

## Tips for Writing a Winning Nomination

1. **Address each criteria for the award** -- Sometimes there is a list of criteria. Sometimes there are several sentences that describe this, and you have to pick out the key ideas/criteria yourself. Group your ideas about your nominee under these key criteria headings so you don't miss mentioning one of them. Often, the committee has a scoring matrix that matches these criteria, so if the nomination package doesn't mention one, your candidate's chance of winning is diminished.
2. **Use the language the award uses** -- If one criteria is "leadership qualities", for example, say, "Joe Smith's *leadership qualities* include the following . . ." instead of just saying "Joe Smith has great organizational skills, is a good motivator, and . . ." Also avoid generalities like "He's a hard worker", "She goes above and beyond her job duties".

**Be descriptive in your nomination** – Focus on how the nominee's contribution/achievement is significant and deserving of recognition, using specific details and descriptions. Include how these steps go beyond the nominee's normal requirements of the job. It is good practice to use bullet points in your nomination to make it more readable. Value quality over quantity. Make every sentence count; remove unnecessary words.

[<http://hrweb.mit.edu/rewards/mit-excellence-award/nomination/examples>]

### 3. Tell What and How

#### WHAT did the nominee(s) do?

- Projects and/or activities above and beyond job descriptions
- Any challenges or issues encountered and overcome
- Your words and examples must help the award committee "see" your nominee's attributes and contributions

#### Give specific examples HOW did the nominee(s) do it?

- Initiative and/or leadership
- Teamwork
- Creativity and/or innovation
- Behaviors and/or attitudes
- Serving as a mentor or role model to others

WHAT were the results and/or impacts?

- What did the nominee(s) accomplish?
- Are there specific benefits derived from those efforts?
- What is the impact on your office, the clientele, or the University?
- Include measurable results where possible (monetary savings, a new product/service, staff morale increasing, students being better informed and more prepared)

**4. Communicate sincerity and personal commitment**

Show that you personally value the contributions of your nominee(s). Write your nomination from the heart, and provide as much specific information as you can.

5. **Find a theme to revolve the nomination around** – Finding a theme to revolve the nomination around helps you build a compelling story and also enables the reviewers to follow along easily. Talking to the nominees about their work, background and experiences to learn from them. Getting to know them would help to provide further information and way to start crafting a story.

6. **Invite input from colleagues and co-workers** -- Get supporting statements from colleagues, clients and students can make help create a unique picture of your nominee and provide detailed examples that you don't know about. Also, it spreads out the workload and everyone has a few minutes to write a story or sentence or two providing details about someone's excellent work efforts. Some of these may even be long enough for you to use as nomination letters for packages that allow for that.

7. **Follow the guidelines for the suggested format for a general nomination letter** –

**Salutation/Greeting** – Addressed to the person who will be reviewing the nomination.

**Paragraph 1** – Explain your connection with the nominee – include how you know the person and why you are qualified to be recommending him/her

**Paragraph 2** – Give a detailed description of their qualifications. Choose few points and give specific examples to reinforce those points.

**Paragraph 3** – Address specific skills that the nominee has in connection to the award.

**Paragraph 4** – State “I highly recommend” or “recommend without reservation”. Include a summary of the reasons, do not introduce any new concepts or ideas.

**Conclusion** – Include a statement reinstating your faith in the nominee and offer to provide more information if required.

8. **Proofread your writing** – Some rules to follow

- Avoid use of too many pronouns and run-on sentences
- Check for grammatical errors and misspelled words
- Have colleagues review the nomination for thoroughness and accuracy prior to submitting it.

**References:**

<http://hrweb.mit.edu/rewards/mit-excellence-award/nomination/examples>

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