

To enter awards or to not enter awards? That is the question...

By [Rogan Jansen](#)

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Everyone, no matter what they say, likes to see at least some recognition for their work. But do awards still hold their value and are they worth the time and money needed to take part?



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) Do awards still hold the value they did and are they worth the time and money needed to take part, asks Rogan Jansen, co-founder and creative director at the Cape Town based design studio DashDigital.

The advertising and design fraternities in South Africa, and around the world for that matter, have long held great value in the idea of winning an award.

Walking away with a trophy, displaying it on the office mantle, adding a logo onto one's website and including the details in client pitches have forever been the driving forces behind entering industry awards.



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The upsides

Winning awards has many positives.

They can assist your business in building credibility in your industry by validating your business model, product or service.

A line of well-respected awards also can demonstrate that your business endeavours have been recognised by experts in the field and as important, certain award wins can set you apart from your competitors.

And standing out holds much more gravity than just attracting new clients, a strong business profile can also assist in securing investment opportunities.

The free exposure garnered via the award ceremony's public relations efforts doesn't hurt either.

But possibly the most valuable result of an award streak is that it strengthens a team's morale and fosters a feeling of value and recognition.

There is a growing list of awards that one can enter these days, and this tends to dilute the prestige they hold and the impact they create, but if you carefully consider your business goals, understand what your industry sees as most relevant, the right award entries can be hugely valuable.



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The downsides

As with everything, entering awards comes at a cost. And not just the monetary kind, which interestingly enough, can be quite hefty today.

The real cost comes from the unbillable hours used to create the entry, which often requires a lot of work.

Great award entries are not something that you slap together overnight.

If you're really in it for the right reasons, your award entry should be a stellar reflection of your business, your people and the work you are entering.

This takes time and often sees team members taken off other clients' work to create something that ultimately could not even gain anything.

It's really about weighing up what is more important at the time, crucial client deadlines or the possibility of winning an award.

The other downside of entering awards, which is often overlooked, is the impact that a loss or lack of nomination has on the team that created the work and played a role in entering it.

Losing out on a highly esteemed accolade or suffering a line of losses can have very negative effects on a team's morale and should be considered when choosing to send that award entry in.

Another negative of losing out on an award is your client's disappointment.

Like agencies, clients value certain awards very highly and when these aren't secured, relationships can take a knock.

It's therefore crucial that you manage expectations upfront when you enter work done for a certain client, this goes a long way to ensuring everyone is on the same page and that if things don't go exactly as desired, disappointment is kept to a minimum.



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Positives outweigh the negatives

All in all, however, I still believe that the positives associated with winning the right award far outweigh the negatives.

However, work should be created to solve a client's problem, bring forth a shared vision or create real change via collaboration – and if this happens to win an award, that's a big cherry on the top.

So, while it makes sense for agencies and their teams alike to add award-winning work to their list of goals, this should not define the work they create or become their overall north star.

ABOUT ROGAN JANSEN

Rogan Jansen is the co-founder and creative director at the Cape Town-based design studio DashDigital.
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