



HOW-TO GUIDE FOR IABC AWARDS

The Midas Touch

How to prepare an IABC Gold Quill Award entry for:
Division 3: Communication Training and Education



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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.

Reaching across the globe, IABC Gold Quill Awards seek the best of the best.

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 28 categories. The Quill 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



- 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.
 - 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.
 - Make sure to follow the directions and answer all questions clearly and concisely.
 - 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.
 - See the work plan template on gq.iabc.com to see formatting requirements. It is a good idea to use this template as your starting point.
- **Work Sample**
 - 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.
 - If no work samples were included, the entry will be disqualified.
 - Make sure to organize/label your work samples to help evaluators know what project elements they are reviewing.
- **Scoring**
 - A score of 4 is professionally sound and appropriate work for a communicator.
 - To achieve a score of 5, the work must truly stand above average.
 - To achieve a score of 6 the work must be innovative and achieve significant business results.
 - To achieve a score of 7, the work must be extraordinary, something that resets the bar for the highest level of communication.
 - 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.



Eligibility

Any work done for IABC at the international level is not eligible.

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 Awards Program?

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

- Gain international peer 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 from around the world.

Questions? Please email recognition@iabc.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 sheet provides information about how scores are weighted for each section. Go to gg.iabc.com to check it out.



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 | 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 |
| <p>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</p> <p>The data supporting the need comes from more than one source</p> <p>Thorough research of business need includes history, current situation, size and scope show significant understanding of situation and how to proceed with solution(s)</p> | <p>Superior explanation of the current business state including challenges and urgency driving the communication opportunity</p> <p>Superior explanation of how the training/education will make a difference on the business or profession</p> <p>A thorough explanation of research, benchmarking <u>and</u> analysis of the business communication environment against the needs and opportunity</p> | <p>Changes or challenges explained demonstrating urgency of the business or profession need</p> <p>Opportunity aligns to the organization's strategic direction, key performance indicators and business need</p> <p>The need is identified through formal or informal research</p> | <p>The business needs are clearly defined demonstrating understanding</p> <p>Speaks to how the education/training opportunity was identified and why it matters to the business or profession</p> <p>Speaks to how the opportunity helps the business</p> <p>Provide enough context about the organization and its environment so it's clear how the program contributes to business success</p> | <p>The business or profession need is not well defined</p> <p>It is not clear why the project was undertaken</p> <p>It's not clear how need and training/education opportunity were defined</p> <p>Training/education opportunity is not aligned with the business need</p> <p>Training/education opportunity is generalized or vague such as management thought it would be a good idea</p> | <p>There is no background on the organization and its business goals to set the context</p> <p>The business or profession need is assumed, generalized or vague</p> | <p>No explanation of the business or profession need</p> <p>No explanation of the training/education communication opportunity</p> |



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 | 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 |
| Truly unique approach to audience analysis that raises the bar of the professional standards | <p>Audience segmentation clearly separates groups and identifies appropriate characteristics</p> <p>Clear explanation of how the audience characteristics influence the solution</p> <p>Thorough explanation of how audience research leads to decisions within project</p> <p>Formal research conducted to define audience characteristics</p> | <p>Superior explanation of characteristics allow appropriate decisions on strategy and tactics</p> <p>A description demonstrates how the audience is linked to strategy and tactics</p> <p>Informal or secondary research defines audience characteristics and needs</p> <p>Explains how audience research leads to strategy and tactics</p> <p>Audiences segmented in way that influences solution</p> | <p>Audience characteristics and mindset analyzed in relation to the education/training opportunity</p> <p>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</p> <p>Speaks to how audience(s) and characteristics identified</p> <p>Appropriate audiences analyzed including those receiving training and those approving training project</p> <p>Appropriate research methodology</p> | <p>Audiences are listed with vague, unsupported assumptions about characteristics</p> <p>Characteristics included are irrelevant to the project or audience</p> <p>Misses an obvious audience in relation to identified need</p> <p>Inappropriate research methodology</p> | <p>Broad publics or stakeholder groups listed without defining needs or characteristics</p> <p>Wrong audience identified based on need</p> <p>No mention of audience research</p> | 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 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 |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <p>A thoroughly explained and insightful approach to setting strategic goals and objectives leading to outstanding business results</p> | <p>Learning outcomes or objectives explanation references the theories and practice of education (pedagogy)</p> <p>Insightful approaches to setting measurements for the training/ education</p> <p>Appropriate objectives are segmented by audience</p> <p>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</p> <p>Explains how <u>all</u> stated, measurable objectives are aligned to business need</p> <p>Research used to set targets</p> | <p>Objectives stated using the SMART formula</p> <p>Objectives are outcome-based <u>and</u> likely to deliver meaningful results to business or profession</p> <p>Thorough explanation of strategic nature of training/education</p> <p>Objectives are stated in terms of impact on the business or profession</p> | <p>States overall big picture goal(s) – do not need to be measurable.</p> <p>Specific outcome-based, measurable, meaningful objectives appropriate for the business or profession need</p> <p>Learning outcomes included that align to goals and objectives</p> <p>Assessments used to measure outcomes are aligned to learning outcomes</p> <p>Explains how the measurable learning outcomes lead to meeting the business or profession need</p> | <p>Understanding of goals, objectives and tactics not demonstrated</p> <p>Objectives production, deadline-focused, or based on tactics</p> <p>Objectives all output-based</p> <p>Learning outcomes are vague, generic and not aligned to specific assessments</p> <p>Objectives do not include preset targets to indicate success</p> <p>Objectives not realistic or achievable</p> | <p>Objectives not measurable</p> <p>Objectives do not focus on the identified goal(s) or business/profession need</p> | <p>No goals or objectives</p> |



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



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 | 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 | <p>An innovative solution to challenges result in exceeding objectives that demonstrate the impact of communication on the business</p> <p>Thorough explanation of an innovative way to consult with audience members resulting in exceeding objectives significantly</p> <p>A thorough explanation of how effective use of limited resource(s) resulting in project that meets implementation plan</p> <p>Clever approach to selling the project to achieve approval or support</p> | <p>Explains the effective use of budget – got a lot done with few resources</p> <p>Demonstrates collaboration with stakeholders</p> <p>Plan implemented under difficult deadlines</p> <p>Effectively manages challenges enabling meeting objectives</p> <p>Work achieved under tight deadlines or budgets</p> | <p>Project budget and resources described</p> <p>Effective and appropriate use of internal and external resources</p> <p>Objectives met within budget</p> <p>Implementation plan met or reasonable explanation provided</p> | <p>Resource description not complete, some resources not included</p> <p>Media, vehicles or channels don't suit audience</p> <p>Inappropriate use of resources</p> <p>Missed deadlines or budget exceeded without reasonable explanation</p> | <p>No budget or resource discussion</p> <p>Excessive use of resources without proper justification</p> <p>Work is clearly not worth the time, effort or money</p> | 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 |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <p>Thorough and insightful explanation of measurement and evaluation that explains an outstanding positive impact this training/ education had on the business/ profession</p> <p>Truly unique example of measurement that raises the professional standard</p> | <p>Measurement encompasses multiple appropriate methodologies to thoroughly explain success</p> <p>Credible measurement of intangibles such as a reputation index or loyalty</p> <p>For academia measurement demonstrates significant impact outside the classroom</p> | <p>Results exceed objectives and have impact business/ profession need positively</p> <p>Explains formal research conducted for measurement</p> <p>Multiple outcomes measured that influence progress toward goals</p> <p>Includes summary explanation of evaluation and how project helped the business/ profession</p> <p>Demonstrates results presented to stakeholders</p> <p>Provides recommendations for improvement</p> | <p>Demonstrates alignment between measurement and preset objectives and learning outcomes</p> <p>Includes proof that objectives were met through assessment, measurement and evaluation</p> <p>Appropriate measurement methodology</p> <p>Includes an explanation of objectives or learning outcomes that weren't met</p> | <p>Results reported on only outputs</p> <p>Results measure only if tactic completed</p> <p>Results don't address business/profession need or relate to audience</p> <p>Results generalized, vague, or anecdotal</p> <p>Results not statistically valid</p> <p>Research methodology doesn't meet industry standards</p> <p>Conclusions drawn from measurement inaccurate</p> <p>No measure for every objective</p> | <p>Results not reported against stated objectives or learning outcomes</p> <p>Subjective results based on hearsay without documented evidence</p> | <p>No measurement or evaluation</p> |



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.



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 |
| <p>Extraordinary example of connecting to audience in meaningful and memorable way that impacts the business positively</p> <p>Work sample elements set a new standard for profession</p> | <p>Smart thinking that shows the audience perspective</p> <p>Demonstrates creative thinking, imagination or an innovative approach certain to engage audience emotionally</p> <p>Innovative use of learning opportunities within training and education</p> | <p>Particularly good choices matching audience characteristics (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels)</p> <p>The materials in the work sample are highly likely to capture audience attention and engage them</p> <p>Sample aligns to audience research</p> | <p>Demonstrates choices appropriate to audiences (language, font size, vehicle choice, channels) and in a way likely to resonate</p> <p>Uses clear, consistent language.</p> <p>Reflects an understanding of audience characteristics and needs</p> <p>Communicates with sensitivity to cultural values and beliefs</p> | <p>Instructional method or materials are inappropriate for audience</p> <p>Work sample elements are bland and likely to get lost in clutter</p> <p>Messages and learning materials are not clear</p> | <p>Messages insult audience</p> <p>Material clearly insensitive to cultural values and beliefs</p> | <p>All work sample elements clearly not appropriate for audience as describe</p> |



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



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



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.



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. |