ULI Europe Awards for Excellence

Winning Strategies

How can projects stand out among their peers? Below are some tips and winning strategies that will give your submission the best chance to succeed.

The Competition Is International.
When preparing your submission, be mindful that your project will be competing on an international scale—office buildings from London will be compared against commercial towers in Frankfurt, shopping centers in Madrid will compete against retail districts in Paris—so stress the international models or strategies it represents.

Make Sure Your Project Is Eligible.
Projects must be in stabilised operation, financially viable, and substantially completed. “Substantially completed” means a single-phase project must be finished, occupied, and in operation; for multiple-phase projects, the first phase must be finished, occupied, and in operation. If you still are not sure whether your project is eligible, write to Europe.Awards@uli.org for further clarification.

There Is No “Completion Date” Requirement for the Awards.
There is no official cutoff date for project completion in the Awards for Excellence program. It’s a balancing act: on one hand, the jury appreciates projects that exhibit a strong financial track record—an advantage that a five-year-old project would have over a newly completed one. On the other hand, the jury rewards those projects that are innovative and create new models for the industry—something a ten-year-old project may not do.

Good Images Are Critical.
Images that accurately represent the character and use of your project are instrumental in the jury’s decision-making process. Be sure that your images include people using the space and give the jury a sense of the project in relation to its surroundings. Provide a contact sheet with captions for each image for reference, and please include photographer credits. All images must be high resolution (ideally at a minimum of 300 dpi at 8” x 11”) because they may be used for ULI publications and other communications channels. All images should be in electronic format (JPEG or TIFF).

Focus on the Project Description.
The project description should be direct and succinct. Focus on what sets your project apart from others, and most important, describe the impact—economic, social, and environmental—the space has had on its surrounding area. Be sure to provide project metrics wherever possible; concrete numbers help the jury make its decision. Also include relevant literature on your project—newspaper and magazine articles, blog posts, etc.—that will offer an objective perspective of your project.

Pick One Person to Serve as the Primary Contact.
Decide who will devote focused attention to completing the submission and include the contact’s name, title, telephone number, and e-mail address. You may wish to use the team members who developed the project to help draft responses to the application. However, the application will be most effective if one person coordinates and processes all information. If your project is selected as a finalist, this person will be ULI’s main point of contact for the site visit and award ceremony.

Keep It Simple.
It may be tempting to create a custom application package, but no jury member will see it. Each submission—application, attached literature, and project images—is presented to the jury in an identical manner to ensure objectivity. All extraneous material and packaging will be disregarded. Keep the focus on presenting the project information and images in a clear, concise manner.

Application Dos and Don'ts

What makes a successful ULI Awards for Excellence application? Here are some guidelines.

Read the entry form carefully, paying close attention to the criteria. The project must be substantially completed and financially viable or, in the case of public and special projects/programmes, must make a significant contribution toward the betterment of its community. The project also must demonstrate excellence in land planning, design, and/or amenities that sets a high standard within the community and the industry.
This 2020 blank submission form illustrates all requirements and the process (PDF). Please note that the submission process is conducted using a live web version of this form. Additional instructions to complete the form can be found here.

Decide who will give focused attention to completing the submission. You may wish to reassemble the team that developed the project so that team members can help draft responses to the application. However, the application will be most effective if one person coordinates and processes all information.

Make certain that your photographs truly represent the quality of your development. Submit images that convey special characteristics of your project, and make sure they are very clear in showing exteriors, interiors, and landscaping. Images of interiors should highlight the unique features of the project.

Review the success factors of your development and explain and document them carefully. Describe target markets, using examples and hard numbers. Focus on communicating how the project demonstrates excellence and why it is worthy of special consideration. Clear, factual information is important.

After you have completed the application, let your public relations advisers review it for language, illustrations, and effective communication of your project. Remember that ULI awards jurors are human beings. They will favour an entry that is persuasive and to the point.

Finalists will be notified in March, and a ULI Awards jury member will contact them to schedule on-site visits. ULI may request additional information about the project at that time.

Remember to number—and assign photo credits to—all images. Provide a contact sheet with the captions and credits.

Please make sure that you also have the rights to use those images, and that you can provide ULI the rights to use them. Selected projects are featured prominently in ULI communication channels using these materials. Occasionally, projects not selected for the awards are also offered the opportunity to participate and be featured in related ULI programmes.

Remember to include the appropriate entry fee. Submissions by public sector organisations / NGOs are free of charge. An entry fee must accompany each submission by private sector companies.

The private sector entry fee for the 2020 ULI Europe Award for Excellence is €500 (VAT may apply). Please note that the entry fee applies to the company or organisation submitting the application, not the type of project. For instance, a private sector company submitting a public sector project pays the private sector fee.

Remember to complete the authorisation section.
Don’t forget to fill out the authorisation section of the submission by the right project representative. The authorisation agreements guarantees the legitimacy of the submission and enables the submission to be approved for evaluation and potential dissemination on ULI channels.