



2009 NOMINATION INFORMATION

Good Business Practices Deserve Recognition!

The *Annual Small Business of the Year Awards Banquet* recognizes small businesses in Benton & Franklin Counties for their exceptional customer service, outstanding commitment to employees, and superior community relations. The Small Business Awards Committee, coordinated by the Three Rivers Alliance of Chambers, is pleased to accept nominations from any citizen of Benton or Franklin Counties who is an employee, customer, supplier, or regulator of the nominated business. *Businesses are encouraged to self-nominate.*

CATEGORIES FOR NOMINATION

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

These awards are presented to small businesses that meet the following criteria: employ fewer than 60 FTE, are locally owned & operated, and are for-profit. These businesses best exemplify the qualities of honesty, fairness, ethical business practices, and commitment to employees & customers.

THREE AWARDS WILL BE GIVEN IN THIS CATEGORY: Gold, Silver, and Bronze

MICRO-BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

At the Judges' discretion, this single award may be presented to a small business that meets the following criteria: employs fewer than 10 FTE, is locally owned & operated, and is for-profit. This business best exemplifies the qualities of honesty, fairness, ethical business practices, and commitment to employees & customers. Businesses nominated in this category *are* also eligible for the Gold, Silver, & Bronze awards in the Small Business of the Year category.

ONE AWARD MAY BE GIVEN IN THIS CATEGORY

SELECTION CRITERIA

Written applications are reviewed & scored by the Small Business Awards Judging Committee. Businesses are evaluated by a point system on their answers to customer, employee, and community relations questions. An explanation of the evaluation system is provided on the following pages. *Please note that if your business has received the Gold award in the past five years, you are not eligible to participate in either category.*

INTENT TO NOMINATE FORM

Included in this packet is an Intent To Nominate form. Forms filled out and returned by **March 20, 2009, 5 p.m.** will receive an additional 5 points toward their nomination score.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Full nomination application packets are due
Thursday, April 2nd, 2009, 5 p.m. Mail eight (8) completed application packets to:

ImagineThat!

P.O. Box 4514, West Richland, WA 99353

Or deliver to your local Chamber office

BANQUET DATE

The Awards Banquet will be held **Thursday, May 7th, 2009** at the Three Rivers Convention Center.

Additional nomination packets may be obtained from your local Chamber of Commerce, TRIDEC, or by contacting Tracy Hill of *ImagineThat!* at 967.1063 or Tracy@ImagineThatPR.com



2009 SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS NOMINATION INFORMATION

***PLEASE READ THROUGH THE ENTIRE PACKET BEFORE
BEGINNING TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS***

Nomination Procedure. Answer sections II through V on five typewritten pages, front only, single-spaced. Be clear and concise. Any additional pages for these sections will be removed from the packet. For section VI, you may include up to 10 additional attachments such as copies of certificates, awards, correspondence, and other materials supporting your nomination (limit of 10 pages total for attachments). For more information on maximizing your score, please contact Brian Johnson, Judging Coordinator at 521-9332.

I. Submission of Intent To Nominate Form by March 20, 2009 (5 points)

II. Information on the Nominated Business and Nominator (5 points)

a. Name of Nominated Business

- ❖ Address
- ❖ Telephone number of nominated business
- ❖ What products or services does the business provide?
- ❖ Number of employees (*must be less than 60 FTE*)
- ❖ How long the business has existed
- ❖ Name and contact information for the business owner(s) or local manager

*Note: The judging committee may visit businesses for evaluation. Please indicate if a site-visit is **not** possible.*

b. Name of Nominator

- ❖ Name, address, phone, fax and email of Nominator
- ❖ Relationship to the nominee
- ❖ Nominator Qualification: Employee, long-standing customer, supplier, business owner, regulator, etc.

III. Employee Relations (30 points)

1. Describe the processes that your business uses to maintain a safe, pleasant working environment for employees. (10 points)
2. Describe the processes that the business uses to motivate employees through benefits and incentives, e.g. profit sharing, stock ownership, savings plans and/or creative employee incentives, etc. (10 points)
3. Describe what the company does to demonstrate concern for personal and professional growth, decision-making, and development of employees. (10 points)

IV. Customer Relations (30 points)

1. Describe ways in which the nominated business consistently demonstrates concern for customer satisfaction and ethical treatment of customers. (10 points)
2. Describe ways in which the business demonstrates commitment to high quality merchandise and/or service. (10 points)
3. What type(s) of follow-up techniques does the nominated business use to retain their customers? (10 points)

V. Community Relations (30 points)

1. Describe how the business location is maintained: is the location well-maintained, well-lit, clean, attractive, and safe? Does the building and its landscaping enhance and beautify the surrounding area? (applies both to commercial and home-based areas) (10 points)
2. Describe how the business as a whole participates in community affairs (example: Chamber of Commerce member, civic organizations, etc.)? (10 points)
3. How are managers and employees (i.e., non owners) involved in community business and service (example: participation in City Council business, volunteer work, community board of directors, etc.)? (10 points)

VI. Supporting Documents and Presentation (5 points)

Please attach documents to support your nomination. Consideration will be given to the relevancy of the documents. Consideration will also be given to presentation of the material.

REQUIRED:

- ↳ **Provide 8 original packets**
- ↳ Please submit *one digital picture* of your business and/or employees that you would like showcased in the Awards Banquet Program. E-mail it to: Tracy@ImagineThatPR.com

Deadline

Thursday, April 2, 2009, 5:00 p.m. Late entries will not be accepted.

Nomination packages (8 total packets) should be delivered to Tracy Hill in care of your local Chamber of Commerce office. Or, mail to: **Small Business Awards Banquet, Attn: Tracy Hill, P.O. Box 4514, West Richland, WA 99353.** Call 509.967.1063 for additional information.

Awards Banquet

Awards will be presented during the Small Business Awards Banquet **Thursday, May 7, 2009** at the Three Rivers Convention Center. Reserve your table through *ImagineThat!*

Scoring of Nomination Packets

Points are awarded for providing complete and accurate information, with clear and concise descriptions. Consideration is also given to overall package presentation.

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|----------------------------|---|
| Section I | Five (5) points for completed and returned Intent To Nominate form. |
| Section II | Five (5) points. Include all information requested; points will be deducted for incomplete information. |
| Sections III, IV, V | Ten (10) points per question. Please provide clear and concise descriptions. |
| Section VI | Five (5) points. Relevancy of attachments and attention to details such as grammar and spelling will be considered. |

Good Luck!!

Scoring/Judging Criteria

2009 Mid-Columbia Small Business Awards

Important Dates: **Nomination Packets Due - Thursday April 2nd**
 Site visits - Tuesday April 28th & Wednesday April 29th

Here are tips from the Judging Coordinator to help your business obtain the best score on your nomination packet...

Intent to Nominate form - 5 points. This form is required. No points will be awarded if the form is not returned by March 20, 2009.

Nominated business & nominator - 5 points. Answer all of the questions – there is a deduction of points for missing information. Every nominated business should score 5 points here.

1. **Employee relations** - There are 3 questions worth 10 points each. The judges are looking for 10 *different* ways that you answer each question. All questions ask “How” you perform a certain task. Make sure to provide 10 different examples in order to gain the most points possible.
2. **Customer relations** - There are 3 questions worth 10 points each. Again, the judges are looking for 10 *different* examples of exemplary customer relations techniques for each question.
3. **Community relations** - There are 3 questions worth 10 points each. Each question asks “How” the company performs a certain task, and the judges are looking for 10 *different* ways that your business does this.
4. **Supporting Documents** - 5 points. You may provide up to 10 supporting documents such as awards, certificates, or other examples of your employee, customer, or community involvement & community relations. **Required:** digital picture of your business/employees. A picture with people is much more interesting. Submit your photo to Tracy@ImagineThatPR.com

All seven judges’ scores for each business are totaled. The top 30% (+/-) scoring businesses will receive a site visit. **The goal of the written application is to get a site visit, so every point counts.**

Site visits (April 28th & 29th)

Each business will have up to 45 minutes with the Judging Committee. Judges are verifying what they read in the nomination packet. They will be scoring on customer service, employee relations, and community involvement. Judges score points in each area, so give them lots of information on what you are doing. They will also see some things on walls or actions by employees that can garner points for you!

It’s good to review your nomination packet with your entire staff before the judges arrive, and then support the packet information. Remember, the nomination packet is what got you the site visit!

Scoring can be very close and the top three business’ scores are usually within 5 points.

All nominees receive an evaluation report of their application strengths and weaknesses after the banquet

Questions? Call Brian Johnson, Judging Coordinator at 521-9332