinforce objectives Demonstrates collaboration with key stakeholders Solution aligned with business need and audience analysis Includes tactical implementation plan	No key messages Solution doesn't address business need Tactical plan sparse Solution not likely to meet stated objectives Rationale clearly inappropriate for business need or audience	Doesn't explain what was done Tactical plan missing Entrant did not play a key role in the project Does not address obvious ethical issues	No explanation of solution

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SECTION 5: Implementation and Challenges

Communication professionals often navigate through a variety of challenges such as tight deadlines, changes in direction, small budgets, stubborn decision makers and staff turnover. Challenges add complexity to project management. Efforts to successfully manage these issues are taken into account when scoring the entry. How well challenges are met speaks to the project management skill.

Evaluator questions

How well did the entrant manage issues related to budget and other resources, timing, direction, selling the solution to decision makers or other challenging issues? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Provide a budget that seems reasonable given the organization and the scope of communication activities?
- Demonstrate that time and other resources were effectively used?
- Outline any challenges faced, and demonstrate that they were effectively managed?
- Demonstrate consultation with stakeholders including presentation of the plan to management?
- Provide evidence of direct involvement in the project?

How this section is scored

Your discussion of the program implementation and any challenges that you faced must be documented. Evaluators look for how budget, time and other resources were used. While the budget doesn't have to be detailed, a range must be included. Provide evidence that resources were used wisely, regardless of how limited or generous. Review limitations or challenges you managed including selling or implementing the idea. Demonstrate collaboration with stakeholders. Resources should seem appropriate for the scope of the project and the size of the organization. If you don't budget, the most your entry can score is 3 points, providing that you have addressed the use of other resources.

Avoid:
- Apologies for insufficient budget or excuses about limited resources.
- Use of media, vehicles or channels that don't suit the audience.
- Excessive use of resources without proper justification.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Discuss how the project was managed, including stakeholder collaboration and involvement if appropriate.
- Provide a reasonable explanation of the resources available and used. Discuss budget, time, staff, consultants and other resources that may have been used.
- Note challenges encountered and how they were overcome.
- Explain how the plan was sold to management, the client or other stakeholders.
- Include a description of your role in the project

Entries are scored up for:
- A clever approach to selling the project.
- Good use of budget including effective use of a limited budget.
- Effective and appropriate use of internal and external resources.
- Innovative solutions to challenges leading to exceeding objectives.
- Work achieved under impossible deadlines or within tight budgets.

Entries are scored down if:

- Budget or resource information is not provided.
- Use of resources seems wasteful or inappropriate.
- There's no explanation about how the project was implemented.
- Deadlines are missed or the budget is exceeded, unless there is a reasonable explanation.
- Work clearly wasn't worth the time, effort and money

Section 5: Implementation and Challenges

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
A truly unique and creative approach to implementing the solution and delivering outstanding results that raises the professional standard	An innovative solution to challenges result in exceeding objectives that demonstrate the impact of communication on the business Thorough explanation of an innovative way to consult with audience members resulting in exceeding objectives significantly A thorough explanation of how effective use of limited resource(s) resulting in project that meets implementation plan Clever approach to selling the project to achieve approval or support	Explains the effective use of budget – got a lot done with few resources Demonstrates collaboration with stakeholders Plan implemented under difficult deadlines Effectively manages challenges enabling meeting objectives Work achieved under tight deadlines or budgets	Project budget and resources described Effective and appropriate use of internal and external resources Objectives met within budget Implementation plan met or reasonable explanation provided Content managed across multiple channels, if appropriate Explains how plan was sold to management, client or other stakeholders	Resource description not complete, some resources not included Media, vehicles or channels don't suit audience Inappropriate use of resources Missed deadlines or budget exceeded without reasonable explanation	No budget or resource discussion Excessive use of resources without proper justification Work is clearly not worth the time, effort or money	No budget or implementation plan

SECTION 6: Measurement and Evaluation

This is where the rubber meets the road! We want your work to demonstrate that strategic communication planning and execution is a vital business process. **That's why it's critical to set measurable objectives that are aligned with business needs, and then measure progress against them.**

When communicators can show management the value of their work in measurable terms, senior executives sit up and take notice, and the reputation of communication as an important business process increases.

Evaluator questions

How well were the communication objectives met? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Align measurement with valid objectives?
- Demonstrate output-based results that measure increased volumes as an indicator of progress and/or outcome-based results that influence awareness, understanding, opinion, attitude, behaviors or business results?
- Provide a thorough evaluation that supports the results?
- In the case of student entries, provide a description of the ways program success would be measured.

How this section is scored

Did you track progress against the objectives set? Experienced entrants often report results against objectives in a table format by listing the original objectives, the targets, and the outcome or output as results.

Evaluators look for measurement of outputs (usually volume-based), and outcomes (measurements that influence audience awareness, opinions, behaviors or business goals). Measurements should be objective, clearly explained and appropriate for the project. The results should show the relationship between the objectives that were set and the results that were achieved. They should be thorough and convincing.

The program must deliver meaningful, measurable results. If you have set strong objectives and measured against them, scoring will be easy. If the original objectives were weak, your scores will not be high.

Your work plan will score lower if:
- There were no objectives or no meaningful objectives.
- You show clear evidence of success without an extensive evaluation process.
- The results were carefully measured but were below expectations. Be sure to provide rationale for objectives that were not met.

Avoid:
- Subjective results based on hearsay without documented evidence.
- Results that don't address the business need.
- Overly positive results that don't seem possible given the project description.
- Narrow, skimpy or vague results, or generalizations.

- Highlights that don't seem to paint the entire picture.
- Results reported only as outputs.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Demonstrate alignment between the objectives and the measurement.
- Demonstrate appropriate measurement methodology, formal or informal – formal is best.
- Reference sample sizes if appropriate.
- Measure against the original benchmarks used to set objectives.
- Show credible results that support the business needs.
- Prove that the objectives were met through evaluation.
- Provide results that demonstrate that the strategy has influenced progress toward business goals.
- At minimum, state output-based results.

Entries are scored up for:
- Thorough evaluation and documentation of measures.
- Use of multiple measurement methods that clearly define results.
- Credible measurement of intangibles such as a media relations or reputation index, or brand or loyalty measurement.
- An executive summary is included among the work samples if a formal evaluation was done.
- Results that exceed targets.
- Results that demonstrate a positive impact on the business.
- Outcome-based results that positively influence awareness, understanding, opinion, attitude, behaviors or business results.

Entries are scored down if:
- The plan fails to report against the stated objectives.
- Results aren't statistically valid.
- The plan includes subjective measurement, or measurement without a source.
- There is a mismatch between objectives and qualitative or quantitative results.
- There is a misinterpretation of survey data.
- Results measure only whether a tactic has been completed.
- There is lack of measurement for each objective.
- The plan provides only anecdotal evaluation such as, "We heard that people were happy."
- Results don't relate to the audience or objectives such as, "My manager liked it."
- Results aren't meaningful to the business.

You will get some credit if evaluation plans are thoroughly outlined but haven't been carried out for a valid reason. You will score zero if objectives are not measured and the missing information is not explained.

Section 6: Measurement and Evaluation

7 Insightful, outstanding results	6 Innovative, significant results	5 Aligned, meaningful results	4 Professionally competent execution and results	3 Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing	2 Inadequate, significant elements missing	1 Poor, wrong
Thorough and insightful explanation of measurement and evaluation that explains the positive impact this communication project had on the organization	Measurement encompasses multiple appropriate methodologies to thoroughly explain success Credible measurement of intangibles such as a media relations, reputation index, or loyalty	Results exceed objectives that have meaningful impact on business need Explains formal research conducted for measurement Multiple outcomes measured Work samples include executive summary of formal evaluation supporting results Includes summary explanation of evaluation and how project helped the business Demonstrates results presented to stakeholders Provides recommendations for improvement	Demonstrates alignment between measurement and objective Outcomes measured Includes proof that objectives were met through measurement and evaluation Appropriate measurement methodology Rationale speaks to objectives that weren't met	Results reported on only outputs Results measure only if tactic completed Results don't address business need or relate to audience Results generalized, vague, or anecdotal Results not statistically valid Research methodology doesn't meet industry standards Misinterpretation of survey data No measure for every objective	Results not reported against stated objectives Subjective results based on hearsay without documented evidence Results not meaningful to business	No measurement or evaluation

HOW TO PREPARE WORK SAMPLES
(at least one and a maximum of five)

For Division 1 Communication Management

What to include in the work sample(s)

Preparing a work sample is like preparing a portfolio. Work sample elements demonstrate skill in strategic planning and execution. Material should be organized and presented in the same order as the questions answered for the work plan. Referencing the samples in the work plan or providing an explanation of the work samples provides evaluators the context for your chosen samples.

Work samples counts for 50 percent of the score in Communication Management, Communication Research, and Communication Education and Training divisions.

The work sample scoring is split into four sections:
- Stakeholder alignment and impact
- Alignment with objectives and strategy
- Professional execution
- Overall quality

IMPORTANT: Work samples are scored separately from the work plan, but it's hard for samples to get a high score if the plan didn't score well. **Make sure that the material in your work samples match the material described in your work plan.**

In Management, Research and Education divisions the work sample should include a representative sample of all project elements so that evaluators can review the material and determine how well it's aligned with the work plan. This might include a summary of the research, the strategic plan, tactical implementation plan, budget, measurements or evaluation, and sample material such as brochures, print or electronic ads or media clips, screen captures of websites, or a link to the website, Power Point presentations, scripts, publications or specific material referenced in your work plan.

Even though the Virtuoso Awards program process has moved online for both entrants and evaluators, please be mindful of your file sizes. You may upload a maximum of five (5) work sample files. Your work sample files must be in PDF, PNG, JPG, GIF, MP4, WMV, M4V formats. If you have more than five (5) files, please combine them into fewer PDF files. Each file is limited to 5 MB in size.

When evaluators review the work sample material they will look at it as objectively as possible through the eyes of your intended audience and take the overall strategy into account.

Make sure to label and organize your work samples to assist evaluators in knowing what they are reviewing.

SECTION 7: Stakeholder Alignment and Influence

Connecting with the audience in a meaningful and memorable way is an important competency in communication work. Strategic planning is only part of the equation. Messages, vehicles and channels must be aligned with audience needs and preferences because if the audience doesn't get the message in a clear, consistent and creative way, everything else is academic.

Evaluator questions

How well do the work samples reflect the audience characteristics, needs and preferences? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Demonstrate good choices of messages, media and communication channels that align with the audience analysis?
- Include messages that engage the intellect and/or emotions of the audience, and influence thoughts or behaviors?
- Integrate key messages, communication vehicles and channels to achieve consistency?

How this section is scored

Evaluators look for a match between the way the audience was described and the way that the program was executed based on the following guidelines:
- Is the language level appropriate for the audience?
- For an older audience, are the font sizes adequate?
- For an audience that has little time, is the copy concise?
- Does the choice of vehicle match the audience's needs?
- What about the communication channels used to deliver the message?
- Are the messages clear, concise, credible, consistent and creative?
- Is the information relevant and meaningful to the business need?

If the needs of the audience were poorly identified, it will be tough to score well in this section. If you're entering a media relations strategy, communication training program, an audit or another program that doesn't lend itself to outstanding visuals or audio, it is not likely to have the same creative appeal as a marketing or community relations campaign. However, creativity can be found in unusual approaches or innovative thinking, and if this is the case, it still counts toward creativity points. The following basic benchmarks apply.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Demonstrate choices appropriate to the audience.
- Use clear and consistent language.
- Be well written and well produced.
- Reflect a clear understanding of audience characteristics and needs.
- Communicate the key messages in a way that is likely to resonate with the audience.

Entries are scored up for:
- Particularly good choices matching audience characteristics.
- Messages that clearly impact the audience.
- Strong writing and execution that is likely to connect emotionally with the audience.

- Integrated vehicles and channels.
- Creative thinking, imagination or innovative approaches certain to engage audiences emotionally.

Entries are scored down if:
- Language, graphics or design is too complex or inappropriate.
- Messages patronize or insult the audience.
- Messages are not clear, or the material is overwritten or too bureaucratic.
- Key messages aren't evident.
- Work sample elements are bland and may get lost in clutter

Section 7: Stakeholder Alignment and Influence

7 **Insightful, outstanding results**	6 **Innovative, significant results**	5 **Aligned, meaningful results**	4 **Professionally competent execution and results**	3 **Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	2 **Inadequate, significant elements missing**	1 **Poor, wrong**
Extraordinary example of connecting to audience in meaningful and memorable way that impacts the business positively	Smart thinking that shows the audience perspective Demonstrates creative thinking, imagination or an innovative approach certain to engage audience emotionally	Particularly good choices matching audience characteristics (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) The materials in the work sample are highly likely to capture audience attention and engage them Sample aligns to audience research	Demonstrates choices appropriate to audiences (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) Uses clear, consistent language. Reflects an understanding of audience characteristics and needs Communicates key messages in way likely to resonate with audience	Choices inappropriate to audience (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) Key messages not likely to connect with audience Work sample elements are bland and likely to get lost in clutter	Messages insult audience Key messages not clear or not included Material clearly insensitive to cultural values and beliefs	All work sample elements clearly not appropriate for audience as describe

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SECTION 8: Alignment with Objectives and Strategy

The work sample(s) must support the objectives stated in the work plan. Strategic execution is not strategic unless it supports the needs of the business, connects with the audience, and makes an impact. This should be clear in everything presented from research to language choices, media, messages, images, vehicles and communication channels.

Evaluator questions

How well is the work sample aligned with the objectives stated in the work plan? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Provide evidence that program design is on strategy, and is consistent with business needs?
- Demonstrate that work sample elements are clear, consistent, and communicated in a powerful, emotional way?
- Demonstrate that work sample elements reflect the objectives, strategic thinking, key messages and audience analysis as presented in the work plan?
- Provide clear evidence that the work sample has the desired effect on the audience and the business needs?

How this section is scored

It should be clear why certain design, style or visual elements were used. The communication material should be clear, consistent and address the communication need. For example, if an objective was to increase employee awareness of company benefits, the writing and design of each campaign element should be aligned with the need.

Evaluators will look for:
- Choices that support the objectives.
- Clear, consistent messages related to objectives.
- Effective communication.
- Use of key messages listed in the work plan.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Reflect the objectives set out in the work plan.
- Contain clear key messages.
- Demonstrate choices that support the needs of the business.
- Be deliberately targeted to close any gaps defined by the research.
- Align with the business needs to support the achievement of goals and objectives.

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Entries are scored up if:

- The work sample is designed and produced to achieve the project's objectives.
- Support material and design elements are appropriate for the audience, and aligned with the business need and brand identity.
- The work is clear, consistent and clever, and communicates the key messages in a powerful, emotional way.
- The sample fully reflects the objectives and strategic thinking presented in the plan.
- The work is an extraordinary example of meeting business needs in meaningful and memorable ways

Entries are scored down if:

- Key messages don't appear in the work sample(s).
- The work is out-of-sync with the organization's brand, unless there's an explanation.
- Messaging isn't consistent.
- Extra elements in the sample(s) distract from the objectives.
- The samples don't show what was done.
- The samples are incomplete, confusing or poorly presented or explained.
- There is an obvious mismatch, such as an emphasis on the wrong audience or too much focus on executive egos and not enough on audience needs.

Section 8: Alignment with Objectives and Strategy

7 Insightful, outstanding results	6 Innovative, significant results	5 Aligned, meaningful results	4 Professionally competent execution and results	3 Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing	2 Inadequate, significant elements missing	1 Poor, wrong
Extraordinary example of meeting business needs and stated objectives in meaningful and memorable way that impacts the business positively	Likely to significantly exceed stated objectives based on work samples Creative elements of work sample strategically aligned to business need The work demonstrates complete alignment from business need, objectives, stakeholder analysis, and solution Work sample contains explanation of how each element contributes to the work plan	Work sample likely to exceed stated objectives and drive business success Work is clear, consistent and clever, communicating key messages in powerful, emotional way Sample fully explains and reflects the objectives and strategic thinking presented in the work plan.	The work sample demonstrates the implementation of the plan Reflects the stated objectives in the work plan Contains identified key messages and linked to goals and objectives Demonstrates choices that support business needs Deliberately targeted to close any gaps defined by research Aligns with business needs to support achieving goals and objectives	Key messages not reflected in work sample elements Work is out of sync with the organization's brand or identity Messages aren't consistent Extra elements in the sample distract from the objectives	Sample doesn't show what was done Sample is incomplete, confusing, or poorly presented or explained	Sample will clearly not accomplish stated objectives

SECTION 9: Professional Execution

Well-designed and implemented communication work helps to build professional reputation and credibility. Without carefully crafted vehicles, even the best strategy may fail to deliver messages that connect with the audience. Paying attention to industry standards and keeping up with leading edge thinking, processes and production demonstrates commitment to effective communication.

On average, people are tapped by more than 500 information sources a day, and they will shut down if a message doesn't grab their attention. Good creative work answers the questions "What's in it for me?" and "Why should I care?" in a way that connects emotionally with the audience. Whether the project is a multimedia advertising campaign or a government relations strategy, creative thinking, imagination and innovative approaches will cut through today's information overload and command audience attention.

Evaluator questions

Given the budget and resources, how well does the work sample measure up to professional standards? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Provide well-designed work samples that are likely to build reputation while delivering meaningful results?
- Offer evidence of alignment with business and audience needs?
- Demonstrate high-quality writing and production within budget and resource considerations?
- Demonstrate consistency between what was presented in the work plan and what was delivered?

How this section is scored

Work must demonstrate alignment with business needs and audience preferences. Evaluators will take note of new or different approaches. Aside from a great print ad or television commercial, there are other ways to express creativity and imagination. It could be that you have presented a new way to use research findings, or demonstrate innovative thinking through audience segmentation or choice of communication channels.

Would this entry survive the competition given the kind of communication normally directed to the audiences described?

The work sample(s) should showcase quality material. If the budget was skimpy, present the best job possible within the budget constraints. If the budget was generous, the production quality should reflect an investment in higher quality products.

Evaluators watch for clear, consistent, error-free writing; high-quality photography; adherence to design principles; and well-produced video. If the entry is an audit or a proposal, evaluators will look for clear writing, an easy to follow structure, charts, graphs, illustrations and appropriate research methodology.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Contain quality production values appropriate to the media and the budget.
- Reflect professional standards of ethics and good taste.
- Align with audience needs and preferences, as well as the business needs.

- Include methods, messages, visuals and channels that are aligned with audience characteristics and preferences.
- Include work samples that match the description in the work plan.
- Demonstrate clear, consistent use of language, visuals and other elements that support the brand, communicate the business need, and support the achievement of communication objectives.
- Demonstrate a fairly standard approach that is well executed.

Entries are scored up for:
- High-quality writing and superior production values.
- Strong images that convey key messages.
- Work that inspires an emotional connection.
- Thorough documentation that supports the description of the project in the work plan.
- Clever, strategic work that's appropriate for the audience and likely to leave a lasting impression.
- Work that increases the professional standards for the medium and channels selected

Entries are scored down for:
- Amateur work or dated approaches unless supported by strategy.
- Inconsistent use of images and language.
- Poor technical production.
- Excess spending not likely to achieve results.
- Images, writing tone or style that doesn't match business or audience needs.
- An overused approach or one that's likely to bore the audience.
- An approach that clearly would not work.
- Work that insults the audience or is inappropriate.

Section 9: Professional Execution

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
An example that increases professional standards of creativity, innovation or use of resources A novel and effective approach aligned to the business, stakeholders, industry/profession, and community	Thorough documentation that supports the description of the project in work plan Clever approach to communication that is appropriate for audience Stands out among others Likely to leave lasting impression	High quality writing superior production values Strong images that convey key messages Work that clearly explains the emotional connection made with the audience Professionally executed with scarce resources	Production values appropriate to media and budget Professional standards of ethics and good taste Clear, consistent messages aligned with brand Consistent use of language, visuals and other elements A well-executed fairly standard approach	Amateur work Dated approach for industry, geography, or media Poor technical production A few spelling, grammar or structure errors Resources not defined	Images, writing tone or style that doesn't match business or audience need An approach that clearly will not work Work insults the audience Several spelling, grammar or structure errors	An approach that clearly will not work

SECTION 10: Overall Quality

The work plan and the work samples must be aligned. You must demonstrate that you applied the research and analytical thinking to the execution of your strategy. If the work plan describes the context, challenges and solution for the communication opportunity, the work sample should demonstrate that the strategy was carried out. Strategic execution is essential to great communication work.

Evaluator questions

Given the interdependence among all sections, to what degree is the entry a strong blueprint for strategic planning and execution? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Provide a well-written and produced entry that's easy to understand?
- Offer a representative sample of all the elements and support material described in the plan?
- Demonstrate strategic and creative thinking as well as approaches that take the audience and business needs into account?
- Demonstrate the ability of communication to influence valid business results?

How this section is scored

There must be a strong connection between the work plan and the work sample(s). The work samples must not only look organized, but they must be strategic. If the work samples are weak although the work plan is good, the entry's score will reflect that weakness.

Consider the following:
- Does the work sample contain all or most of the elements referred to in the work plan?
- Is it easy to assess that the work sample is a logical, detailed presentation of the work plan?

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Provide an overall quality product aligned with the objectives.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive but not overbearing presentation of the elements described in the work plan.
- Provide evidence that as much care and attention was devoted to delivering the tactical elements of the plan as went into developing the plan itself.
- Include a work samples that reinforce the work plan and contribute to the overall quality of the entry.
- Demonstrate consistency between the work plan (what you said you would deliver) and the work sample (what you actually delivered).

Entries are scored up for:
- Representing most or all of the elements referenced in the work plan.
- Creative execution, processes, and approaches that take the audience and business needs into account.
- Demonstration of excellence in strategic planning and execution throughout the entry.
- A comprehensive sample or samples.

Entries are scored down if:
- A sample doesn't match the plan or reflect the business or audience needs.
- Inconsistency or lack of clarity occurs between the work plan and the execution.
- Within cultural considerations, spelling, grammatical or structural errors occur.
- There is a demonstration of poor work, including lack of proofreading, poor photography and poor technical production.
- Work plan doesn't follow IABC format

Section 10: Overall Quality

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Demonstrates an outstanding example of a unique, innovative and highly effective approach to communication with a thorough explanation of how it influences business results	Thorough explanation of what was done Demonstrates excellence in execution Explains significant business results Highly innovative approach	Comprehensive and representative sample reflecting the work plan Demonstrates and explains a meaningful business result	Work samples match description in work plan Clearly shows what was done for the project Reinforces work plan Provides evidence of care and attention to delivering the tactical elements of the plan Contributes to overall quality of entry	Work samples don't match plan Work samples don't reflect the business or audience needs Work sample elements are extremely long showing entire project rather than representing the project Work plan doesn't follow IABC format	The work samples are significantly different from the work plan	No work sample included

Division 2 Communication Research

Entries in this division recognize the importance of research and measurement as a foundation for strategic communication work and a competency that's integral to success throughout the career of a communication professional. A clear understanding of why the research was needed demonstrates its strategic value to an organization.

Communication research often focuses on formative research conducted during the initial stages of the strategic communication planning process that benchmarks internal audience opinions or behaviors, profiles the marketplace or internal communication environment in which the organization operates, aligns best practices against organizational needs or informs strategic direction for internal communication programs.

Entries may include any research that informs actions or decision making within the communication field. This could be audience analysis, competitive benchmarking, program or product test markets, reputation or brand studies, communication audits, content audits, usability studies, readership or effectiveness studies.

The IABC award work plan format is arranged to allow for a strategic explanation of the project being submitted. The work plan sections correspond directly to the sections on the evaluator scoring sheet.

HOW TO PREPARE A WORK PLAN

SECTION 1: The Business Need or Opportunity

Research serves as a foundation for strategic communication work. It enables an accurate and objective understanding of the situation critical to business communication decision making.

A strategic communication opportunity flows from the business need. It answers the question "How can communication help the organization meet this need?" To close the knowledge gap here, research questions provide direction for the research project.

Evaluators need context to assess whether the communication research supports business needs and the aligned communication opportunity. Without the relevant background information, it's difficult to determine whether the research addresses the right issues and audiences. A good description of the business need sets the stage for the rest of the work plan sections including describing stakeholders, objectives and solution(s).

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant explain the context for the entry by clearly establishing the business need, the related communication opportunity and the research purpose? *To what extent does the entrant:*

- Align the communication opportunity and the business need by explaining how the project helped the organization?
- Explain how the research informs the direction of the communication project, the Actions that may be taken or decisions that may be made as a result of the research?
- Explain the questions the research helps to answer?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look for the entrant to show a clear understanding of the business needs and organizational mandate.
- It should be clear why the research was carried out.
- The entry explains how the research helps to positively influence business performance, now or in the future.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Clearly define and demonstrate an understanding of the business need.
- Speak to how the research opportunity was identified and why it matters to the business.
- Address the research questions.
- Provide enough context about the organization and its environment so it's clear how the program contributes to business success.

Entries are scored up for:
- A clear explanation of specific changes or challenges demonstrating the urgency of the business need.
- A multi-faceted explanation of the strategic alignment and why the research matters to the business or how it will make a difference on the business need.
- Including additional primary or secondary research, such as data mining of HR or Marketing/Sales numbers, industry research, research about other organizations in similar situations, academic research related to the current issue, etc.

Entries are scored down if:
- There isn't an explanation of how the research will help the organization.
- The business need is assumed, generalized, or vague.
- There isn't enough information about the organization and its business goals to allow evaluators to fairly evaluate the solution.

Tips from evaluators:

- Describe what has changed that brought about the business need to demonstrate the urgency or why the work is needed now. This could be related to an industry issue, the business climate, regulatory issues, etc.
- A superior entry explains the business need at the highest level. For example, rather than stating there is a cost-cutting initiative or reputation building, it explains why the cost-cutting initiative or reputation building is needed.
- A strategically written Section 1 would include a business need description tied to the organization's external environment followed with an explanation of how the communication opportunity and research can help the organization meet the business need.
- Tell a story – how does the research link to the communication opportunity and how does the communication opportunity link to the business need.
- Evaluators are looking to understand how the research informs decisions that positively impact the organization.

Section 1: Business Need and Communication Opportunity

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	Innovative, significant results	Aligned, meaningful results	Professionally competent execution and results	Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing	Inadequate, significant elements missing	Poor, wrong
Multi-faceted explanation of how the need is strategically aligned to the business, why research matters to business and how it will make a difference on business need The data supporting the need comes from more than one source Thorough research of business need includes history, current situation, size and scope show significant understanding of situation and how to proceed with solution(s)	Superior explanation of the current business state including challenges and urgency driving the communication opportunity Superior explanation of how the opportunity addresses the need Includes additional primary or secondary research, such as data mining of HR or Marketing/Sales numbers, industry research, research about other organizations in similar situations, academic research related to the current issue, etc.	A clear explanation of specific changes or challenges demonstrate the urgency of the business need The business needs are clear and strategically defined based on mission, values, goals, and brand Business need and research aligns to the organization's strategic direction, key performance indicators and business need Clear explanation of how research positively impacts business performance now or in the future Challenges facing the business are explained	The business needs are clearly defined and demonstrate an understanding of what they mean to the business Speaks to how the research opportunity was defined and why it matters to the business The research questions are addressed It's clear how the program will contribute to business success	The business need is not well defined It is not clear why the project was undertaken Not clear how need and research questions were defined No explanation of how the research will help the organization Opportunity is generalized or vague such as management thought it would be a good idea	There is no background on the organization and its business goals to set the context The business need is assumed	No explanation of the business need No explanation of the research

SECTION 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Effective research results begin with appropriate targeting and understanding of the audience to be studied. It is also important to understand the audience the research will be presented to so they will take action or make decisions based on the research. The work plan must demonstrate an understanding of both of these audiences. If the entrant doesn't explore the audience size, location, preferences, attitudes, demographics, psychographics or other characteristics, it's difficult to determine whether the objectives, approach, or methodology are appropriate.

Evaluators look for entrants to show that they understand which audience to target to result in meaningful research results. Demonstrate that the research and its presentation take the audience's needs, wants, preferences, opinions and behaviors into account and that they use the information to design the research and presentations.

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant define, segment, and analyze the critical characteristics of the audience(s) in relations to the research? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Include appropriate audiences that are subjects of the research?
- Include audiences hearing/consuming the research results to make decisions or take actions based on the results?
- Share relevant audience characteristics such as prior knowledge, education, geography, demographics, psychographics, preferences, attitudes, opinion, motivations, etc.?

How this section is scored

- It must be clear that the audience targeted for the research can deliver results.
- The entrant must show that they've taken the audiences' needs, wants, preferences, opinions, and behaviors into account and that they have used this information to design the research and research presentation.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- List research subject audience(s) and describe the characteristics, preferences, and needs in enough detail to show how your understanding led to choices of methodology, channels, strategy and tactics.
- List audience(s) who will hear the research results and describe the characteristics, preferences, and needs in enough detail to show how your understanding led to choices in how the research was presented.

Entries are scored up for:
- A discussion that shows how the audience is linked to strategy, methodology and tactic choices.
- Explanations of how audience characteristics influence the research project.
- Including additional primary or secondary research related to stakeholders.

Entries are scored down if:
- The audience(s) aren't defined.
- Broad audiences such as employees, the general public, or customers are listed without defining needs or characteristics.

- Audiences are listed but no analysis is provided.
- An opportunity to segment and target specific audience groups is missed.
- An obvious audience in relation to the research purpose is missed without explanation.
- The research target audience is unlikely to provide data related to the research purpose or business need.
- There are vague, unsupported assumptions about audience needs.

Tips from evaluators:
- Describe your subject audiences' online access if you are using an online survey tool to demonstrate an appropriate survey tool choice.
- Explain the preferences of the audience hearing the research results and how this helped you to determine your approach.
- Avoid making vague assumptions such as "We thought they might like…"

Section 2: Stakeholder Analysis

7 Insightful, outstanding results	6 Innovative, significant results	5 Aligned, meaningful results	4 Professionally competent execution and results	3 Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing	2 Inadequate, significant elements missing	1 Poor, wrong
Thorough explanation of how audience research drives research project decisions <u>and</u> what they mean to each audience segment	Audience segmentation clearly separates groups and identifies appropriate characteristics Includes additional primary or secondary research related to stakeholders	Superior explanation of how characteristics influences research project A description demonstrates how the audience is linked to strategy and tactics Informal or secondary research defines audience characteristics and needs Audiences segmented in way that influences solution	Lists research subject audience(s) and describes the characteristics, preferences, and needs in enough detail to understand how they lead to choices of methodology, channels, strategy and tactics Lists audience(s) who will hear the research results and describe the characteristics, preferences, and needs in enough detail to understand how they lead to choices in how the research was presented Speaks to how audience(s) and characteristics identified Appropriate research methodology	Audiences are listed with vague, unsupported assumptions about characteristics Characteristics included are irrelevant to the project or audience Misses an obvious audience in relation to identified need Inappropriate research methodology The audience targeted for research is unlikely to provide data related to research purpose	Broad publics or stakeholder groups listed without defining needs or characteristics Wrong audience identified based on need No mention of audience research	Audiences not listed

SECTION 3: Goals and Objectives

The ability to set meaningful, measurable, objectives that are relevant to the business need is critical to measure the success of any communication program. Effective work that delivers results helps to create value and build credibility of communication as a primary business driver. **Appropriate goals and objectives are critical to an entry because poor objectives will lower the score in other parts of the evaluation.**

Research goals and objectives focus a study and help to organize the solution including the areas of methodology, data collection, analyzing, interpreting and using the data. Understanding the margin of error and the appropriate survey size are important to an efficient research project resulting in a survey that reflects the views of the total population. Margin of error calculators are available on many sites online including Survey Monkey.

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant set measurable objectives relevant to the business need/research purpose and measure the effect of strategic communication to the business? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Distinguish between goals, objectives, and tactics?
- Establish measurable, relevant objectives?
- Align objectives with the stakeholder analysis and the business need?
- Ensure that the objectives will produce an effect on the stated business need?

How this section is scored
- Evaluators look primarily for an explanation of the goal of the research and for objectives that measure the research project's outcome. This can be represented in an entry by demonstrating what kinds of actions will be taken because of the research and then measuring if those decisions were made.
- Output-based objectives such as targeted response rates show the evaluator a thoughtful approach was used in designing the research project.
- Goals and objectives must be aligned with the business needs identified and the purpose of the research.

Goals generally describe what you want to accomplish in a broad sense. Objectives clearly define the desired outcome, or what success will look like. More detail on communication goals and objectives can be found in the Division 1 Communication Management section of this document.

Avoid stating objectives:
- That aren't aligned to the goals, the business need, or research purpose.
- Are vague, irrelevant or not measurable.
- Are task-based or process-based rather than based on the research results.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- State an overall big picture goal(s) that doesn't need to be stated in measurable terms.
- State specific measurable, meaningful objectives demonstrating the results of the research project.
- State research objectives providing focus for the study.
- Include data on audience size and targeted response rates.

Entries are scored up for:
- A clear explanation of how the research results are used to help the organization.
- Clearly stated research goals linked to the business need and research purpose.
- Explaining the desired margin of error to be achieved and why that margin is appropriate for the project.
- Objectives that are stated in terms of impact on the business.
- Insightful approaches to measuring the success of the research project.
- Thorough explanation of the strategic nature of the research.

Entries are scored down for:
- Objectives are production or deadline-focused, or based on process or tactics.
- Objectives are not related to the business need or research purpose.
- There are no measurable objectives.

Tips from evaluators:
- Use comparisons to other similar organizations as benchmarks.
- A professionally competent entry includes objectives that determine what types of actions will be taken because of the research and measure if the decisions were made.
- Explain how the actions or decisions made because of the research will help the organization.

A note on Communication Research objectives

A strategic research program must help the organization meet its business needs. **Look to the business need and communication opportunity to set relevant, measurable objectives.**

If the research informs a communication project, the measurement of success would be the objectives set for the communication project as a whole. A strategically written entry would include those objectives and an explanation of how the research results support the project.

If the research purpose is to determine an action or for decision-making, the measurement of success would be hitting the target for any improvements or changes the research supports. A strategically written entry would include measurable objectives setting the target for the improvements and an explanation of how the research results informed the actions or decisions.
Research objectives generally summarize what is to be achieved by the study.

Examples

Some examples of research goals, objectives and results:

Research informing communication project.
- *Communication project measurable objective:* Increase customer satisfaction with technical manual from x% to x% in 2017.
- *Research goal:* Identify changes that would make the technical manual easier to use.
- *Research objective:* To determine at least one actionable recommendation for each research question.
- *Research result:* Recommendations approved for implementation and how research supports changes.

Research to determine an action or decision.
- *Research goal:* Allocate resources based on communication effectiveness.
- *Research objective:* To determine the effectiveness of individual elements of a communication program for potential resource allocation.
- *Research result:* A description of how resource allocation changed or remained the same based on research results.

- *Research goal:* Determine areas for consolidation or elimination to reduce departmental budget by X%.
- *Research objective:* To determine ROI of existing communication strategies.
- *Research result:* Showing where the budget was cut and how the research supported the changes.

- *Research goal*: Identify current baselines to create and monitor progress on key performance indicators (KPIs) for a department or its individuals.
- *Research objective*: To determine existing benchmarks for xxx as a KPI.
- *Research result*: Establishing measurable KPIs established using the baselines.

Section 3: Goals and Objectives

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
A thoroughly explained and insightful approach to setting strategic goals and objectives leading to outstanding business results	Thorough explanation of the strategic nature of the research Insightful approaches to measuring the success of the research project	Clear explanation of how the research results help the organization Clearly stated research goals linked to the business need and research purpose Explains the desired margin of error to be achieved and why that margin is appropriate for the project Objectives stated in terms of impact on the business Objectives are outcome-based and likely to deliver meaningful business results Goals are clearly linked to the organizations mission, values, goals, strategic direction and brand	States overall big picture goal(s) – do not need to be measurable. State specific measurable, meaningful objectives demonstrating the results of the research project. State research objectives providing focus for the study Includes data on audience size and targeted response rates	Understanding of goals, objectives and tactics not demonstrated Objectives production, deadline-focused, or based on tactics Objectives all output-based Objectives do not include preset targets to indicate success Objectives not realistic or achievable	Objectives not measureable Section 1: Business need and communication opportunity doesn't provide any detail to evaluate if goals and objectives are appropriate Objectives do not focus on the identified goal(s) or business need	No goals or objectives

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SECTION 4: The Solution Overview

The solution offers insight into how you approached the research project. The appropriate research methodology affects the conclusions and applications of the research. The validity and reliability of the research is important when results are used for decision making or as benchmarks for communications initiatives. Sound methodology and planning improves the communicator's credibility.

Evaluator questions

How effective is the research approach? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Demonstrate an appropriate research methodology?
- Demonstrate an effective approach to selecting and sampling the audience?
- Connect with research participants to encourage participation?
- Explain how the research methodologies align with the business need, audience and objectives?
- Explain the presentation of the research?
- Provide an executive summary or tactical plan for the research project?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators seek to understand the planning of the research project.
- It should be clear how the business need, communication opportunity, and audience analysis informed the research methodology.
- Evaluators look for appropriate communication to engage participants.
- The research methodology, sampling, channels and tools are clearly explained.
- A well-thought out project schedule and plan are included.
- Evaluators will look for an intentional, planned presentation of the research results.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Describe how the research plan was developed.
- Explain the rationale and strategic thinking.
- Explain how the sample was selected.
- Explain how research results will be presented.
- Include a high-level tactical implementation plan.
- Be aligned to the business need, research purpose and audiences.

Entries are marked up for:
- Well explained rationale linking audiences and objectives to channels and tactics.
- Sound explanation supporting choices, which may include evaluating other options.
- Discussion of links to business needs.
- A thorough explanation of when, where and how the research was done.
- An explanation of how the margin of error impacted decisions.
- Highly creative approach to presentation of research results.
- An explanation of any incentives used to motivate increased participation and why they are appropriate to your audience(s).
- An explanation of how selections were made for sample locations to conduct interviews, focus groups to mirror the entire audience accurately, or for comparator organizations in a benchmarking study and why selections provide the best results.

- A summary of the tactical implementation plan listing the audience, key messages, tactics, channels and timeline.

Entries are marked down for:
- Failing to explain what was done or why.
- The plan doesn't address the business need or research purpose.
- The tactical implementation plan is sparse or missing.
- Not providing an explanation of when, where or how the research was done.

Tips from evaluators:
- Explain why the research methodology was selected and why it is appropriate.
- Include data on the audience size, sampling approach and margin of error.
- Explain how your solution choice was impacted by your analysis of the audience hearing/consuming the research to make decisions or take actions based on the results.
- Explain any incentives used to motivate increased participation and why they are appropriate to your audience(s).

Section 4: Solution Overview

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Solution increases the highest level of professional standards of creativity, innovation or resource utilization Thorough explanation of potential for outstanding results An effective communication research solution not heard of before	Unique and effective approach to meet business need Sound explanation supporting choices, which may include evaluating other options Demonstrates innovative approach to collaboration or facilitation Why sample locations, groups or comparative organizations chosen is explained with how they influence best results Addresses solutions for potential ethical issues An explanation of how the margin of error impacted decisions Highly creative approach to presentation of research results	Well explained rationale linking audiences and objectives to channels and tactics Explanation of how solution links to business needs A thorough explanation of when, where and how the research was done Stakeholder input included Solution is highly likely to achieve stated objectives Summary of tactical plan lists audience, tactics Explains appropriate rationale and strategic thinking Potential ethical issues identified Use of incentives explained with link to audience	Describes how the research plan developed Entrants role explained Explains how the sample was selected Explains how the research will be presented Demonstrates collaboration with key stakeholders Solution aligned with business need, research purpose and audience analysis Includes a high-level tactical implementation plan	Solution doesn't address business need or research purpose Tactical plan sparse Solution not likely to meet stated objectives Rationale clearly inappropriate for business need or audience	Doesn't explain when, where or how research was done Tactical plan missing Entrant did not play a key role in the project Does not address obvious ethical issues	No explanation of solution

SECTION 5: Implementation and Challenges

Implementing a written strategic plan demonstrates necessary project management skills required by professional communicators. A communicator demonstrates value to the organization by how well the project moves from plan approval to project completion. In research, implementing the plan precisely can also affect the quality of the results. Budget management is a critical skill of a communicator when implementing a plan. And, communicators must often navigate through a variety of challenges such as tight deadlines, small budgets, stubborn decision makers and staff turnover which when managed right show management capabilities.

Evaluator questions

How well was the plan managed through implementation? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Demonstrate that time, money, labor, and other resources were used effectively.
- Outline any challenges faced and demonstrate that they were effectively managed.
- Demonstrate consultation with stakeholders.
- Appropriately analyze the research results.
- Explain the approach to presenting the research findings to decision makers.
- Explain how the research subjects were informed of the results.

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look to see how the entrant gained approval for the plan and consulted stakeholders.
- Evaluators look for how budget, time, labor and other resources were used. While an exact budget figure is not required, evidence of resources available and how they were wisely used must be included.
- Evaluators take into account efforts to successfully manage challenges when scoring an entry since this speaks to a communicator's project management skills.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Discuss how the project was managed, including stakeholder collaboration and involvement, if appropriate.
- Provide a reasonable explanation of the resources available and used including budget, time, staff, consultants, etc.
- Note challenges encountered and how they were overcome.
- Explain how the research findings were presented to decision makers.
- Explain how the plan was sold to management, client or other stakeholders.
- Include a description of your role in the project.

Entries are scored up for:
- A clever approach to selling the project or presenting the research results.
- Good use of budget including effective use of a limited budget.
- Effective and appropriate use of internal and external resources.
- Innovative solutions to challenges leading to exceeding expectations of project.
- An explanation of how research subjects were informed of the results.
- Work achieved under difficult deadlines or conditions.

Entries are scored down if:
- Budget or resource information is not addressed.
- Use of resources seems wasteful or inappropriate.
- There's no explanation of how the project was implemented.
- Deadlines are missed or budget exceeded without a reasonable explanation.
- Work clearly wasn't worth the time, effort or money.

Tips from evaluators:
- Explain the budget figure for the research project, including staff time, and how you effectively managed it.
- Tell us why the implementation of the plan was above expectations.
- Evaluators don't score down if there were no challenges. If you expected potential problems or challenges during the planning stage, describe how you prevented them from occurring.

Section 5: Implementation and Challenges

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
A truly unique and creative approach to implementing the solution and delivering outstanding results that raises the professional standard	An innovative solution to challenges result in exceeding objectives that demonstrate the impact of communication on the business Thorough explanation of an innovative way to consult with audience members resulting in exceeding objectives significantly A thorough explanation of how effective use of limited resource(s) resulting in project that exceeds objectives Clever approach to presenting results or selling the project to achieve approval or support	Explains the effective use of budget – got a lot done with few resources Demonstrates collaboration with stakeholders Plan implemented under difficult deadlines Effectively manages challenges enabling meeting objectives Work achieved under tight deadlines or budgets An explanation of how research subjects were informed of the results	Explains how project was managed Reasonable explanation of project budget and resources described Effective and appropriate use of internal and external resources Objectives met within budget Implementation plan met or reasonable explanation provided Explains how the plan was sold to management, client or other stakeholders	Resource description not complete, some resources not included Inappropriate use of resources Missed deadlines or budget exceeded without reasonable explanation	No budget or resource discussion Excessive use of resources without proper justification Work is clearly not worth the time, effort or money	No budget or implementation plan

SECTION 6: Measurement and Evaluation

Strategic communication planning and implementation is a vital business process. **That's why it's critical to set measurable objectives aligned with the business needs and then to measure progress against them.**

When communicators can show management the value of their work in measurable terms, senior executives take notice, and the reputation of communication as a critical contributor to organization success increases.

Evaluator questions

How well were the communications objectives met? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Align measurement with valid objectives?
- Demonstrate output and outcome-based results?
- Explain how the results of the research was used to make decisions, answer questions, or improve results?
- Provide a thorough evaluation that supports the results?

How this section is scored

Evaluators look to see that the entrant tracked results against the same objectives set in the entry's Section 3 Goals and Objectives. These results or measurements should be objective, clearly explained and appropriate for the project. The results should show the relationship between the objectives that were set and the results that were achieved. They should be thorough and convincing. Entries with poor or no measurable objectives set in Section 3, will score lower in this section.

Avoid:

- Results that don't address the business need.
- Overly positive results that don't seem possible given the project description.
- Vague results or generalizations.
- Providing only highlights that don't tell the whole result story.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Demonstrate appropriate measurement methodology.
- Measure against the original benchmarks or targets used to set objectives.
- Show credible results that support the business need and research purpose.
- Prove that objectives were met through evaluation.
- Provide results that demonstrate the research has helped the organization.

Entries are scored up for:
- Thorough evaluation and documentation of results.
- Credible measurement of intangibles.
- An executive summary is included in a work sample.
- Outcome-based results that positively influence business results.

Entries are scored down if:
- The results are not reported against the stated objectives.
- Only output-based results are reported.
- Results aren't statistically valid.
- There is a mismatch between objectives and results.
- The results show only anecdotal evaluation.
- Results aren't statistically meaningful to the business.

Tips from evaluators:
- Tell us how the research has been a success.
- Report on each objective and then provide a short paragraph explaining the project's success.
- Don't rely only subjective results based on hearsay without documented evidence, yet anecdotal feedback along with quantitative measures often helps tell the story.

Section 6: Measurement and Evaluation

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Thorough and insightful explanation of measurement and evaluation that explains a significant positive impact this research project had on the organization

A truly unique and creative approach to delivering outstanding results that raises the professional standard | Measurement encompasses multiple appropriate methodologies to thoroughly explain success

Credible measurement of appropriate intangibles such as a reputation index, or loyalty | Results exceed objectives that have meaningful impact on business need

Multiple outcomes measured that influence progress toward business goals

A work sample includes executive summary of formal evaluation that supports the results

Provides recommendations for improvement | Demonstrates appropriate measurement methodology

Measurements against original benchmarks or targets

Rationale speaks to objectives that weren't met

Credible results support the business need and research purpose

Proof provided that objectives were met through evaluation

Demonstrates the research helped the organization | Results reported on only outputs

Results measure only if tactic completed

Results don't address business need or relate to audience

Results generalized, vague, or anecdotal

Results not statistically valid

Misinterpretation of survey data

Results aren't statistically meaningful to business

No measure for every objective | Results not reported against stated objectives

Subjective results based on hearsay without documented evidence

Results not meaningful to business | No measurement or evaluation |

HOW TO PREPARE WORK SAMPLES
(at least one and a maximum of five)

For Division 2 Communication Research

What to include in the work sample

The elements of the work samples should be representative of the project—you need not include every item produced for the project. The elements you include should demonstrate skill in both strategic planning and implementation. The overall work sample(s) should represent the research instrument, analysis and reporting of findings, and recommendations based on the findings that flow from the research. Materials should be organized and presented in the same order as the work plan format. Referencing the samples in the work plan or including notes of explanation on each work sample provides additional context for the evaluators to understand your work.

IABC awards programs allow you to upload a maximum of five work samples.

In this division, work samples might include your communication plan, research plan, and communication requesting participation, incentives, and survey tools such as questionnaires, interview guides, focus group reports, research reports, research presentations and research recommendations.

The work sample scoring counts for 50 percent of the entry score in Division 2 Communication Research.

The work sample scoring is split equally into four sections:
1. Stakeholder alignment and impact
2. Alignment with objectives and strategy
3. Professional execution
4. Overall quality

Evaluators look to the work samples to demonstrate that the plan was implemented effectively and professionally. All the samples combined are scored separately from the work plan, but it's hard for samples to get a high score if the work plan didn't score well. Evaluators review the work samples as objectively as possible through the eyes of your intended audience, and take the overall strategy into account.

SECTION 7: Stakeholder Alignment and Influence

Connecting with the audience in a meaningful and memorable way is an important competency in communication work. Strategic planning is only part of this equation. Messages, vehicles and channels must be aligned with audience needs and preferences because if the audience doesn't get the message in a clear, consistent, convincing, and creative way, it might not be heard. If the audience is not moved to action, your response rates may suffer. If your language is not aligned to your audience, your survey, interviews or focus groups may receive inappropriate responses.

Evaluator questions

How well do the work samples reflect the audience characteristics, needs and preferences? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Demonstrate good choices of messages, mediums, media, channels, and methodology that align with the audience analysis?
- Include messages that engage the audience and influence behaviors?
- Utilize language aligned to the audience analysis?

How this section is scored

Evaluators look for a match between the way the audience was described and the way the program was implemented based on the following guidelines:
- Is the language level appropriate for the audience?
- For an audience that has little time, is the copy concise?
- Does the channel choice match the audience's needs?
- Is the research methodology selected available to the audience?
- Are the messages clear, concise, credible, consistent, convincing, and creative?

If the audience analysis was not adequately defined, it will be tough to score well in this section.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Demonstrate choices appropriate to the audience aligning with the work plan.
- Use clear and consistent language.
- Be well written and produced.
- Reflect a clear understanding of audience characteristics and needs.
- Communicate in a way that is likely to resonate with the audience.

Entries are scored up for:
- Particularly good choices matching audience characteristics.
- Messages that clearly impact the audience.
- Strong writing and execution likely to connect emotionally with the audience.
- Integrated channels, tools, and vehicles.
- Creative thinking, imagination, or innovative approaches certain to engage audiences and influence behavior.

Entries are scored down if:
- Language, graphics or design is too complex or inappropriate for the audience.
- Messages patronize or insult the audience.
- Messages are not clear.

- Work samples are unlikely to gain audience attention.

Tips from evaluators:
- Select representative work samples that connect with the audience.
- Add notes to each work sample to explain how project choices were made based on the audience analysis.

Section 7: Stakeholder Alignment and Influence

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Extraordinary example of connecting to audience in meaningful way that impacts the business positively	Smart thinking that shows the audience perspective Demonstrates creative thinking, imagination or an innovative approach certain to engage audience emotionally	Particularly good choices matching audience characteristics (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) The contents of the work samples are highly likely to capture audience attention and engage them Strong writing and execution likely to connect with the audience Integrated channels, tools and vehicles	Demonstrates choices appropriate to audiences (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) Uses clear, consistent language. Reflects an understanding of audience characteristics and needs Communicates in a way likely to resonate with audience Communicates with sensitivity to cultural values and beliefs	Choices inappropriate to audience (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) Audience unlikely to respond to messages, vehicles, channels Work sample elements are bland and likely to get lost in clutter	Insults audience It's not clear how audience is to respond Material clearly insensitive to cultural values and beliefs	All work sample elements clearly not appropriate for audience as describe

SECTION 8: Alignment with Objectives and Strategy

A project implemented and represented by your work sample(s) must support the objectives stated in the work plan. Strategic execution supports the needs of the business, connects with the audience, and makes an impact. This should be clear and consistent in all elements of a communication research project.

Evaluator questions

How well are the work samples aligned with the objectives stated in the work plan? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Provide evidence that the project is on strategy and is consistent with business needs?
- Provide clear, consistent work sample elements that are communicated in a powerful way?
- Reflect the research objectives, research questions, and strategic thinking in the work sample(s)?
- Provide clear evidence that the work samples have the desired effect on the audience and business needs?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators will look for choices in research approach, instruments, and reporting documents that support the objectives.
- Communication to the audience being studied should be engaging and likely to deliver on the stated objectives.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Reflect the objectives set out in the work plan.
- Demonstrate choices that support the needs of the business, purpose of the research, and the questions the research was intended to answer.
- Align with the business needs to support the achievement of goals and objectives.

Entries are scored up if:
- The work samples are designed and produced to achieve the research project objectives.
- Support material and design elements are aligned to the organization, business need, and brand identity.
- The work is clear, consistent and communicates in a powerful way.
- The sample fully reflects the objectives and strategic thinking presented in the plan.
- The work is an extraordinary example of a research approach.

Entries are scored down if:
- The work is not aligned to the organization's brand, unless there's an explanation.
- Messaging isn't consistent.
- The work sample elements contain extra elements that distract from the research objectives, purpose of the research, or questions the research was intended to answer.
- The work samples don't show what was done.
- The samples are incomplete, confusing, poorly presented or inadequately explained.
- There is an obvious mismatch, such as an emphasis on executive egos and not enough on the research objectives and purpose.

Tips from evaluators:

- Add notes to the work samples explaining how they deliver on the research objectives.
- Include the communications or a research plan as a work sample to demonstrate strategic planning.

Section 8: Alignment with Objectives and Strategy

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Extraordinary example of research approach meeting business needs and stated objectives in meaningful and memorable way that impacts the business positively	Likely to significantly exceed stated objectives based on work samples Creative elements of work samples strategically aligned to business need and research project objectives	Work samples designed and produced to achieve the research project objectives Work samples likely to exceed stated objectives and drive business success Work is clear, consistent and clever, communicating in powerful way Sample fully explains and reflects the objectives and strategic thinking presented in the work plan	Work samples demonstrate the implementation of the plan Reflects the stated objectives in the work plan Demonstrates choices that support business needs, purpose of the research, and the questions the research was intended to answer Aligns with business needs to support achieving goals and objectives	Messaging is not consistent Work is out of sync with the organization's brand without explanation Messages aren't consistent Extra elements in the samples distract from the research objectives, purpose of the research, or questions the research was intended to answer	Samples don't show what was done Samples are incomplete, confusing, or poorly presented or explained	Samples will clearly not accomplish stated objectives

SECTION 9: Professional Execution

For research to serve as a foundation for strategic communication work there must be confidence in the approach taken to obtain, interpret, and analyze data. Well-designed and implemented research projects following industry accepted practices earn credibility and influence decisions that improve an organization's success. Paying attention to industry standards and keeping up with leading edge thinking, processes, and production demonstrates commitment to effective communication.

Evaluator questions

Given the budget and resources, how well do the work samples measure up to professional standards?
To what extent did the entrant:
- Provide well-crafted work sample elements?
- Align to accepted research practices?
- Demonstrate appropriate data analysis, interpretation of results, and presentation of recommendations?
- Demonstrate high-quality writing and production?
- Demonstrate consistency between what was presented in the work plan and what was delivered?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators take note of innovative approaches to valid and reliable research.
- They watch for clear, consistent, error-free writing, well-crafted questionnaires, and convincing communications.
- Evaluators look to see the extent to which the research instrument is appropriate in language, question design, response options, and ease of administration.
- They look for an appropriate analysis of the research data with an accurate and engaging presentation of results that lead to decisions.
- Evaluators will review how accurately reporting documents represent results and make it easy for the decision-making individuals to understand what was learned and the implications.
- Reports need to adhere to professional standards of how numbers were analyzed.
- There is appropriate weighting of any survey results needed to match the actual audience.
- Charts must effectively show results and correctly visualize the findings.
- Includes both an executive summary for executives and a detailed report for the communicators to use in action planning by subgroup of the target audience.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Provide accurate analysis and reporting of the data throughout.
- Contain quality production values appropriate to the media and the budget.
- Reflect professional standards of ethics and research practices.
- Contain work samples demonstrating the ability to answer the research questions.
- Demonstrate clear, consistent use of language, visuals, and other elements that support the brand, research objectives, and audience.
- Demonstrate a fairly standard approach that is well implemented.

Entries are scored up for:
- Well-crafted questionnaires, surveys or messages that lead directly to improved results.
- Logical and accurate interpretation of data leading to recommendations of action.
- High-quality writing and superior production values.
- Work that influences decisions to make a positive contribution to the organization.
- Thorough documentation supporting the description of the project from the work plan.
- Clever, strategic work that's appropriate for the audience.
- Work that increases the professional standards for the channels selected.

Entries are scored down for:
- Poorly crafted questionnaires, surveys or messages.
- Obvious misinterpretations of data.
- Errors in research presentation.
- Amateur work or dated approached unless supported by strategy.
- Poor technical production.
- Excess spending not likely to achieve results.

Tips from evaluators:
- Explain the choices made and the superior professional execution of the work sample elements.
- Include the scenario for the research presentation, i.e., number of people involved, arrangements, etc.

Section 9: Professional Execution

7 **Insightful, outstanding results**	6 **Innovative, significant results**	5 **Aligned, meaningful results**	4 **Professionally competent execution and results**	3 **Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	2 **Inadequate, significant elements missing**	1 **Poor, wrong**
An example that increases professional standards of innovation or use of resources An novel and effective approach aligned to the business, stakeholders, industry/profession, and community	Thorough documentation that supports the description of the project in the work plan Clever approach to communication that is appropriate for audience Stands out among others Work that influences decisions to make a significant positive contribution to the organization	High quality writing superior production values Well-crafted questionnaires, surveys or messages leading directly to improving the organization's results Logical and accurate interpretations of data with recommendations as to actions needed Work that clearly explains the emotional connection made with the audience Professionally executed with scarce resources	Good production values appropriate to media and budget Provides accurate analysis and reporting of data throughout Professional standards of ethics and good taste Work samples demonstrate the ability to answer the research questions Clear, consistent use of language, visuals and other elements Consistent use of language, visuals and other elements A fairly standard approach that is well executed	Poorly crafted questionnaire, surveys or messages Errors in research presentation Poor technical production A few spelling, grammar or structure errors Resources not defined	Obvious misinterpretations of data Images, writing tone or style that doesn't match business or audience need An approach that clearly will not work Work insults the audience Several spelling, grammar or structure errors	An approach that clearly will not work

SECTION 10: Overall Quality

Entries receiving IABC awards signify strategic communication and the ability of communication to positively influence business results. Entries are evaluated by trained communicators. Their ability to evaluate the entry properly is impacted by how well the entry is organized and written. They look for alignment between the work plan and work samples to demonstrate planning and implementation abilities.

Evaluator questions

Given the interdependence among all sections, to what degree is the entry a strong blueprint for strategic planning and communication? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Provide a well-written and produced entry that's easy to understand?
- Provide a representative sample of all the elements described in the work plan including the research instrument, analysis and reporting of findings, and recommendation based on the findings that flow from the research?
- Demonstrate strategic and creative thinking that reflects the audience and business needs?
- Demonstrate the ability of research to serve as a foundation for communication and to influence valid business results?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look for a strong connection between the work plan and the work samples.
- The work samples should be organized and strategic containing the elements referred to in the work plan including the research instrument, analysis and reporting of findings, and recommendation based on the findings that flow from the research.
- The work samples are not excessively long, yet include a reasonable amount of work sample elements representing the research project.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Be organized and strategic containing the elements referred to in the work plan including the research instrument, analysis and reporting of findings, and recommendation based on the findings that flow from the research.
- The work plan and work sample elements have few errors in spelling or grammar.
- The work sample elements represent a successful research project.

Entries are scored up if:
- Work sample elements are included representing most or all of the work plan.
- The entry demonstrates excellence in strategic planning and execution throughout.
- The entry demonstrates innovative or resourceful planning or execution.
- The entry clearly conveys the success of the project.

Entries are scored down if:

- The work samples don't match or is inconsistent to the work plan.
- The entry demonstrates poor work including errors, lack of proofreading, or obvious missing items.
- The work samples are excessively long.
- Work plan doesn't follow IABC format.

Tips from evaluators:

- Label the work sample elements with easy to identify file names, i.e., Communications Plan; Questionnaire, Report, Presentation…
- Reference the elements of the work samples within the work plan.
- The entry should tell a story of your success. Include enough information and explanation for the evaluator to understand the strategic alignment, professional execution and how the project helped your organization.
- Include photos of events (with explanations) as work samples to show evaluators the people involved.

Section 10: Overall Quality

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Demonstrates an outstanding example of a unique, innovative and highly effective approach to communication with a thorough explanation of how it influences business results	Thorough explanation of what was done Demonstrates excellence in strategic planning and execution Explains significant business results Highly innovative approach	Comprehensive and representative sample reflecting a successful research project Demonstrates and explains a meaningful business result	Work samples match description in work plan Clearly shows what was done for the project Reinforces work plan Provides evidence of care and attention to delivering the tactical elements of the plan Contributes to overall quality of entry	Work sample doesn't match the plan Work sample doesn't reflect the business or audience needs Work sample elements are extremely long showing entire project rather than representing the project Work plan doesn't follow IABC format Work sample elements demonstrate poor work including errors, lack of proofreading or missing obvious items	The work sample is significantly different from the work plan	No work sample included.

DIVISION 3 COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND EDUCATION

This division recognizes the training and education role of consultants and communicators in developing and delivering workshops, classes, seminars or training that educates an audience about any aspect of the communication profession. This division includes all communication disciplines and professional competencies.

Entries in this division may include communication training delivered within an organization, whether by consultants or in-house staff, as well as training and education via university classes, conferences, seminars, or workshops. It includes training or education intended to develop or enhance communication competencies or skills as identified in the Global Standard of the Communication Profession's six principles: ethics, context, analysis, consistency, engagement and strategy.

Communication training and education has the potential to enhance the value of the communication function, profession, or discipline. Entries in this division must demonstrate:

- Alignment of learning outcomes to goals and objectives.
- Alignment of assessments to specific learning outcomes.
- Theories and practices of educational excellence.
- Impact outside the classroom.

HOW TO PREPARE A WORK PLAN

SECTION 1: The Business Need or Opportunity

Communication training delivered within an organization whether by consultants or in-house staff has the potential to improve business results when strategically focused on a business need. A strategic communication training opportunity flows from the business need. It answers the question "How can this training help the organization meet the business need?" Learning outcomes define what the learner can demonstrate, represent or produce following training and lead to meeting the business need.

Communication education in an academic, conference, or seminar environment has the potential to raise the value of the communication profession, function, or discipline or to improve the academic program or institution. The business need in these situations often relates to closing a gap between what exists today in communication skills, competence and knowledge and what is possible to achieve. Learning outcomes define what the learner can demonstrate, represent or produce and lead to closing a defined gap within the profession.

Evaluators need context to assess whether the communication training supports a business or profession need and the aligned communication training opportunity. Without the relevant background information, it's difficult to determine whether the training addresses the right issues and audiences. A good description of the business need sets the stage for the rest of the work plan sections including describing stakeholders, objectives and solution(s).

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant explain the context for the entry by clearly establishing the business or profession need, the related communication training and opportunity? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Explain the business or profession environment including specific challenges that have occurred?
- Align the training/education opportunity and the need by explaining how the project helps the organization or the communication profession, function or discipline?
- Use research to substantiate the need and inform the direction of the communication education and training?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look for the entrant to show a clear understanding of the business or profession needs and why that understanding matters.
- It should be clear why the training/education was carried out.
- The entry explains how the training/education helps to positively influence business performance or enrich the communication profession, function or discipline, now or in the future.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Clearly define and demonstrate an understanding of the business or profession need.
- Speak to how the education or training opportunity was identified, why it matters to the business or profession.
- Provide enough context about the organization and its environment so it's clear how the program contributes to business success.

Entries are scored up for:
- A clear explanation of specific changes or challenges demonstrating the urgency of the business or profession need.
- The relevance of the education/training is thoroughly explained.
- A multi-faceted explanation of the strategic alignment and why the training/education matters to the business or profession.
- A thorough and insightful explanation of how the training/education will make a difference on the business or profession need.
- Including primary or secondary research to define the need.

Entries are scored down if:
- There isn't an explanation of how the education/training will help the organization or profession.
- The business or profession need is assumed, generalized, or vague.
- There isn't enough information about the organization and its business goals to allow evaluators to fairly evaluate the solution.

Tips from evaluators:
- Describe what has changed that brought about the business need to demonstrate the urgency or why the training is needed now. This could be related to an industry issue, the business climate, regulatory issues, etc.
- A superior entry explains the business or profession need at a high level. For example, rather than stating there is a need for the organization to provide specific curriculum, it explains why the curriculum is needed.

Section 1: Business Need and Communication Opportunity

7 **Insightful, outstanding results**	6 **Innovative, significant results**	5 **Aligned, meaningful results**	4 **Professionally competent execution and results**	3 **Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	2 **Inadequate, significant elements missing**	1 **Poor, wrong**
Multi-faceted explanation of how the need is strategically aligned to the business, stakeholders, industry/ profession, and community along with why the training/ education matters The data supporting the need comes from more than one source Thorough research of business need includes history, current situation, size and scope show significant understanding of situation and how to proceed with solution(s)	Superior explanation of the current business state including challenges and urgency driving the communication opportunity Superior explanation of how the training/education will make a difference on the business or profession A thorough explanation of research, benchmarking and analysis of the business communication environment against the needs and opportunity	Changes or challenges explained demonstrating urgency of the business or profession need Opportunity aligns to the organization's strategic direction, key performance indicators and business need The need is identified through formal or informal research	The business needs are clearly defined demonstrating understanding Speaks to how the education/training opportunity was identified and why it matters to the business or profession Speaks to how the opportunity helps the business Provide enough context about the organization and its environment so it's clear how the program contributes to business success	The business or profession need is not well defined It is not clear why the project was undertaken It's not clear how need and training/education opportunity were defined Training/ education opportunity is not aligned with the business need Training/ education opportunity is generalized or vague such as management thought it would be a good idea	There is no background on the organization and its business goals to set the context The business or profession need is assumed, generalized or vague	No explanation of the business or profession need No explanation of the training/ education communication opportunity

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SECTION 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Effective training/education results begin with appropriate understanding of the audience receiving the training/education. It may also be important to understand the audience who will approve the training/education. The work plan should demonstrate an understanding of the relevant audiences. If the entrant doesn't explore the appropriate characteristics such as audience size, location, preferences, attitudes, demographics, psychographics or other characteristics, it's difficult to determine whether the objectives, learning outcomes, approach, methodology, assessments, or evaluation are appropriate. Evaluators look for entrants to demonstrate that the planning and presentation of the training/education takes the audience needs, wants, preferences, opinions and behaviors into account.

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant define, segment, and analyze critical characteristics of the audience(s) in relation to the training/education? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Share relevant audience characteristics such as prior knowledge, education, geography, demographics, psychographics, preferences, attitudes, opinion, motivations, etc.?
- Include audience research that provides insight to the education and training?
- Discuss how audience analysis will influence the planning, delivery or measurement of the training and education?

How this section is scored

- It must be clear that the audience(s) analyzed is appropriate.
- Audience analysis should be based on formal or informal research.
- The entrant must show that they've taken the audiences' needs, wants, preferences, opinions, and behaviors into account and that they have used this information to design or deliver the training/education.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- List audience(s) and describe the characteristics, preferences, and needs in enough detail to show how your understanding led to choices of methods, materials, channels, strategy and tactics.

Entries are scored up for:
- Research that defines audience characteristics and needs (formal is best, but informal analysis can be cited).
- A thorough discussion that shows how the audience is linked to strategy, methods, materials and tactic choices.
- A research-based benchmark is included for the relevant audience attitudes, knowledge or skills.

Entries are scored down if:

- The audience(s) aren't defined.
- Broad audiences such as employees, the general public, or customers are listed without defining needs or characteristics.
- Audiences are listed but no analysis is provided.
- An opportunity to segment and target specific audience groups is missed.
- An obvious audience in relation to the training/education is missed without explanation.
- There are vague, unsupported assumptions about audience needs.

Tips from evaluators:

- Describe your subject audiences' online access if you are using an online learning tool to demonstrate an appropriate tool choice.
- If you must pitch or receive approval for your training, include characteristics of the audience approving the training and how this helped you to determine your approach.
- Explain relevant cultural differences.
- Avoid making vague assumptions such as "We thought they might like…"

Section 2: Stakeholder Analysis

7 — Insightful, outstanding results	6 — Innovative, significant results	5 — Aligned, meaningful results	4 — Professionally competent execution and results	3 — Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing	2 — Inadequate, significant elements missing	1 — Poor, wrong
Truly unique approach to audience analysis that raises the bar of the professional standards	Audience segmentation clearly separates groups and identifies appropriate characteristics Clear explanation of how the audience characteristics influence the solution Thorough explanation of how audience research leads to decisions within project Formal research conducted to define audience characteristics	Superior explanation of characteristics allow appropriate decisions on strategy and tactics A description demonstrates how the audience is linked to strategy and tactics Informal or secondary research defines audience characteristics and needs Explains how audience research leads to strategy and tactics Audiences segmented in way that influences solution	Audience characteristics and mindset analyzed in relation to the education/training opportunity Lists audience(s) and describe the characteristics, preferences, and needs in enough detail to show how the understanding led to choices of methods, materials, channels, strategy and tactics Speaks to how audience(s) and characteristics identified Appropriate audiences analyzed including those receiving training and those approving training project Appropriate research methodology	Audiences are listed with vague, unsupported assumptions about characteristics Characteristics included are irrelevant to the project or audience Misses an obvious audience in relation to identified need Inappropriate research methodology	Broad publics or stakeholder groups listed without defining needs or characteristics Wrong audience identified based on need No mention of audience research	Audiences not listed

SECTION 3: Goals and Objectives

The ability to set meaningful, measurable, objectives that are relevant to the business or profession need is critical to measure the success of any communication training and education program. Effective work that delivers results helps to create value and build credibility of communication as a primary business driver. **Appropriate goals, learning outcomes, and objectives are critical to an entry because other parts of the entry evaluation are dependent on these elements.**

Preset goals, learning outcomes, and objectives identify the important factors being measured to indicate training success. They should align to the business or profession need and audience analysis. Stating measurable learning outcomes that are behavior-based and use the SMART formula set a target for success.

Excellence is recognized as measurable outcomes related to the application of training and education to improve the business results of an organization or to enhance the communication profession. In addition, specific measurable learning outcomes should define what the learner can demonstrate, represent or produce during or following training, along with an explanation of how these lead to meeting the business/profession need.

Evaluator questions

How well does the entrant set measurable objectives or learning outcomes relevant to the business or profession need? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Distinguish between goals, objectives, learning outcomes, and an approach to the training/education?
- Establish measurable, relevant learning outcomes and objectives?
- Align learning outcomes and objectives with the stakeholder analysis and the business or profession need?
- Ensure that objectives will produce an effect on the stated business or profession need?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look primarily for an explanation of the goals of the training and education along with objectives and learning outcomes that measure the outcome.
- Preset, measurable objectives and learning outcomes set the target and are stated as outcome-based objectives related to the business or profession need.
- Goals and objectives are aligned with the business or profession needs identified.
- Excellence is recognized as outcomes related to the application of academic education to enrich the communication profession.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- State an overall big picture goal(s) that doesn't need to be stated in measurable terms.
- Include preset, measurable, and outcome-based objectives that link to the business or profession need.
- State specific measurable, meaningful learning outcomes.
- Learning outcomes align to goals and objectives.
- Assessments align to learning outcomes.
- Explain how measurable learning outcomes lead to meeting the business or profession need.

Entries are scored up for:
- Learning outcomes or objectives explanation references the theories and practice of education (pedagogy).
- Insightful approaches to setting measurements for the training/education.
- Thorough explanation of the strategic nature of the training/education.
- Objectives are stated in terms of impact on the business/profession.
- Objectives focused on both cognitive skills such as knowledge acquisition or application of knowledge and non-cognitive skills, such as changes in values and attitudes.

Entries are scored down for:
- Objectives are production or deadline-focused, or based on process – these are tactics not objectives.
- Objectives are not related to the business or profession need.
- There are no preset, measurable objectives.
- Learning outcomes are vague or generic and not aligned to specific assessments.
- Learning outcomes are too narrow and not sufficient to achieve the overall strategic goal of the training/education.

Tips from evaluators:
- Clearly describe the strategic nature of your training/education—how will it change the institution or the communication profession? Do not assume that the learning outcomes themselves make the case for that.
- Explain which assessments correspond to which learning outcomes and how they all connect to your overarching goal.
- Highlight any innovation in assessment you may have used through the training/education and explain how it was effective.
- Emphasize any and all post-training measurements you have applied both on the individual learner or the institutional level.

A note on Communication Training and Education objectives

Goals generally describe what you want to accomplish in a broad sense. Objectives clearly define the desired outcome, or what success will look like. Objectives should be related to the business or profession need and be measurable. More detail on communication goals and objectives can be found in the Division 1 Communication Management section of this document.

Learning outcomes generally state what a learner can demonstrate, represent, or produce based on the learning. They measure something that is useful, meaningful and relevant to the course and business or profession need. Assessment should link to learning outcomes and consist of multiple approaches for a full understanding of results.

SMART learning outcomes
There is considerable literature written supporting the use of the SMART formula for writing learning outcomes. The SMART formula can help you determine whether the outcomes are sound, and while this process is not the only way to evaluate the strength of outcomes, it is a good guideline.

Specific: States exactly what the learner should learn or be able to do after the training
Measurable: Stated with a quantity and able to be measured
Achievable: Something learners have a chance of completing or satisfying
Relevant: Something useful or valuable that contributes to the business or profession
Time-framed: Includes a time-frame or completion date

Assessments (specific instruments, tools, and metrics) measure learning outcomes.

Section 3: Goals and Objectives

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
A thoroughly explained and insightful approach to setting strategic goals and objectives leading to outstanding business results	Learning outcomes or objectives explanation references the theories and practice of education (pedagogy) Insightful approaches to setting measurements for the training/ education Appropriate objectives are segmented by audience Objectives focused on both cognitive skills such as knowledge acquisition or application of knowledge and non-cognitive skills, such as changes in values and attitudes Explains how all stated, measurable objectives are aligned to business need Research used to set targets	Objectives stated using the SMART formula Objectives are outcome-based and likely to deliver meaningful results to business or profession Thorough explanation of strategic nature of training/education Objectives are stated in terms of impact on the business or profession	States overall big picture goal(s) – do not need to be measurable. Specific outcome-based, measurable, meaningful objectives appropriate for the business or profession need Learning outcomes included that align to goals and objectives Assessments used to measure outcomes are aligned to learning outcomes Explains how the measurable learning outcomes lead to meeting the business or profession need	Understanding of goals, objectives and tactics not demonstrated Objectives production, deadline-focused, or based on tactics Objectives all output-based Learning outcomes are vague, generic and not aligned to specific assessments Objectives do not include preset targets to indicate success Objectives not realistic or achievable	Objectives not measureable Objectives do not focus on the identified goal(s) or business/profession need	No goals or objectives

SECTION 4: The Solution Overview

The solution offers insight into how you approached the training/education project. It should flow from the business or profession need, audience understanding, goals and objectives, learning outcomes, and relevant research. This section covers your approach and plan for the project including the tactical elements.

Evaluator questions

How effective is the education/training approach? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Explain how the business or profession needs, audiences and objectives are aligned with the strategic and/or creative approach, methods, or materials?
- Demonstrate that the audience analysis was taken into account to engage learners or other audiences?
- Explain the approach to teaching materials and methods?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look to see how the business or profession need, audience analysis and research informed the solution.
- Evaluators seek to understand the planning of the communication training/education.
- Appropriate communication, methods, and materials to engage participants are explained.
- A well-thought-out project schedule and plan are included.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Describe how the training plan was developed.
- Explain the rationale and strategic thinking.
- Include a high-level tactical implementation plan.
- Be aligned to the business or profession need, audiences, objectives, and learning outcomes.

Entries are marked up for:
- Well explained rationale linking audiences and objectives to methods and materials.
- Sound explanation supporting choices, which may include evaluating other options.
- Thorough discussion of links to business needs.
- Highly creative approach to methods, materials, or presentation.
- Including stakeholder input.
- Thorough explanation of how theories and practices of education (pedagogy) impact choices.

Entries are marked down for:

- Failing to explain what was done or why.
- The plan doesn't address the need or learning outcomes.
- The tactical implementation plan is sparse or missing.
- The methods and materials are inappropriate for the audience.

Tips from evaluators:

- Explain how your solution choice was impacted by your analysis of the audience.
- Specifically state the major strength(s) of your solution. Include explanations and evidence supporting the strength(s).
- Reference and explain the elements you will use in your work sample.
- Explain how and why your approach was creative/innovative for the specific training/education.

Section 4: Solution Overview

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Solution increases the highest level of professional standards of creativity, innovation or resource utilization Thorough explanation of potential for outstanding results An effective communication solution not heard of before	Unique and effective approach to meet business/ profession need Explanation of potential for significant results Highly creative approach to methods, materials, or presentation Explanation of how scarce resources to produce significant results Explanation of how the solution is likely to deliver results for multiple business/ profession needs Demonstrates innovative approach to collaboration or facilitation Addresses solutions for potential ethical issues	Thorough explanation of how solution links to business need, audiences, and objectives Sound explanation supporting choices, which may include evaluating other options Stakeholder input included Solution is highly likely to achieve stated objectives Explains appropriate rationale and strategic thinking Research results inform the solution Potential ethical issues identified	Describes how training plan developed Entrants role explained Solution aligned to the business or profession need, audiences, objectives, and learning outcomes Demonstrates collaboration with key stakeholders Solution aligned with business need and audience analysis Includes high-level tactical implementation plan	Solution doesn't address business or profession need Tactical plan sparse Solution not likely to meet stated objectives or learning outcomes Solution clearly inappropriate for business/profession need or audience	Doesn't explain what was done Tactical plan missing Entrant did not play a key role in the project Does not address obvious ethical issues	No explanation of solution

SECTION 5: Implementation and Challenges

Implementing a written strategic plan demonstrates necessary planning and project management skills required by professional communicators and educators. A professional demonstrates value to the organization by how well the project moves from plan approval to project completion. Budget management is a critical skill when implementing a plan. And, challenges such as tight deadlines, small budgets, stubborn decision makers and staff turnover often occur which when managed right show management capabilities. How well challenges are met speaks to a professional's skills and abilities.

Evaluator questions

How well was the plan managed through implementation? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Demonstrate that time, money, labor, and other resources were used effectively?
- Outline any challenges faced and demonstrate that they were effectively managed?
- Demonstrate consultation with stakeholders?
- Provide evidence of direct involvement in the training/education?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look for documentation of implementation and any challenges faced.
- Evaluators expect an explanation of how budget, time, labor and other resources were used. While an exact budget figure is not required, evidence of resources available and how they were wisely used must be included.
- Evaluators take into account efforts to successfully manage challenges when scoring an entry. Entries are not scored down if there are no challenges.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Discuss how the project was managed, including stakeholder collaboration and involvement, if appropriate.
- Provide a reasonable explanation of the resources available and used including budget, time, staff, consultants, etc.
- Note challenges encountered and how they were overcome.
- Explain how the plan was sold to management, client or other stakeholders.
- Include a description of your role in the project.

Entries are scored up for:
- Good use of budget including effective use of a limited budget.
- Effective and appropriate use of internal and external resources.
- Innovative solutions to challenges leading to exceeding objectives.
- Work achieved under difficult deadlines or conditions.
- Explanation of any future modifications to methods and materials based on the implementation or challenges.
- A clever approach to selling the project.

Entries are scored down if:
- Budget or resource information is not addressed.
- Use of resources seems wasteful or inappropriate.
- There's no explanation of how the project was implemented.

- Deadlines are missed or budget exceeded without a reasonable explanation.
- Work clearly wasn't worth the time, effort or money.

Tips from evaluators
- Be sure to explain the budget for the project, including staff time, and how you effectively managed it.
- Tell us why the implementation of the plan was above expectations.
- Evaluators don't score down if there were no challenges. If you expected potential problems or challenges during the planning stage, describe how you prevented them from occurring.

Section 5: Implementation and Challenges

7 Insightful, outstanding results	6 Innovative, significant results	5 Aligned, meaningful results	4 Professionally competent execution and results	3 Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing	2 Inadequate, significant elements missing	1 Poor, wrong
A truly unique and creative approach to implementing the solution and delivering outstanding results that raises the professional standard	An innovative solution to challenges result in exceeding objectives that demonstrate the impact of communication on the business

Thorough explanation of an innovative way to consult with audience members resulting in exceeding objectives significantly

A thorough explanation of how effective use of limited resource(s) resulting in project that meets implementation plan

Clever approach to selling the project to achieve approval or support | Explains the effective use of budget – got a lot done with few resources

Demonstrates collaboration with stakeholders

Plan implemented under difficult deadlines

Effectively manages challenges enabling meeting objectives

Work achieved under tight deadlines or budgets | Project budget and resources described

Effective and appropriate use of internal and external resources

Objectives met within budget

Implementation plan met or reasonable explanation provided | Resource description not complete, some resources not included

Media, vehicles or channels don't suit audience

Inappropriate use of resources

Missed deadlines or budget exceeded without reasonable explanation | No budget or resource discussion

Excessive use of resources without proper justification

Work is clearly not worth the time, effort or money | No budget or implementation plan |

SECTION 6: Measurement and Evaluation

Strategic planning and implementation is a vital business process. **That's why it's critical to set measurable objectives and learning outcomes aligned with the business or profession needs and then to measure progress against them.**

When professionals can show management the value of their work in measurable terms, senior executives take notice, and the reputation of communication as a critical contributor to organization success increases. When learners can apply what they have learned it has the potential to enrich the communication profession, function or discipline.

In an academic environment, grades don't tell the whole outcome. Multiple assessments show a better picture than relying upon a single method. An explanation of direct and indirect assessment methods provides a more thorough evaluation.

Evaluator questions

How well were the objectives and learning outcomes met? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Align measurement with valid objectives?
- Demonstrate outcome-based results that influence awareness, understanding, opinion, attitude, behaviors, business results, or application of learning?
- Measure achievement of learning outcomes/objectives?
- Provide a thorough evaluation that supports the results?
- Measure impact outside the classroom?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look to see that the entrant tracked results against the same objectives and learning outcomes set in the entry's Section 3 Goals and Objectives.
- These measurements should be objective, clearly explained and appropriate for the training/education.
- Assessments tied to specific learning outcomes.
- The results should show the relationship between the objectives or learning outcomes that were set and the results that were achieved.
- The results should be thorough and convincing.
- Entries with poor or no measurable objectives set in Section 3, will score lower in this section.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Measure against the original benchmarks or targets used to set objectives and learning outcomes.
- Provide evidence that objectives and learning outcomes were met through evaluation.
- Demonstrate appropriate measurement methodology.
- Show credible results that support the business or profession need and impact outside the classroom.

Entries are scored up for:
- Thorough evaluation and documentation of results.
- An executive summary of the measurement included.
- Measuring behavior-based learning outcomes that are useful and meaningful.
- Including outcome-based results that positively influence business results or enhance the profession.
- Measuring application of learning post-event.
- Multiple forms of assessments included that are tied to learning outcomes.
- A superior explanation of an appropriate measurement approach.
- Measurement demonstrates significant impact outside the classroom.

Entries are scored down if:
- The results are not reported against the stated objectives.
- Only output-based results are reported.
- Conclusions drawn from measurements aren't accurate.
- There is a mismatch between objectives, learning outcomes, and results.
- The results show only anecdotal evaluation.

Tips from evaluators:
- Report evidence for each objective and follow with one short paragraph explaining the success of the project overall.
- Include multiple methods of measuring learners' cognitive or non-cognitive skills, as applicable.
- Tell the evaluator why the entry is a success.
- Don't' rely only on subjective results based on hearsay without documented evidence, yet anecdotal feedback along with quantitative measures often helps tell the story.

Section 6: Measurement and Evaluation

7 **Insightful, outstanding results**	6 **Innovative, significant results**	5 **Aligned, meaningful results**	4 **Professionally competent execution and results**	3 **Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	2 **Inadequate, significant elements missing**	1 **Poor, wrong**
Thorough and insightful explanation of measurement and evaluation that explains an outstanding positive impact this training/ education had on the business/ profession Truly unique example of measurement that raises the professional standard	Measurement encompasses multiple appropriate methodologies to thoroughly explain success Credible measurement of intangibles such as a reputation index or loyalty For academia measurement demonstrates significant impact outside the classroom	Results exceed objectives and have impact business/ profession need positively Explains formal research conducted for measurement Multiple outcomes measured that influence progress toward goals Includes summary explanation of evaluation and how project helped the business/ profession Demonstrates results presented to stakeholders Provides recommendations for improvement	Demonstrates alignment between measurement and preset objectives and learning outcomes Includes proof that objectives were met through assessment, measurement and evaluation Appropriate measurement methodology Includes an explanation of objectives or learning outcomes that weren't met	Results reported on only outputs Results measure only if tactic completed Results don't address business/profession need or relate to audience Results generalized, vague, or anecdotal Results not statistically valid Research methodology doesn't meet industry standards Conclusions drawn from measurement inaccurate No measure for every objective	Results not reported against stated objectives or learning outcomes Subjective results based on hearsay without documented evidence	No measurement or evaluation

HOW TO PREPARE WORK SAMPLES
(at least one and a maximum of five)

For Division 3 Communication Education and Training

What to include in the work sample

The work sample elements should be representative of the project -- you need not include every item produced for the project. The elements you include should demonstrate skill in strategic course planning, method selection, material preparation, delivery, and other relevant implementation. The overall work sample should represent the learning plans along with the materials and methods used in the training and education. This could include a project plan, program description, learning plan, syllabus, presentations, interactive exercises, grading reports, rubrics, discussion approaches, assessments, post-event surveys, and other items.

Materials should be organized and presented in the same order as the work plan format. Referencing the samples in the work plan or including notes of explanation on the work sample elements provides additional context for the evaluators to understand your work.

IABC Awards programs allow you to upload a maximum of five work samples. The samples must be in PDF, PNG, JPG, GIF, MP4, WMV, or M4V formats.

The work sample scoring counts for 50 percent of the entry score in Division 3 Communication Education and Training.

The work sample scoring is split equally into four sections:
- Stakeholder alignment and impact
- Alignment with objectives and strategy
- Professional execution
- Overall quality

Evaluators look to the work samples to demonstrate that the plan was implemented effectively and professionally. The sample is scored separately from the work plan, but it's hard for a sample to get a high score if the work plan didn't score well. Evaluators review the work sample as objectively as possible through the eyes of your intended audience, and take the overall strategy into account.

SECTION 7: Stakeholder Alignment and Influence

Connecting with an audience or learners in a meaningful and memorable way is an important competency in any communication work. Strategic planning is only part of this equation. Content, messages, vehicles, channels, presentation, materials, and methods must be aligned with audience needs and preferences to enable effective learning.

Evaluator questions

How well does the work sample reflect the audience characteristics, needs and preferences? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Demonstrate good choices of messages, mediums, media, channels, materials, and methodology that align with the audience analysis?
- Include messages that connect with and engage the audience?
- Align language and instruction level to the audience analysis?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look for a match between the way the audience was described and the way the program was implemented in areas such as language, attention, channel and materials.
- If the audience analysis was not adequately defined, it will be tough to score well in this section.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Demonstrate choices appropriate to the audience aligning with the work plan.
- Demonstrate methods and materials that offer learning opportunities to participants.
- Use clear and consistent language.
- Be well written and produced.
- Reflect a clear understanding of audience characteristics and needs.
- Communicate in a way that is likely to resonate with the audience.

Entries are scored up for:
- Particularly good choices of methods and materials matching audience characteristics.
- Innovative use of learning opportunities within training and education.
- Messages that clearly connect with and impact the audience.
- Creative thinking, imagination, or innovative approaches certain to connect with and engage audiences.

Entries are scored down if:
- Instructional method or materials are inappropriate for the audience.
- Messages and learning material are not clear.
- Work sample elements are unlikely to gain learners' attention.

Tips from evaluators:

- Select representative work samples that connect with the audience.
- Add notes to the work sample to explain how project choices were made based on the audience analysis.

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Section 7: Stakeholder Alignment and Influence

7 Insightful, outstanding results	6 Innovative, significant results	5 Aligned, meaningful results	4 Professionally competent execution and results	3 Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing	2 Inadequate, significant elements missing	1 Poor, wrong
Extraordinary example of connecting to audience in meaningful and memorable way that impacts the business positively Work sample elements set a new standard for profession	Smart thinking that shows the audience perspective Demonstrates creative thinking, imagination or an innovative approach certain to engage audience emotionally Innovative use of learning opportunities within training and education	Particularly good choices matching audience characteristics (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) The materials in the work sample are highly likely to capture audience attention and engage them Sample aligns to audience research	Demonstrates choices appropriate to audiences (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) and in a way likely to resonate Uses clear, consistent language. Reflects an understanding of audience characteristics and needs Communicates with sensitivity to cultural values and beliefs	Instructional method or materials are inappropriate for audience Work sample elements are bland and likely to get lost in clutter Messages and learning materials are not clear	Messages insult audience Material clearly insensitive to cultural values and beliefs	All work sample elements clearly not appropriate for audience as describe

SECTION 8: Alignment with Objectives and Strategy

Implementation of a project represented by your work samples must support the objectives stated in the work plan. Strategic execution supports the needs of the business or profession, connects with the audience, and delivers results. This should be clear and consistent in all elements of a communication training and education entry.

Evaluator questions

How well is the work sample aligned with the objectives stated in the work plan? To what extent did the entrant:
- Demonstrate evidence that the training/education is on strategy and is consistent with business needs?
- Provide clear, consistent work sample elements that are communicated in a powerful way?
- Reflect the objectives, learning outcomes and strategic thinking in the work sample?
- Provide clear evidence that the work sample has the desired effect on the audience and business or profession needs?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators will look for choices in materials and methods that support the business need, objectives, and learning outcomes.
- It should be clear why methods and materials were used.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Reflect the objectives and learning outcomes set out in the work plan.
- Demonstrate choices that support the needs of the business or profession.
- Include materials that show strategic alignment which may include program description, syllabus, or others.

Entries are scored up if:
- It is demonstrated that materials and design elements are aligned to the organization and business or profession need.
- The methods and materials communicate in a powerful way.
- The sample fully reflects and aligns to the objectives, learning outcomes, and strategic thinking presented in the plan.
- The work is an extraordinary example of an approach to training or education.
- The work clearly has the potential to make a big impact outside the classroom.

Entries are scored down if:

- Materials aren't consistent in content and intent.
- The work sample elements contain extra elements that distract from the purpose of the training/education.
- The work sample or samples don't show what was done.
- The sample or samples are incomplete, confusing, poorly presented or inadequately explained.
- There is an obvious mismatch, such as an emphasis on executive egos and not enough on the training/education objectives, learning outcomes and purpose.

Tips from evaluators:

- Add notes to the work samples explaining how they deliver on the objectives and learning outcomes.
- Include the project plan as a work sample to demonstrate strategic planning.

Section 8: Alignment with Objectives and Strategy

7 **Insightful, outstanding results**	6 **Innovative, significant results**	5 **Aligned, meaningful results**	4 **Professionally competent execution and results**	3 **Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	2 **Inadequate, significant elements missing**	1 **Poor, wrong**
Extraordinary example of meeting business needs and stated objectives in meaningful and memorable way that impacts the business or profession positively Sets a new professional standard	Likely to significantly exceed stated objectives and learning outcomes based on work samples Creative elements of work sample strategically aligned to business need The work demonstrates complete alignment from business need, objectives, stakeholder analysis, and solution	Clearly explained how the materials and design elements are aligned to the organization and business or profession need Work sample likely to exceed stated objectives and drive business success The work clearly has the potential to make a big impact outside the classroom Work is clear, consistent and clever, communicating in a powerful, emotional way Sample fully explains and reflects the objectives and strategic thinking presented in the work plan	The work sample demonstrates the implementation of the plan Reflects the stated objectives and learning outcomes in the work plan Demonstrates choices that support the needs of the business/profession Deliberately targeted to close any gaps defined by research Include materials that show strategic alignment which may include program description, syllabus, or other.	Key messages not reflected in work sample elements Work is out of sync with the organization's brand or identity Messages aren't consistent Extra elements in the sample distract from the objectives	Sample doesn't show what was done Sample is incomplete, confusing, or poorly presented or explained	Sample will clearly not accomplish stated objectives

SECTION 9: PROFESSIONAL EXECUTION

For communication training and education to have impact outside the classroom teaching excellence must exist. This excellence comes through planning courses, methods and materials based on the theories and practice of education. Paying attention to industry standards and keeping up with leading edge thinking, processes, and production demonstrates commitment to effective communication and training.

Evaluator questions

How well does the work sample measure up to professional standards? *To what extent did the entrant:*
- Provide well-crafted work sample elements?
- Use engaging methods of instruction likely to increase learners' ability to learn, remember, and apply skills?
- Demonstrate high-quality writing and production?
- Display a high level of teaching with likelihood of making an impact outside the classroom?
- Demonstrate consistency between what was presented in the work plan and what was delivered?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators take note of innovative approaches to training and education.
- They watch for clear, consistent, error-free writing, and convincing communications.
- Methods selected should be appropriate to the teaching environment described.
- Evaluators look to see the professionalism used in preparing materials including presentations, assessments, and others.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Demonstrate methods of instruction likely to result in learning, remembering, and applying skills.
- Contain quality production values appropriate to the media and the budget.
- Reflect professional standards of ethics, training and education practices.
- Demonstrate clear, consistent use of language, visuals, and other elements that support the brand, learning outcomes, and audience.
- Demonstrate a fairly standard approach to training and education that is well implemented.

Entries are scored up for:
- Well-crafted lesson plans or presentations that lead directly to improved results.
- High-quality writing.
- Thorough documentation supporting the training and education project.
- Clever, strategic work that's highly likely to increase learners' ability to learn, remember, and apply skills
- Work that is likely to result in major impact outside the classroom.
- Work that increases the professional standards of communication training and education.
- Unique and effective ways to deliver education/training that is aligned to the need.

Entries are scored down for:
- Selection of inappropriate methods of instruction.
- Poorly crafted materials.

- Amateur work or dated approaches, unless supported by strategy.
- Poor technical production.
- Excess spending not likely to achieve results.

Tips from evaluators:
- Explain the choices made and the superior professional execution of the work sample elements.
- Select work sample elements that highlight the strength of the entry, yet provide a representative sample of the work.

Section 9: Professional Execution

7 **Insightful, outstanding results**	6 **Innovative, significant results**	5 **Aligned, meaningful results**	4 **Professionally competent execution and results**	3 **Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	2 **Inadequate, significant elements missing**	1 **Poor, wrong**
An example that increases professional standards of communication training and education A truly novel and effective approach aligned to the business or profession needs, objectives, learning outcomes, <u>and</u> audiences	Thorough documentation that supports the description of the project in the work plan Clever, strategic work that's highly likely to increase learners' ability to learn, remember, and apply skills Work that is highly likely to result in major impact outside the classroom Stands out among others	Well-crafted lesson plans or presentations that lead directly to improved results High quality writing superior production values Thorough documentation supporting the training and education project Work that clearly explains the emotional connection made with the audience Professionally executed with scarce resources	Demonstrates methods of instruction likely to result in learning, remembering, and applying skills Methods selected appropriate to teaching environment Good production values appropriate to media and budget Professional standards of ethics and good taste Clear, consistent messages aligned with brand A fairly standard approach that is well executed	Selection of inappropriate methods of instruction Poorly crafter materials Dated approach for industry, geography, or media unless supported by strategy Poor technical production A few spelling, grammar or structure errors	An approach that clearly will not work Work insults the audience Multiple spelling, grammar or structure errors in materials	An approach that clearly will not work

SECTION 10: Overall Quality

Entries receiving IABC awards signify strategic communication and the ability of communication to positively influence business results. Entries are evaluated by trained IABC members. Their ability to evaluate the entry properly is impacted by how well the entry is organized and written. They look for alignment between the work plan and work sample to demonstrate planning and implementation abilities.

Evaluator questions

Given the interdependence among all sections, to what degree is the entry a strong blueprint for strategic communication training and education? *To what extent does the entrant:*
- Provide a well-written and produced entry that's easy to understand?
- Provide a representative sample of all the elements described in the work plan?
- Demonstrate strategic and creative thinking that reflects the audience and business or profession needs?
- Demonstrate the ability of training/education to serve as a foundation for communication and to influence valid business results?

How this section is scored

- Evaluators look for a strong connection between the work plan and the work sample.
- The work sample should be organized and strategic containing the elements referred to in the work plan.
- The work sample is not excessively long, yet includes a reasonable amount of work sample elements representing the research project.

A professionally competent entry earns a score of 4. It should:
- Be organized and strategic containing the elements referred to in the work plan.
- The work plan and work sample elements have few errors in spelling or grammar.
- The work sample elements represent a successful training/education project.

Entries are scored up for:
- Work sample elements are included representing most or all of the work plan.
- The entry demonstrates excellence in strategic planning and execution throughout.
- Innovative or resourceful planning or execution.
- The entry clearly conveys the success of the project.

Entries are scored down if:

- The work sample doesn't match or is inconsistent to the work plan.
- The entry demonstrates poor work including errors, lack of proofreading, or obvious missing items.
- The work sample is excessively long.
- Work plan doesn't follow IABC format.

Tips from evaluators:

- Label the work sample elements with easy to identify file names, i.e., Project Plan; Syllabus, Presentation, Post-event Survey …
- Reference the work sample elements within the work plan.
- The entry should tell a story of your success. Include enough information and explanation for the evaluator to understand the strategic alignment, professional execution and how the project helped your organization or the profession.
- Include photos of events (with explanations) as work samples to show evaluators the people involved.

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Section 10: Overall Quality

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Insightful, outstanding results	**Innovative, significant results**	**Aligned, meaningful results**	**Professionally competent execution and results**	**Less than satisfactory, several key elements missing**	**Inadequate, significant elements missing**	**Poor, wrong**
Demonstrates an outstanding example of a unique, innovative and highly effective approach to communication with a thorough explanation of how it delivers outstanding results	Thorough explanation of what was done Demonstrates excellence in execution Explains significant business results clearly conveying the success of the training/education project Highly innovative approach	Comprehensive and representative sample reflecting the work plan Demonstrates and explains a meaningful result	Work samples match description in work plan Clearly shows what was done for the project Provides evidence of attention to delivering tactical elements of the plan Contributes to overall quality of entry	Work sample doesn't match the plan Work sample elements are extremely long showing entire project rather than representing the project Work plan doesn't follow IABC format	The work sample is significantly different from the work plan	No work sample included.