



Hints and Tips

Make the most
of your success

Enter the
Awards for Excellence
in Real Estate



THERE ARE MANY REASONS TO ENTER THE AWARDS.

- Raise the profile and reputation of your business
- Assist in annual business planning
- Review goals and record achievements
- Benchmark against other professionals
- Great for staff morale
- Receive recognition of excellence by your peers
- Enhance your business performance and company's success
- Showcase your success to the industry and public

This guide includes hints and tips on how to answer the criteria when writing your submission so that it's easy to read and covers all parts of a question with the aim of making your entry truly competitive in the category.

Refer to it regularly and check that you are providing all the information required and in the right format.

If you have any questions that are not covered in this guide, contact REISA on (08) 8366 4300 or email awards@resia.com.au

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CATEGORIES AND CRITERIA

Hall of Fame (HoF)

The Hall of Fame (HoF) is one of the most prestigious awards given to those businesses and individuals that have shown outstanding performance in their chosen category over several years.

It is awarded to recipients who have won their category for three consecutive years.

All current year inductees will be acknowledged on stage at the Awards night, one year after they have won their third Award. Previous inductees will also be acknowledged at the Awards Gala.

Each HoF inductee will be:

- Recognised at the annual Awards ceremony
- Included in promotional activities surrounding the Award winners
- Provided with an exclusive Hall of Fame logo for use in marketing

New in 2024

Awards criteria are reviewed annually. This may result in revised wording or entry eligibility to ensure categories and questions remain current. It is important that you download the current criteria from the Awards section of the REISA website each year.

Changes include new questions to align with national REIA Awards criteria, award scoring and changes to the information you supply in your entry details.

See the Awards Criteria document for full details.

Do not cut and paste from last year's entry!

Categories/Questions

1: Categories

There are no new categories this year.

2: Questions

Read all questions – and parts of questions – very carefully. There are significant changes from last year to enable closer alignment to the national awards.

Awards

In 2024, Winner, Silver and Bronze awards may be allocated (based on scores achieved) in all categories except The Torrens and Community Service award.

Silver and Bronze awards will acknowledge entrants who may have a score very close to the winning entrant and are awarded to encourage a better submission in subsequent years based on judges' feedback.

Entrants must achieve the following scores to receive a medal.

Bronze 225+

Silver 250+

Winner – top score

Entrants will not be given their final score however, feedback will be supplied relevant to all questions.

All three award recipients will be able to display a REISA Awards logo in marketing. Category winners will go forward to REIA national awards judging where categories align.

Rules for Entry

1. Individuals who change agencies during the submission period must enter under the agency for which they currently work. Figures from both the current and previous agency may be combined to achieve a 12-month total, but the point at which the agency change was made and the total for each must be clearly identified.
2. The company name under which you submit your entry will be the one used in any finalist or award status promotion. If you change employment after the submission date, you must inform REISA and supply updated information. REISA will not be responsible for any information regarding employment status that is out of date at the time of publication.
3. Entrants must declare contravening of regulations, PSC or engagement in litigation.
4. The entrant and contact name must be the same, not the contact details for a PA or agency representative.
5. You must provide a membership number.
6. You must upload at least three images and a hi-res version of your logo for each category you enter. These will be used at the awards presentation.
7. Third party nominations will not be accepted. The only exception is The Torrens Award.
8. You cannot enter under a trainee licence.

Full Terms and conditions are available on the REISA website.

Interviews

Audit judge/s will complete all phone finalist interviews for the agency and individual categories. Interviews will be based on the submission material provided and finalists will be briefed on what they will need to provide at the time. Interviews will attract an independent score from the judge.

- Do not keep the judge waiting on the phone
- If you have entered multiple categories, it is likely a judge will want to address more than one in the same phone call. Make sure you allow enough time if this occurs.

The Audit judge will be looking for verification of claims you have made in your submission. It may be useful to have appropriate material such as a copy of your business plan and a small sample of marketing material for reference to help you answer a question.

Judging

Judging of finalists is conducted by one Audit/Interview Judge and two independent judges scoring your online submissions. Scores from all three judges are correlated and Winner, Silver, and Bronze awards – based on scores achieved – will be determined.

Judges are briefed to look for:

- A financially sound, well-managed business
- Demonstration of excellence
- Business and marketing plans
- Measurable goals and outcomes
- Passion and enthusiasm
- Awareness of the industry and marketplace
- Efforts to meet and surpass industry standards
- Active contribution to the profession
- Evidence of a strategic rather than an opportunistic approach

This finalist review process will be managed by the Independent Audit Consultant (IAC), who will also audit Judge's scoring to ensure consistency. If the Independent Panel raises specifics about an entry, the IAC may conduct an audit on the information supplied.

Scores will be tallied by the IAC and an aggregate applied to ensure that scoring is consistent in all categories.

The Independent Panel has the power to refrain from awarding Winner, Silver, or Bronze in any category if they feel that the calibre of entries is not of the highest order for an industry award. Further, the Independent Panel may award a 'highly commended' award if appropriate, rather than declare a category winner.

DOS AND DON'TS

Do:

- Read the category criteria thoroughly and make sure you qualify.
- If you entered last year, re-read the feedback you received and use it to improve this year's submission.
- Spelling and grammatical errors can cost valuable points! Prepare a draft entry in Word and have it proofread by at least two other people before you upload. **If you have received feedback that your entry contained errors, don't make the same mistakes again.**
- Answer the question. This may seem obvious, but many submissions simply ramble on with unnecessary information. Keep it straight and to the point. Read the question a few times to really understand what is being asked.
- Answer **all parts** of the question.
- Make sure you supply the requested number of examples. If a question calls for two examples, make sure you supply two. If it asks for three, supply three, etc.
- Use the REISA spreadsheet supplied. Substitution will result in disqualification.
- Get one person who knows you and your business well to read your almost final draft and ask them to make sure you have **a)** answered all the questions properly and **b)** provided the information with passion to make it stand out from the rest.
- Ask another person who does not know you or your business to act like a judge and ensure they get a clear picture of what you do and how you do it from the submission.
- Be consistent and focused. Judges can tell when entrants are getting tired and tending to cut corners on the entry. Take a break and go back to it later if necessary.
- Judges will be very focused on the support you provide for claims that you make. You must be able to back up all claims with evidence. Consider using client testimonials, online reviews, case studies, etc., where possible. Be truthful - inflated results are obvious and transparent.
- Put your entry into context. Most of the judges are not familiar with your market, so answers and results need context.
- Use examples to support claims made. This applies to all questions, not just where it is specified.

- Time-line answers where appropriate. Answers must relate to the qualifying period.
- Ensure all your information relates to the submission period, i.e., the past financial year.

Don't:

- Leave your submission to the last minute. Schedule time well in advance of the deadline to ensure you can research, edit, and proofread adequately.
- Don't write your answer in all dot points. Use a combination of dot points and engaging text.
- **DON'T WRITE YOUR SUBMISSION IN THE THIRD PERSON or NOMINATE AN ENTRANT ON THEIR BEHALF.** The only exceptions are The Torrens Award and Community Service. Entries written in the third person will be disqualified at the finalist level.
- Don't rely on attachments to answer a question. Where attachments are required, they should be used as **supporting information or evidence** of the claims you make in the answer.
- Judges are likely to read more than one category – be wary of simply repeating achievements/innovations/enhancements that others in your agency will also submit.
- Fill the submission with 'award entry' clichés. The judges will be looking for freshness and originality as well as substantial supporting evidence.
- Be boring. The judges have many entries to read. Make your story stand out. Let your innovation and passion for the industry shine through.
- Assume judges (especially national judges) will know your locale. Describe the main area in which you practice or to indicate sales.
- Denounce your opposition – it only makes **you** look bad.
- Use words such as 'estimate', 'I believe', 'around', 'approximately' or 'they say'. Be positive. Judges are looking for facts, not guesses.
- Supply referees if they are not going to be able to substantiate claims you make in your submission. Ensure your nominated referees are aware they may be contacted by the IAC for verification.

HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

This example covers generic questions to each category. Make sure you answer the specific questions relevant to the category you are entering. If a specific question to your category is not featured here, read on anyway. There are points relevant to every question in all categories.

For all answers:

- It's best not to use all text or all dot points. Keep the reader interested by using a mixture of both. For example, use dot points to summarise your answer at the beginning of the question, then expand in following text.
- Don't use motherhood statements or generalise without evidence. E.G., **'we sell more than anyone in the area'**. Sell what? Where? Why? Definition of area? **'People keep coming back to us because we're better'**. Better than what? Against whom? Coming back for what? Who are the 'people'?
- Don't cut and paste from previous entries.
- Think nationally. Should you go on to represent South Australia in the national awards, judges will not know your business, locale, etc.
- Remain business and customer service focused.
- If you are entering a salesperson category, remain focused on you, the individual, rather than on the agency.
- Consider the points awarded to each question and the number of words permitted. Plan your answer before going online.
- Don't underestimate the importance of proofreading your entry. Judges score on 'excellence' and attention to detail – errors such as spelling mistakes and sample omissions will cost points.

Support Staff

Several categories assume that the salesperson/s has assistance by sales support staff.

You must provide a statement regarding any sales support staff that outlines their involvement. Read the criteria carefully and answer each of the four parts. This answer is not scored but is essential for judges to compare entries.

Sales Achievement

There are two parts to this question. Don't make the mistake of answering only one part or changing the spreadsheet format.

Part A: When answering, be sure to provide the requested information in **exactly** the same order as specified in the question. This will enable the judges to accurately compare your entry with others in the category. Simply follow the dot points and list your statistics – don't bury the information in unnecessary text.

Don't include any other irrelevant information or figures from previous years. If you need to explain any circumstances that might have influenced your results, make it very brief.

Be very clear about your statements regarding **solo** and **shared sales**. Judges will allocate points on solo sales. A submission only based on shared sales will be ineligible.

Be definite with numbers. For example, do not use a phrase such as 'I would estimate 20% of my sales are from repeat business'. Words such as **'estimate'** and **'I believe'** do not belong in award submissions.

Note: Average sale time is defined as 'from the date the property is released to the market to when the contract is signed by the purchaser'.

Part B: A Sales Achievement Spreadsheet is located on the REISA website under the Awards section. You must complete this spreadsheet (as support to your answer in Part A), save it as a PDF and upload it as an attachment along with your submission. Make sure you clearly identify solo sales and joint sales.

Don't use any other spreadsheet format – you will be immediately declared ineligible for finalist status.

No other attachments or hyperlinks are allowed for this question.

HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS cont.

Significant Achievement

These criteria give the judges the opportunity to learn more about how you have achieved success in the past 12 months.

You must provide the specified number of significant listings and sale achievement and outline why you believe it/they were significant and how you achieved success.

Note: the definition of *significant* is:

*Sufficiently great or important to be worthy of attention; noteworthy. "a significant increase in sales"

*Having a particular meaning; indicative of something e.g., "in times of stress her dreams seemed to her especially significant"

You might have an example of a significant or record sale for the local area; a complex situation that may have drawn out or made the sale challenging; an innovative approach to the sale or effective marketing techniques that attracted success and recognition by senior peers.

Examples in past years have also included dealing with vendors or buyers interstate or overseas, deceased estates, and family intervention with an elderly vendor.

Your example must focus on properties and means for achieving success, not volume or value.

If you refer to a Joint listing, explain your involvement.

Judges will be looking for indications of your commitment to customer service and sales excellence above and beyond the call of duty.

Don't waffle, but don't be hesitant to use all 500 words allowed to get your story across. You should not be shy about presenting a genuine situation where you have excelled.

Supporting Material: You may upload a maximum of three pages covering client testimonials, marketing material or other evidence relevant to your answer. Make sure everything you supply relates to the submission period.

Business Challenges & Risk Management

Give two examples of challenges or major risk management issues that you encountered during the financial period and explain how you have overcome them. Include details of a difficult client or assignment and explain what resources you drew on to resolve the difficulties and exceed your client's expectations.

On a first reading, this question may seem similar to Significant Listing Achievements, however here you have the opportunity to go beyond property and look at a broader range of business challenges and risk management mitigations you were able to introduce/use those already in place.

No attachments or hyperlinks are allowed.

Innovation/Enhancements

In your answer, judges will be looking for any new ideas, procedures or services you were specifically involved in recommending, creating and/or implementing.

'**Innovation**' is generally defined as production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of a value-added novelty in economic and social spheres; renewal and enlargement of products, services, and markets; development of new methods of production; and establishment of new management systems. It is both a process and an outcome.

An '**enhancement**' is the process of improving the quality, amount or strength of something. It may be a new experience or facility, improvements made to your website or social media platforms use, a change to staff training, etc.

If you are describing an innovation, it must be unique to South Australian real estate and in the spirit of the Awards, should not be simply a re-badged version of an existing product.

To answer this question, ensure you cover these points:

- describe any new ideas and innovative procedures/ services you have implemented in your business and its contribution to your success

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- state whether this includes customer service enhancements, cost savings, business efficiencies, staff satisfaction, work/life balance or any other 'value add' to the real estate profession
 - describe if this has contributed to your positioning and differentiation in the marketplace

Ensure your examples are time specific to the awards period. If you are discussing a continuation of an innovation/enhancement introduced in a previous financial year, ensure you only talk about the qualifying period.

Supporting Material: You are encouraged to include material in the form of case studies or examples where criteria allows.

Quality Client Service

There are two specific requirements for your answer.

- a) You are asked to give two examples of how you provide excellent service to your clients and explain why you believe these are significant.
- b) You are also asked to provide an example of how you have achieved a point of difference in the delivery of excellent service to clients

Everyone assumes they provide great customer service, so this is the time to take an audit of what you do and highlight the real exceptions. Remember, judges will be looking for the 'outstanding' – calling a customer back within 2 hours is entry level service, not exceptional!

You could also consider how you go about ensuring you continue to offer quality service (e.g., training, response to feedback, surveys, etc.), accessibility of you and/or your office, supervision of sales and operational areas, staff selection or liaison with the industry.

Perhaps you have provided for clients with specific needs. For example, families/children, physical or intellectual disabilities or non-English speaking.

There may be innovations/enhancements that have taken place in the qualifying period that have contributed to exceptional customer service.

No attachments or hyperlinks are allowed.

Service and Support to your Agency and other Staff

In this answer, you need to outline the most important responsibilities you believe you have to your agency.

You should describe your personal contributions to your agency's success and fellow staff in the past financial year and explain why these made a difference.

Remember there are two parts to this question ... to **describe the contribution** and **explain the outcome**.

The judges will be looking for **strong leadership qualities**, that is, entrants who are leaders rather than just team members.

Examples could be:

- **Assisting other staff** - e.g., special projects or research, assisting in times of need, identifying training & development needs, mentoring and buddy systems, creation of resource manual
- **Contributing to regular staff meetings** – e.g., updates on industry regulations, new technology, constructive feedback and suggestions for improvements, contribution to the agenda
- **Participating in industry committees** – e.g., membership of REISA committees, professional development organisations
- **Team building exercises** – formal and informal. Include activities you manage yourself, and those that require outsourcing

There may be innovations that have taken place in the qualifying period that have contributed to the success.

No attachments or hyperlinks are allowed.

HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS cont.

Personal Milestones and Career Goals

Ongoing education is critical to developing new skills and maintaining peak performance.

Consider the following:

Your career goals and the strategies you are implementing to achieve those goals

State where you were at the beginning of the last financial year and where you were at the end of that financial year. Include any industry awards or industry acknowledgment gained during that period. State your career goals for those 12 months, then detail the strategies you employed to achieve success. Explain if the strategies are on-going.

What training you have undertaken in the past financial year

List both formal and informal training. Be careful to remain relevant to the past financial year only. If you have not been able to undertake any formal or informal training, explain why.

Marketing, sales, public relations and administration training all count, as does training for new computer systems, etc. You should also include private reading in relevant areas along with mentoring and 'buddy' systems.

How have you incorporated these new skills into your business?

Identification of how your training has improved your business is required. Explain the value of the courses/activity you have undertaken and the direct relationship to the business's operation.

Future plans for professional development

State your current status and where you would like to be in at least two timelines, e.g., 1 year and 3 years. List the strategies you believe you will have to put in place to achieve these goals in the time you have allowed. This could include formal and informal training and industry involvement.

No attachments or hyperlinks are allowed.

Leadership and Contribution to the Industry

This is your opportunity to show the Judges a genuine sense of responsibility to the industry at large and in your local area.

Involvement should be specific to the past 12 months. Ensure you address all three parts of the question.

Part 1: Provide two examples of how you have demonstrated leadership in your area of real estate

Part 2: Explain clearly how you have contributed to the industry (ideally more than one item) and why you think these contributions will improve your agency's practice and its standing within the real estate industry

Part 3: Outline the ways your field of real estate complements other property professionals in meeting consumer needs.

Judges will also be looking for passion and personality in this answer; it's best to use a combination of dot points and descriptive text. Don't be shy about your involvement and success.

Business Development Plan

Business plans should encompass a wide range of goals, from financial and market growth to staffing and client service. Choose three areas you have concentrated on in the past financial year and clearly state the strategies you put in place to achieve your desired outcomes. Explain why you have selected these three as priorities.

You may find it helpful to use a simple matrix... Goal – Strategy/ies – Outcome/s

The question must be answered in less than 500 words.

Supporting Material: You may upload a copy of your business plan.

Professional Development

There are two parts to the question; what has occurred in the past financial year, and how those activities have improved your performance. You may also wish to allude to goals you have for the future. You might consider outlining your activities and outcomes in a simple matrix. A list of courses or workshops undertaken will not be sufficient. Training can relate to both real estate and non-real estate training. The types of activities may include Continuing Professional Development courses, in-house training, coaching, role-playing sessions, etc.

No attachments or hyperlinks allowed.

Marketing

This question calls for strategies, so ensure you provide the required number of marketing activities you consider to be the most successful during the submission period. Detail the strategies implemented and relate the outcomes.

No attachments or hyperlinks allowed.

Significant Sales and or Property Management Listings

The requirement should be self-explanatory, just don't forget there is a WHAT and a WHY (HOW) success was achieved in all three examples. No attachments or hyperlinks allowed.

Sustainability – Individual and Agency

These two categories will also be featured in the REIA national awards.

In addition to your own action plans, you will find this material very helpful in preparing your answer.

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/>

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/publications/australias-long-term-emissions-reduction-plan>

<https://www.finance.gov.au/government/aps-net-zero-emissions-2030>

<https://www.iea.org/policies/14379-net-zero-2050-australias-long-term-emissions-reduction-plan>

For further information, see 'Universe of Material Risk' document, found on the 2024 REISA Awards for Excellence portal.

<https://reisa.awardsplatform.com/>



For more information:
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