

WHAT MAKES YOUR BUSINESS SUPER?

This application form is a simple self-evaluation that can improve your business management skills and put you in the running to win the Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business Award!

Step 1 / Self-Evaluation:

- If your organization is a business, please use Form A.
- If you are a nonprofit, please use Form B.

Eligibility:

- In business for at least three continuous years.
- 150 employees or fewer.
- Previous Award of Excellence recipients and applicants who were not selected for an award may resubmit their same application up to three years back.
- Previous Superstars in Business winners may re-apply after five years.
- Please answer the questions by completing the application online at www.dsc.com/superstarsinbusiness. Electronic PDFs and paper versions are also available for reference, but your application must be submitted online. Please contact Kerri Welcher at kwelcher@dsc.com or (302) 576-6566 with questions.

Step 2 / Submission:

All applications must be submitted online. Applications must be submitted to the Superstars in Business Selection Committee no later than Thursday, July 18, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. No late entries will be accepted. Please note that all submitted information remains confidential.

It is important to note that each question has a word count limit. Please follow those word count limits. Applications longer than the outlined limits will not be accepted.

Step 3 / Application Review:

Within each category, the finalists may be contacted for additional information or validation of the information submitted. The review made at this step is held in strict confidence.

Step 4 / The Awards:

Each winner will be presented with a special award recognizing their superior achievement on November 6, 2024, at a luncheon in the Gold Ballroom of the HOTEL DU PONT in Wilmington. Marketing and recognition will be given to all the Superstars in Business honorees throughout the year.

Awards may be judged in the following categories (*Please note that final categories will be decided upon at the Selection Committee's discretion based on the number of entries and quality of applications*):

- 1-15 employees
- 16-40 employees
- 41-150 employees
- Nonprofit

Below each question, we provided you with 'Superstar Suggestions.' They aim to help you form more robust answers and provide suggestions on what information may make your response more competitive. These are not requirements but will help judges compare your organization against other applicants. Please answer questions as concisely as possible.

ENTRY DEADLINE: July 18, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.

Questions? Please contact Kerri Welcher at kwelcher@dsc.com or (302) 576-6566.

Form A for BUSINESSES

1. **Business name, address, and phone; primary contact and CEO's name, title, phone number and email.**

2. **450 words: Background information**

- Describe your business. (Superstar suggestion: Assume the reader has no understanding of your industry.)
- List the number of years in business and briefly explain how your business was started.
- Number of employees and average tenure (Please distinguish between full-time and part-time).

3. **450 words: Please provide your business mission statement and/or business philosophy including core competencies and strengths. How do you align your day-to-day operations to this statement/philosophy?**

Superstar suggestion: Provide your mission statement, vision statement, guiding principles, or strategies for success. How is your mission statement communicated to your clients, employees, investors, and/or the general public (i.e., word of mouth, through marketing materials, etc.)? Also, explain how they were developed – were they customer or leadership driven, and how do you ensure they are understood by your entire company? Tell us here if you have team building meetings, strategy sessions, and/or safety meetings that may include a regular discussion on these important guiding statements.

4. **450 words: What are your key metrics and tools and how are you measuring your results? How do you use these to proactively measure your performance and guarantee future success?**

Superstar suggestion: Here is the place to highlight any strategies and measures taken that resulted in savings, stability, or growth. You should be monitoring outcomes that are a consequence of its operational performance and then serve as predictors of future performance. How do your results measure up to other companies in your industry? Be specific and tell us about innovative tools you use to market or boost sales, which in turn produces a good ROI. Customer loyalty, years of experience, low associate turnover and industry awards are all competitive weapons. We want to know that your business is sustainable and will be around in the years to come. Actual financial metrics (i.e., revenue growth percentage, profit margin, days cash on hand, debt ratio, etc.) could separate your application from the competition. *Remain assured that all information is kept confidential.

5. **450 words: When thinking about your customers, what makes your business stand apart from your peers and/or similar businesses?**

Superstar suggestion: Use this question to outline how you identify customer needs and priorities. Tell us if you are measuring customer satisfaction or if you have moved to customer loyalty or customer advocacy. How do you engage your customers? Share with us how you brand your company and how you maintain it (i.e., social media, online networking, marketing campaigns). Tell us if you have a customer database or process to retain information about customers to use in the future. If you have a formal process for tracking and resolving complaints, highlight your program here and brag about your results. What makes your business a Superstar?

6. **450 words: A qualified workforce is a main concern for all businesses. How do you recruit and retain your associates?**

Superstar suggestion: What are your key workforce practices and how are they directed towards creating and maintaining a high-performance work environment? How do you determine and meet the needs of your employees? If associate training or education reimbursement programs are a big part of your employee retention program or your quality/safety programs, please tell us about that too. Specific examples are appreciated.

7. **450 words: What recent or current significant challenges other than COVID-19 have you had to overcome to continue to be a successful business? Identify and describe the steps you took.**

Superstar suggestion: How were the challenges identified, and did you anticipate them coming? If they couldn't be predicted, what did you learn for the next time to make the company stronger? For these opportunities, financial or otherwise, how did the leaders of the organization rally and engage associates to adapt to change and meet the challenge? List challenges within the past two years.

8. **450 words: Discuss the nature and involvement of your community service efforts from leadership to employees.**

Superstar suggestion: We want to know what organizations your company chooses to align with and why. How in-depth is your involvement? How does your owner/leadership's commitment and involvement influence the corporate culture as it relates to community service efforts? Describe investments of time, as well as causes supported financially. Highlight efforts regarding care for our environment, care for underserved communities, and/or social equality. Do you have a formal program that includes fundraising or service hours donated? Are the commitments or passions you have for certain causes conveyed in your marketing, company brand, and culture?

Form B for NONPROFITS

1. Business name, address, and phone; primary contact and executive director's name, title, phone number and email.

2. 450 words: Background information:

- Describe the work of your nonprofit. (*Superstar suggestion*: Assume the reader has no understanding of your industry)
- Number of years serving the community.
- Number of paid staff and average tenure (Please distinguish between full-time and part-time).
- Number of volunteers and their average tenure.

3. 450 words: Please provide your organization's mission statement and/or philosophy, including core competencies and strengths. How do you align your day-to-day operations to this statement/philosophy? Also please provide the number of people or groups that benefit from your organization (Please provide results for each of the last three years).

Superstar suggestion: Provide your mission statement, vision statement, guiding principles, or strategies for success. How is your mission statement communicated to your beneficiaries, staff, board, contributors, and/or the general public (i.e., word of mouth, through marketing materials, etc.)? Also, explain how they were developed – were they constituent or leadership driven, and how do you ensure they are understood by your entire organization? Tell us here if you have team-building meetings, strategy sessions, and/or safety meetings that may include a regular discussion on these important guiding statements.

4. 450 words: When thinking about your key constituents (i.e., recipients of service, board members, donors, and/or customers), what makes your organization stand apart from your peers and/or similar nonprofits?

Superstar suggestion: Please use this question to outline how you identify constituent needs and priorities. Are you measuring their satisfaction? How do you engage your constituents? Share with us how you brand your organization and how you maintain it (i.e., social media, online networking, marketing campaigns, etc.) Tell us if you have a database or process to retain information about your constituents to use in the future. If you have a formal process for tracking and resolving complaints, please highlight your program here and brag about your results.

5. 450 words: A qualified workforce and board of directors are main concerns for all nonprofits. How do you recruit and retain your staff, board members, and volunteers?

Superstar suggestion: What are your key workforce practices, and how are they directed toward creating and maintaining a high-performance work environment? How do you determine and meet the needs of your staff, board, and volunteers? How often does your board meet, and are there term limits? What is the percentage of board members who make financial contributions to your organization? If associate training or education reimbursement programs are a big part of your employee retention program or your quality/safety programs, please tell us about that too. Specific examples are appreciated.

6. 450 words: What recent or current significant challenges other than COVID-19 have you had to overcome to continue to be a successful nonprofit? Identify and describe the steps you took.

Superstar suggestion: How were the challenges identified, and did you anticipate them coming? If they couldn't be predicted, what did you learn for the next time to make the company stronger? For these opportunities, financial or otherwise, how did the leaders of the organization rally and engage associates to adapt to change and meet the challenge? Please list challenges within the past two years.

7. 450 words: List your organization's functional expense allocation as a percentage of total expenses:

Program Services _____ Fundraising _____ Management & General _____

8. What is the calculation of your unrestricted net assets to current operating expenses? How many months of cash do you have on hand?

9. 450 words: Please use the space below to provide a narrative that will help the selection committee understand the strength of your nonprofit's financial position.

Superstar suggestion: A well-run nonprofit should meet standards where at least 65% of its total expenses are on program activities. Please explain if your organization's ratio is below that. Also, a well-run nonprofit should avoid accumulating funds that could be used for current program activities. To meet this standard, the organization's unrestricted net assets should be no more than 3x the size of the past year's expenses or 3x the size of the current year's budget, whichever is higher. Please explain any variance from this standard. Examples may be that your organization is planning on a large capital project, introducing a new program, or amid a capital campaign, in which the organization is accumulating funds for that expense.