

**Guidance notes**

We want everyone to improve their chances of winning by presenting the strongest possible entry. Please remember that the judges might not know your business personally and they will be shortlisting based on your application alone.

It is important, therefore, that your entry is clearly presented and easy to read, addresses the judging criteria, looks professional and conveys what it is that makes your business really special.

***Before you begin to complete the entry form, why not write your ‘back story’ eg where your business is now, how you arrived at this point, what makes you special or different to your competitors, where are you going etc. This process can be helpful and may help you to avoid reading a question in the form and then staring at a blank piece of paper waiting for the words to come! Once you have this information in front of you, answering the questions is usually easier.***

1. **Continuity** - please ensure that the name of the business submitted on the application form is the one you would want to be used in future correspondence (including the media) and if shortlisted as a finalist at the award ceremony itself.
2. **Keep it succinct** - there is a strict character count stated on the WRA application form so please only provide relevant information to make an excellent case. Judges make their decision on the quality of the evidence not its quantity.



3**.Remember**, judges will be looking for evidence of YOUR passion for YOUR business. A judge can pick up an entry and quickly feel if it's there; make sure yours is!

4. **Make it persuasive** - don't be tempted to provide masses of linked supporting documentation - the trick is just to select those you consider to be the best to support what you've written in your application form.

5. **Pictures tell stories** - we are often told that a ‘picture can count for a thousand words'. Are your images of a high quality? We don't require professional images but ensure yours are of a really good quality. Don't let them undermine your application.

6. **Examples impress** - judges are looking for where you go that ‘extra mile' in providing first-class customer service. Examples and stories which capture that special essence of your business can be very persuasive.

7. **Make it look professional** - complete your application and then read it, and read it again, to ensure that you have given a full, fair and honest picture of your business.

8. **What do others think?** - Ask colleagues/friends to read through your entry and ask them to give you honest feedback - can they feel your passion? This is a really useful exercise. It doesn't always come naturally to blow one's own trumpet and your colleagues/friends are more likely to ensure that you do!



9. **Does your online presence truly reflect your business?** As part of the judging process, and to get a feel for your business, judges will look at your web site, social media platforms, links to business pages on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and online review sites.

Judges will expect your website to be easy to navigate and for everything to be up-to-date. Please check that this is the case as early as possible as you might need to make some improvements and updates.

10. **Investing in people and product** - people make businesses special and judges look for businesses that support their staff and invest in them. They are also keen to see where you might have reinvested in the business to maintain/improve standards. Demonstrate how you value your staff.

11. Businesses can enter as many categories as they wish.

12. Judges reserve the right (with your permission) to change the category you have entered if they feel it is more appropriate.

13. Do remember it is not possible to revisit your application prior to being put forward for national judging.

14. Judges are looking in all entries for examples of how you or your business has promoted Yorkshire as a brand.

15. Any questions please don’t hesitate to be in touch [cshaw@yorkshire.com](mailto:cshaw@yorkshire.com) or 07769 257 383



Remember, the care and attention that you put into your entry will help demonstrate the care and attention that you put into ensuring that your customers and visitors have a really great tourism experience in Yorkshire.

Should you require any guidance please don't hesitate to contact Claudine Shaw on [cshaw@yorkshire.com](mailto:cshaw@yorkshire.com) or call 07769 257 383