PMI Awards Application - Treat it like a project script

By Claire Gately - National Project Awards 2023 - Winner of Innovation in Technology Award

To me winning an award is similar to winning a race. The effort and discipline that goes into planning, preparation, training gets you over the line, with a little bit of luck thrown in, sometimes you win!

How to complete the award application – approach is like a Project…

Initiation / Go - No Go

1. Get permission, essentially a sponsor / champion. You can't progress / accept if the company isn't on board.
2. Ask for help, early on.
3. Get stakeholder buy-in.
4. No need to reinvent the wheel, who else has done this before or similar e.g. tender submission, business case?
5. Communicate, set expectations with the team, let them know what you are doing and how they are being asked to contribute, set a timeline. Is anyone taking leave?

Planning / Semantics

6. Read the award entry criteria.
7. Read the questions.
8. Adhere to the word count, file format, media etc.
9. Aim to submit prior to the deadline, check for local time e.g. GMT or EST
10. Create the account, test login.

Monitor & Control

11. Communicate progress with sponsor & stakeholders.

12. Note the support availability / resource – if required, contact them early, remember generally they are volunteers.

Execution / Delivery

13. Source existing content from project records e.g. PID, RAID log / Jira, memos, lessons learned, IM's, emails, reports, business case & or tender documents.
14. Use appropriate terminology, balance so it's not too jargony. Explain acronyms.
15. Review the organisation, company, project, award, sponsor websites for ideas.
16. Be resourceful, leverage marketing, sales teams for company branding, graphics, template etc.
17. Be honest and remember the challenges - objectively. Most projects and businesses have stories that are confidential and or sensitive. If you can find a diplomatic way to explain a situation – because we all have them, that's the gold people are seeking, and need help with. You may not be answering their specific issue, sometimes it's enough to know that you're not alone. Most of us encounter significant issues, what we want to learn from one another is how to best resolve these, ideally to benefit all. Peer support.
18. Industry / Peer recognition. You are sharing a story, passing on knowledge and experience. Explain how did your team and project shine. Within businesses and working groups, many are oblivious to the detail of your work, the unique complexities of your project, stakeholder, budget, constraints etc. Often it can be outsiders who recognise the benefit(s) and understand the challenges that have been overcome, the benefit and potential.
19. Find a reviewer to help improve.

Closure

20. Lessons learnt, ideally, hindsight is off course 2020, start a project with the intention of winning the award. Gather potential material along the way.
21. Find a way to reward and celebrate. Tag key team members in social media. Ask for budget for awards night dinner celebration.