



IABC Heritage Region Silver Quill Entrant Checklist for Division 2 Communication Research

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.

The Work Plan

Section	Elements to Include	Check When Complete
Business Need and Communication Opportunity (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the business and communication environment, including specific challenges establishing need for the research. <i>TIP: Assume your evaluator is completely unfamiliar with your organization.</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how the research informs the direction of the communications project, the actions that may be taken or decisions that may be made as a result of the research. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the questions the research helps to answer. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how the business needs are based on mission, values, goals and brand and align with the organization’s strategic direction and performance indicators. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the research positively impacts business performance now or in the future. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stakeholder Analysis (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select appropriate audiences as subjects for the research and demonstrate how the audience is linked to the strategy and tactics. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe relevant audience characteristics, such as prior knowledge, education, geography, demographics, psychographics, preferences, attitudes, opinion, motivations, etc., and how those characteristics influenced research. <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"> Describe how the audiences hearing/consuming the research results were included in the decisions made and the actions taken based on the results. 	<input type="checkbox"/>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know the above characteristics of your audience? Share prior audience research that provides insight into the audience characteristics and needs. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the audience segmentation influenced the research solution. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goals and Objectives (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe an overall goal for the research that is linked to the organization's business need and research purpose, as well as the organization's mission, values, goals, strategic direction and brand. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullet out (or put in a table) several specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) objectives that are stated in terms of impact on the business, align with the stakeholder analysis and the business need, and show they can produce an effect on the stated business need. <p><i>TIP: 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 and Objectives in How-To Guide for IABC Awards.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how the research results help the organization. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the desired margin of error to be achieved and why that margin is appropriate. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solution Overview (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain what you did by providing an executive summary or tactical plan for the research project explaining when, where and how the research was done. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the research methodologies and choices you made for channels and tactics link to your audiences and objectives and how the solution links to the business needs. 	<input type="checkbox"/>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate appropriate research methodology and approach to selecting and sampling the audience. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include stakeholder input, if possible, and show how research helped determine the solution. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and address any potential ethical issues and explain any use of incentives. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how you connected with research participants to encourage participation and how you presented the research results. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation and Challenges (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the budget you had to work with. If you are not permitted to share specific figures, explain your constraints/include ranges. <i>TIP: Even if you spent no money, estimate the value/cost of staff time and other resources.</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how time, money, labor and other resources were effectively managed. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss challenges faced and describe how these were effectively managed. (Tight deadlines or budget? How was this resolved?) 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show how stakeholders (audience members) or subject matter experts were consulted during the research. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriately analyze the research results. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the approach to presenting the research findings to decision makers. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the research subjects were informed of the results. 	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Section	Elements to Include	Check When Complete
Measurement and Evaluation (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List the SMART objectives again from the Goals and Objectives section, including the results you achieved. Check your math for accuracy when using numbers and percentages. Ideally, you met or exceeded some or all of the objectives. <i>TIP: Demonstrating the outcomes you achieved is key to showing the success of your project.</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how you measured the objectives, showing a thorough evaluation that supports the results. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include an executive summary of formal evaluation supporting results in the work sample, and explain how the project helped the business. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide recommendations for improvement. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work plan total points	Points in each work plan section are added together, divided by six and then multiplied by .50.	

The Work Sample

Section	Elements to Include	Check When Complete
Stakeholder Alignment and Influence (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample includes selections that demonstrate good choice of messages (your key messages), mediums, media and communication channels aligned with the audience analysis as discussed in the work plan (language, font size, vehicle choice). 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample has messages that engage the intellect or emotions of the audience, influence their thoughts and behaviors, and connect with the audience. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample language is aligned to the audience analysis. 	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Section	Elements to Include	Check When Complete
Alignment with Objectives and Strategy (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample selections show the project is on strategy and consistent with business needs. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample elements are communicated in a clear, consistent and powerful way. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample reflects the research objectives, research questions and strategic thinking. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample provides clear evidence that it has the desired effect on the audience and business needs (work is clear, consistent and clever, communicating key messages in powerful, emotional way). 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Execution (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample elements are well crafted (strong images convey key messages). 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample elements demonstrate high-quality writing and production within available budget and resources. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample elements demonstrate consistency between what is presented in the work plan and what is delivered. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample aligns with accepted research practices and demonstrates appropriate data analysis, interpretation of the results and presentation of recommendations. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Quality (This section is worth up to 7 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample meets professional standards with a well-written and produced entry that's easy to understand. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample provides a comprehensive and representative sample of all the elements described in the work plan, including the research instrument, analysis and reporting of findings, and recommendations based on the findings that flow from the research. 	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Section	Elements to Include	Check When Complete
	<i>TIP: Do not include EVERYTHING in your work sample. Select the most representative items.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample demonstrates strategic and creative thinking that reflects the audience and business needs. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work sample demonstrates the ability of the research to serve as a foundation for communication and to influence valid business results. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work sample total points	Points in each work sample section are added together, divided by four and then multiplied by .50.	

Final Checklist

Check Before Submission	Check When Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work plan is four pages or less, has a font size of 10 points or larger and has at least 0.5 inch margins. 	<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 = work plan points + work sample 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 1, 2 and 3](#)*
- Review [Gold Quill Resources for Entrants](#)*

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