



IABC Heritage Region Silver Quill Entrant Checklist for Division 4 Communication Skills

For the best possible entry, follow this checklist when creating your entry or when reviewing before submitting to ensure all of these items are covered.

Strategic Alignment

Section	Elements to Include	Check when complete
How well does the work sample align to the purpose as described on the entry form? (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show how the selected communication tool or method is appropriate to meet the communication purpose. <i>TIP: Assume your evaluator is completely unfamiliar with your organization.</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the elements of the work sample align to the purpose. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample includes persuasive information or a call to action that is likely to cause recipient to meet the purpose. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
How appropriate is the work sample for the audience as described on the entry form? (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample is well targeted to the audience, and the choices made were driven by relevant audience characteristics, such as prior knowledge, education, geography, demographics, psychographics, preferences, attitudes, opinion, motivations, etc. <i>TIP: Showing you know your audience is key. Do not refer to the general public.</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know the above characteristics of your audience? Share audience research that provides insight into the audience and/or the project, and ensure the work sample aligns with this research. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The communication channel and work were appropriate for the audience to receive the message. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The message is understandable to the audience. 	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Section	Elements to Include	Check when complete
How well were the stated measurable objectives met? (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The entry met or preferably exceeded the (up to) three key measurable output- or outcome-based objectives. <i>TIP: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) objectives are CRUCIAL. You'll need them to earn an award. Outcomes are preferred over outputs. Focus on outcomes as much as possible. For more information, see the section on goals, objectives and tactics in How-To Guide for IABC Awards.</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objectives are explained and relevant to the purpose/business need. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurement and evaluation is appropriate and quantifiable data support the results. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
How well does the work sample incorporate the key messages stated on the entry form? (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key messages are appropriate for the audience. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key messages are integrated into the work samples and are integral to the samples. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key messages are aligned to the purpose and audience, are delivered in a way that will engage the intellect or emotion of the audience, and are likely to influence their thoughts and behaviors. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic Alignment total points	Points for the four main questions in this section are added together, divided by four and then multiplied by 0.3333.	

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Creativity, Resourcefulness, Innovation

Section	Elements to Include	Check when complete
Given the resources and information described in the entry, how creative, resourceful or innovative was the work sample? (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This work is better than average as compared to other work within the category, geography or industry. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements of the work show creativity or innovation considering the category, geography or industry. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrant effectively used resources (even if resources were scarce) and the approach is appropriate for the resources described. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All elements of the work are directly linked to the audience or issue 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity, Resourcefulness, Innovation total points	Points in this section are multiplied by .3333.	

Professional Execution

Section	Elements to Include	Check when complete
Overall, how likely is the work sample to engage the audience, connect emotionally or elicit a desired response? (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample clearly engages the audience using superior means. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample is likely to connect emotionally with the audience. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample is well executed, supporting its ability to deliver its stated purpose. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elements of the work are well organized, urging recipients to continue. 	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Section	Elements to Include	Check when complete
How well does the work sample demonstrate effectiveness, functionality, organization, consistency, readability or appropriateness? (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work is consistent from the beginning to the end for theme, writing style, look and feel, etc. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work flows well. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work results in a very readable, viewable or enjoyable experience for the recipient. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The format of the work is appropriate. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choices made for the medium selected are appropriate; the work takes advantage of the medium. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
How strong are the elements of the work sample and how it comes together considering the category? Depending on the category, this could include items such as look/feel, theme, use of color, design, layout, composition, imagery, graphics, production value, language or writing style. (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production values are appropriate to media and resources available. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work reflects standards of ethics and good taste. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample matches the description in the entry. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, consistent use of language, visuals and other elements support brand and purpose. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work exhibits high-quality writing. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work exhibits superior production values. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong images convey key messages, or key messages are conveyed in powerful, emotional way. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach is well executed and appropriate for the audience. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Professional Execution total points	Points for the three main questions in this section are added together, divided by three and then multiplied by .3333.	



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Final Checklist

Check before submission	Check when complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure that your responses to the eight questions asked on the online form follow the character limits listed in the Preview of Questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The work entered was completed within the allowed time frame.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">If you're a consultant and your work was done for a client, you have included a client permission letter for your entry.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Entry score = Strategic Alignment points + Creativity, Resourcefulness, Innovation points + Professional Execution points.

- A score between 5.12 and 5.24 receives a Silver Quill Award of Merit**
- A score of 5.25 or higher receives a Silver Quill Award of Excellence**



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Evaluators follow IABC's Seven-point Scale of Excellence.

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

In scoring each section, evaluators begin with a score of 4 and score up or down based on criteria listed on a rubric. Scores of 7 or 1 are rare.

For more information:

- View [Evaluating Excellence: A Guide for IABC Evaluators, Divisions 4*](#)
- Review [Gold Quill Resources for Entrants*](#)

*Note: Silver Quill follows the same scoring rules as Gold Quill.