HOW TO WIN BUSINESS AWARDS & INFLUENCE REVENUE



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INTRODUCTION

Buffer

12X

more trusted than product descriptions

BUSINESS AWARDS INCREASE TRUST AND SOCIAL PROOF BY INCREASING REPUTATION AND AWARENESS THROUGH VALIDATION

What is Social Proof?

Social proof is publicly visible validation by independent parties of your product, services, social media profiles, business, and everything related to it.
For most companies, it is customer testimonials, product reviews, and awards won.
For a social media business, it may be social shares.

What are Trust Seals?

Trust seals are badges you can display on your website, marketing materials, or product that confirm they are trustworthy. They may convey additional information such as your use of a trusted payment provider, evidence that your product has been independently tested, or that you won a business award.

HOW SOCIAL PROOF AND TRUST SEALS DRIVE SALES IN THE DIGITAL AGE:

TURNING BYSTANDERS INTO LOYAL CUSTOMERS

Today, social proof and trust seals are what potential buyers rely on most to evaluate your company, your product, and even you as a person or executive.

Social proof has transformed the way sales are made trust seals may give you the final reason that makes a customer sign a contract or commit on a checkout webpage. In an age when credit card fraud causes 2.3 trillion dollars' worth of damage every year, trust is what turns interested bystanders into customers.

A huge part of Amazon's success relies on product reviews. Their five star rating system shown directly next to the products transmits trust to potential buyers. Studies have shown that 70% of consumers look at product reviews before they buy. In fact, product reviews are 12x more trusted than product descriptions from manufacturers





92%

of consumers

TRUST RECOMMENDATIONS



from friends and family more than any form of advertising

BUILDING TRUST:

HOW BUSINESS AWARDS AND THIRD-PARTY VALIDATION DRIVE LONG-TERM GROWTH ACROSS INDUSTRIES

Increasing trust in your products, your brand, and your company is key to business growth. It doesn't matter which industry you are in or whether your business is B2B or B2C, third party and unbiased validation and trust are key ingredients to any successful business story – a story that converts prospects into long-term business relationships.

Pursuing and winning business and industry awards are key to increasing trust in your brand and products.

Business awards provide trust seals and objective reviews that are invaluable to business growth and success.

UNLOCK BUSINESS GROWTH:
HOW WINNING INDUSTRY AWARDS BOOSTS TRUST, VALIDATES EXPERTISE, AND ELEVATES YOUR BRAND

Pursuing and winning business and industry awards are key to increasing trust in your brand and products. Business awards provide trust seals and objective reviews that are invaluable to business growth and success. Now, you may think that your business is not ready run in or even win a high profile business award – but you are wrong!

Most, if not all, businesses can win business awards. The key to winning is figuring out what your business really does well – and then entering awards programs that focus on that topic or area of expertise. You should also consider what your customers need to validate so that you can compete in award categories that help fill that need. For instance, if you differentiate yourself on stellar customer services, and your customers need superior customer service, make sure to go after awards that recognize you for that.



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63%

increase in operative income

39%

increase in Sales

HOW BUSINESS AWARDS ALLOW YOU TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE PACK

There are few things that can improve your business like having a great reputation can. Building a reputation that your business can benefit from happens in a variety of ways.
The most common way comes from providing an outstanding customer service experience. Your customers will want to share their satisfaction with others. However, the problem with relying only on your customers to spread the word is that it can take a long time. It doesn't matter what size your company is or where you're located – there is a wide variety of awards you may qualify for.

Next, a few points that make business awards a great business growth strategy.

CREDIBILITY

Awards tell current and potential customers that your business has stood up to scrutiny and has come out a winner.
Business awards are a mark of excellence. They give you the opportunity to tell the world how great your business is by pointing to the praise from an impartial third party. Awards from trade groups and associations broadcast the fact that your business is respected by your peers as being top-notch. They can give you a competitive advantage, because they acknowledge that your business is a leader in your industry.

The increased credibility you gain from your awards can also give you a leg up in attracting and retaining quality employees.
Your existing employees will benefit from the boost in morale, and you will profit from their confidence in you. After all, everyone likes to be associated with a winner.

MARKETING

Awards often come with lots of free publicity. The groups and organizations offering the awards want the world to know about your business because it shines a positive light on them. This free publicity can come in a variety of forms from press releases, billboards, newspaper and magazine ads to radio, television, and online ads. Oftentimes the award sponsor will include links from their website to yours, which is a key component in how you rank in Google searches.

In addition to the free publicity that comes from awards, you can use the award to earn even more free and low-cost PR. Send your own press releases to your local newspapers, business journals, and other media. Be sure to include details about the award and why you are proud of it. Including interesting information about you and your business can make your story even more enticing

SOCIAL PROOF AND TRUST SEALS

Similar to customer and influencer reviews, winning an award shows your existing and future customers that you have been reviewed by independent entities and were deemed a winner. Badges and trust seals provided by the awards programs are invaluable and have the potential to greatly influence buying decisions!

CUSTOMER RECOGNITION

Use your award as a reason to thank your customers for helping to make your company a success. Your customers will appreciate the thank you. They can also share their pride in you with others. A thank you card for their support is a fantastic way to stay in the front of their mind and generate more business for you.

AWARD BADGES



A simple way
to turn RECOGNITION into
CUSTOMER CONFIDENCE

63%

increase in operative income

39%

increase in Sales

FACTS & FIGURES

On average, smaller award-winning companies:

↑ Increased their operating income by 63%

↑ Boosted their sales by 39%

Larger award-winning companies:

↑ Enjoy a 48% increase in operating income

↑ Experience a 38% growth in sales

(Compared to non-winning companies)

Running for and winning business awards is a cost-effective growth strategy, often less expensive than hiring PR and marketing firms.

A successful industry award strategy also brings the added benefits of:

- Heightened brand awareness
- Press attention
- Increased customer trust
- Social proof

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AWARD GROWTH STRATEGY

Any business can win business awards because every business is great at something; otherwise, it wouldn't be a business. But simply participating in business awards
programs all the time isn't a strategy – it's a game of luck. And in business, that is not what you want to play.

We want to define a clear strategy for you that you can follow step-by-step to grow your business through running for and winning select business awards awards that really
highlight what you do best and that really provide that missing link that your business was missing on its journey to more growth. We will start right at the beginning with identifying what you do best and identifying which awards programs you can/should enroll in, and we will move from there through the whole process of participating, implementing the results, and moving forward.

The full strategy of how to grow your business through business awards



STEP 1

- Preparations
- Research
- Selection of Awards Programs

PREPARATIONS & RESEARCH

If you want to grow your business through business awards, if you really want to highlight how great your business is, there are two questions that you need to ask yourself before you enroll your company in any awards program.
The first question is: What is my company great at?
What are the key aspects that my company really shines in?

This is very important: You obviously won't win an award for customer service if you are not providing any customer service. And if you do win an award, what is the real value of the award? And won't your new customers feel like they got tricked?

"DIVE IN AND FIGURE OUT WHICH ASPECTS OF YOUR COMPANY REALLY SHINE

So dive in and figure out which aspects of your company really shine?
What makes your company great?
What makes your company culture different than your competitors?

If you can't figure it out all by yourself, maybe it is a good idea to ask your employees. Ask them what they like about working for you. Ask your sales team what the customer feedback is and why customers like your product. Get a feeling not just for the aspects of your company that need fixing, but also for the aspects of your company that shine!

You may even consider using a short survey that asks your customers to rate your different business departments, processes, and products on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. This type of customer information is exactly what judges want to see in your nomination as well.

STEP 1 PREPARATIONS & RESEARCH

Then ask yourself a second question:
What do I need validation for? What aspect of my company is keeping customers from buying / prospects from converting?
When you want to win a business award to grow your business, you need to make sure you win an award that highlights the aspects of your business that customers have a hard you may qualify for. Your search for awards should start locally with your time evaluating without buying your product or service.

So ask yourself:
What kept that customer from signing the contract? What made him question whether you could solve his problem?
Why has your business not been featured in the press more often?

These questions are the right kind of preparation to make you ready for the selection process. Once you have your answers, you should move on to making a list of awards programs that may be right for your business. It doesn't matter what size your company is or where you're located – there is a wide variety of awards chamber of commerce. Other local sources of awards are fraternal organization and business associations like the Rotary Club.

Then expand your award search area to include regional and national business awards, such as trade associations, consumer groups, and consulting firms. Use the Internet to help track down awards and groups, and you'll find others, like Boost Marketing that offers a directory of business awards

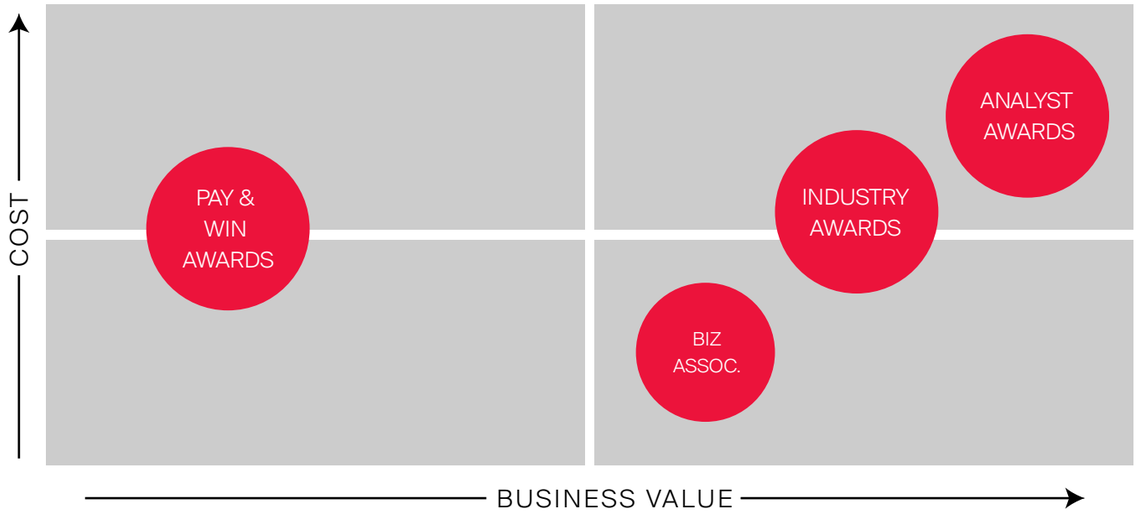
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
- US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
- GLOBALCHAMBERS OF COMMERCE
- ROTARY CLUB
- TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

STEP 1 SELECTING AN AWARDS PROGRAM

Selecting awards programs for your business isn't a trivial task.

There are many factors to consider – such as your location, your marketing budget, your industry, the kind of validation that is required to grow your business, and maybe even the laws in your country.

Now that you have a list of possible awards programs, it is time to filter this list down until you decide an award you can run for right now. One thing to keep in mind is that business awards range from no entry fee to fees of tens of thousands of dollars, from low reputation to highly valued business awards, and from pay-to-play awards to independently judged business awards. Your goal should be to identify those awards that lie within your reach and that give you the most benefit. Don't simply run for pay-to-play awards because they are easy to achieve.



STEP 2

ONCE UPON
A TIME

PARTICIPATING IN AN AWARDS PROGRAM

Many business awards programs are simple to enter, but some may require some additional thought, research, and budget. Startup competitions, for instance, may have requirements regarding the age of your company or the way it is funded and therefore demand some additional references. After selecting the right awards program, the real works begins. To win a real, independently judged business award, you have to work hard and focus on every detail to win the judges over and overpower the competition!

So you think you deserve to win the award? We believe you – but that's not the point. Between your company or yourself and a shiny new business award, there is one barrier. And that barrier is the seemingly small task of a written entry.

So you better get that one right there is no second chance, no face to-face presentation where you can iron out what you messed up before. Here are some tips on how to get that written entry right

TELL A STORY

Yes, that wisdom you learned about PR is true here as well (it is everywhere you are pitching your business). You need to tell a story and it needs to be compelling. Yes, you are talking to a judge, but this is not a court. Use narration to win over the judges.

STEP 2

Participating in an Awards Program

SHOW YOU HAVE PROOF

Avoid claiming things you cannot prove:

“Feedback was immediately amazing” is an unproven claim, and this will make judges wary. If feedback was amazing – prove it:

“Our first 1,000 customers provided us with amazing feedback: 89% rated the product as great, while the remaining 11% rated it as the best they’ve ever used. 100% customer satisfaction!”

Don’t submit statements without real evidence to back it up.

Read The Instructions

While this may sound like the most obvious thing to state, it needs to be said: Judges act on the criteria that are described in the awards programs instructions. So you better read them and make sure you answer everything. Submitting applications that break the rules of the contest are not just annoying to the judges – even seemingly small offences like going slightly over the allowed word count can easily lead to immediate disqualification. Once you have a final draft of your nomination, re-read the instructions to make sure you followed all the directions to the letter.

ASK WHEN YOU ARE UNSURE

For most programs, there is a fee for entering. It costs money to produce these programs, but you are a customer – and your participation is an investment. You are entitled to get something back – so if you are unsure about the rules, the process, or anything about the submission guidelines, ask. Asking can’t hurt you, but assuming can.

STEP 2

Participating in an Awards Program

BALANCE YOUR ANSWERS

Your submission is about what you have achieved as well as what it took to get it done. Balance the two aspects – don't focus too much on one of them. Bring to life the features of your company or product, but also tell the story of the problem you solve for customers.

FIND INDEPENDENT REVIEWERS

While you think you may know your submission story and what makes it compelling, keep in mind that judges may not be experts in what your company does. Find reviewers who can give you advice who may not be experts, either. Heck, this could include your own relatives. You will also want to make sure that your nomination has been proofed for spelling and grammatical errors.

Consider using a service like Scribendi to professionally proof read your materials for errors and consistency.

INVOLVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE FROM YOUR COMPANY

You may be the Chief Marketing Officer in your company – but for a compelling submission – it may help to get the other people from within your company involved. Consult with them – let them add their two cents. It may provide a different view of the problem, a solution, or a bit of color that could pay off in the end.
More people = more wins

STEP 3

Gain Free PR and Build Trust

WINNING...OR LOSING

After submitting your entry, there is really not too much you can do. You wait, and in the end you win or you lose – it is out of your hands now. If you win, great. If you lose, that is also great – but we will get to the benefits of losing later on.

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOU'VE WON

So, you won. What next? Easy – milk your shiny new badge as best as you can. Here are some things you can (and should) do now

FREE PUBLICITY

Awards often come with lots of free PR – the groups running awards programs want to let the world know about their shiny new winners.
The publicity comes in a variety of forms: press releases, billboards, newspaper and magazine ads, and radio, tv, and online ads. Make use of the free PR as best as you can sometimes the awards will get back to their winners with interview requests or requests for bios or company profiles to include in their PR work.

BUILD CREDIBILITY

Winning an award is a validation of your company performance or mission.
– you were reviewed by a professional and independent party and were deemed a winner.
Even better – you are able to confirm you are a winner simply by sticking a badge to your forehead... err... business.

STEP 3

2/3

Boost Marketing of industry awards provide you with valuable feedback

BUILD CREDIBILITY

Use that badge in all material that benefits from it. If you are an e-commerce business, add your award to your checkout pages; if you are a consulting company, put it on your proposals and offers. Add it to your marketing materials, include it in press releases (even journalists love validation!), and see that it gets the attention it deserves so that you get the success from it that you've earned!

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Let your existing customer base know you won an award. Thank them for helping to make your company a success – let them know they are part of the journey. Ask them to share your success story, and make it easy for them to share your award material on social media.
Increase your social proof this way. There are many ways to gain profits from winning awards, but we hope that we were able to give you a basic idea of what you can achieve by winning an award!

WHAT TO DO IF YOU LOSE

Ok, maybe you didn't win – what now?
Well, this wouldn't be much of a strategy if all was lost when you didn't succeed in winning the first time. The first thing to do is to ask the question, "Why didn't we win?"
According to Boost Marketing, one third of all award programs give feedback on applications once the winners have been announced, and another third will give feedback when asked.
Make use of that feedback, and if you didn't receive any feedback initially, ask for it.
Determine what went wrong and, more importantly, how to make sure that it doesn't go wrong the next time.

STEP 3

Here are some
questions
you should ask after
winning or losing
an award

RIGHT AWARD

- Did we apply for the right award?
- Any business can win awards, but that doesn't mean that any business can win any award.
- Did you apply for an award you could win?
- Was the category absolutely the right one?
  Or, should you select a different category next time?
- Did you miss the top spot narrowly or by far?

RIGHT STORY?

- Did the story catch?
- Did the judges love the story your company had to tell?
  How can you improve the story next time so that it gets even better?
  Why didn't it catch their attention?
- Do you need a different story?

RIGHT INFORMATION?

- What details did the judges like, and what details didn't they like?
- How can you improve your application the next time?
- What kept the judge from giving you a higher rating?
- How can you fix that problem the judge saw in your application?

The feedback you get from awards does not just help you with your next application – it may also help you determine how to improve the public image of your company. That problem a judge pointed out may very well be the same problem that keeps a customer from hitting the "Buy Now" button on your checkout page!

STEP 4

HIGHLY SCALABLE STRATEGY!

IMPLEMENT & REPEAT

Participating in awards gives you a lot of business intelligence – and a lot of information on how to improve your application for the next awards program. You put too much work into one application to not continue on this strategy – submit yourself to more awards programs. Don't get frustrated if you didn't win the first time around, and don't get overly excited with winning one award – more validation for your company is always better.

One badge is great, but what if you had 10?

When you have completed an awards program, aim for the next

The Point of any business growth strategy is scalability, and business awards are a highly scalable strategy!

THE ROI OF NOT WINNING AN AWARD

The awards show is over. You donned your best evening wear and were excited to possibly, just possibly, get on stage to collect that beloved trophy you knew you deserved.
Who worked harder?
Who worked longer hours?
Who did more for their customers and employees than you?

But then, in an instant, your name is...not called. You want to “boo,” but instead you smile and clap, like Susan Luchi who famously was nominated for 19 Emmy awards before winning in 1999. “I am proud to just be nominated.” Liar. But should you be proud?
In short, of course. It Is an Honor to Be Nominated Industry awards competitions seek to reward the best of the best.
Stop. Read that again. “The best of the best.” Not the best of the bunch. Or the best of the worst. Or even the best of those we could round up. Just being nominated for an award has merit and an ROI all its own.
Let’s step back, ok way back, to when you were 11 years old. At that age the world of “everyone gets a trophy” fades, and the real completion begins. In the United States, you’re usually in 6th grade and the competition for sports, the other sex, and grades heats up.

Competition at this age is about experiencing the world and developing your skills, regardless the sport (grades, dating, or athletics). The same is true in business Awards programs provide you an outlet to experience the world, usually within the larger business industry or your specific marketplace. Take advantage of participating in and experiencing that world

It is an Honor to be NOMINATED

THE ROI OF NOT WINNING AN AWARD

Truly Objective Feedback Improves Your Company

Feedback helps you improve your company – and honest feedback by business professionals is probably the most important feedback you will ever get. Industry awards programs supply you with this type of feedback – and while it sometimes may hurt, it has the power to help you improve and grow your company.

Now, you may think that some of the critique you get may not represent your company, and that may be the truth. But that also means that you have not told the story or the facts about your company as best as you could have. Or maybe the feedback you receive is completely representing the facts. Then you can use this feedback to actually improve your company and how it performs.

Wasn't that your goal all along?

THE ROI OF NOT WINNING AN AWARD

Network at the event, and develop new relationships with others so you can leverage their knowledge, market, and expertise. You are paying for this $200 a-plate dinner; you might as well gain something from it, other than heartache

Smile and Get Angry!

Losing stinks, but it also can be a great motivator and a learning experience. Alan Stein is the owner of Stronger Team and a Head Coach for the nationally renowned Nike Elite DeMatha Catholic High School basketball program. In How to Erase the Sting of Losing,

he wrote:
“How you handle a loss and deal with adversity speaks volumes about your character, your competitiveness, your commitment to excellence, and determining whether losing will become a habit or the initial spark that ignites success.”

When I was younger I loved waterskiing, and I can remember the mother of one of my friends, and world-class ski boat driver for teenagers, telling me that falling meant I was trying hard, “keep it up.” She was right. If you don’t fail or fall down, you are not trying hard enough. Skin your knee. Pull a muscle. Be okay with failing. Failing means you were in “it to win it.” You tried. Not failing usually means you didn’t even try. So, when your competitor gets up to take the trophy, smile, clap, and quietly resolve to beat him or her next time. Go back to your team with a mission, a plan, a strategy for improving your results, so you can go back next year and take home the prize.

Smile and Get Angry!

THE ROI OF NOT WINNING AN AWARD

CONSIDER YOUR BUDGET$

CONSIDER YOUR BUDGET

The entry fees associated with business awards programs range widely. Some of the higher-priced programs may seem expensive at first sight, but that really depends on your expectations.

Usually it goes like this: The higher the entry fee, the higher the reputation of the awards program. But that doesn't mean you should only enter if the awards program is highly expensive. Determine your goals and examine your budget.

Remember:
There is no guarantee for winning your first awards program – plan for entering more than one program. The goal is to enter awards programs as a scalable business growth strategy – and that means that you should run in multiple programs over the course of a year. While it may seem that you need a considerable budget for this, you should consider the following:
Awards programs offer validation, social proof, and trust seals for winners for a fraction of the price that is usually needed for validation of this kind.
Award programs offer free PR and publicity to winners; compare that to the results that PR agencies get you for a much bigger budget.
Awards programs provide you with independent and professional feedback – feedback that you can easily turn into monetary results when you apply it to your business and use it to improve your performance.

ABOUT THE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE GROUP

Business Intelligence GROUP™

THE FIRST AND ONLY CROWD-SOURCED INDUSTRY AWARDS PROGRAMS FOR BUSINESS

Since 2012, the Business Intelligence Group has recognized and rewarded hundreds of business executives, departments, products, and entire organizations for their innovation and leadership.



Transparent industry awards platform focuses on helping businesses and their employees get the recognition they deserve from leaders worldwide.



Nominations are sourced organically from companies around the globe. We do not discriminate on geography, age, size, or any other factors.



Judges are experts in their fields and represent the most trusted brands. Executives give back by volunteering their time, expertise, and feedback.



Nominations are scored using our proprietary statistical methodologies, and winners are notified ahead of public notice to maximize exposure.

ABOUT THE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE GROUP

Business Intelligence GROUP™



PR Excellence Awards



BIG Awards for Business



Stratus Awards for Cloud



Sustainability Awards



Sales and Marketing Awards



BIG Innovation Awards



PR And Marketing Excellence Awards



Best Places to Work Awards



AI Excellence Awards



Excellence in Customer Service Awards

OUR PROGRAMS



TouchCommerce participated in the BIG Business Awards program and we were thrilled to have won the New Product of the Year award in 2014 for TouchStore solution.

The Business Intelligence Group's awards program and their crowd-sourced model allowed us to highlight our innovations and performance to a global audience of industry analysts, customers and prospective customers.

George Skaff

Chief Marketing Officer

TouchCommerce

TouchCommerce

RISE ABOVE

Business Intelligence GROUP™

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