

10 Design Award Entry Errors

Submitting your hospital to the Hospital Design Competition is a long, laborious project so try to avoid these common mistakes.

It happens every year. As the Design Awards competition judges flip through the entries, a few will stand out but **not** for the right reasons. Something's a little off, whether it's the architectural and design information, the floor plan, or the photographs.

Sloppy entry notebooks can be the kiss of death for some hospitals. The judges need well-organized, professional notebooks to gain a sense of each hospital and its individual qualifications. It's no surprise that the best entry notebooks each year often come from the practices that win Merit Awards. Here are the top 10 mistakes we see each year and tips for avoiding them.

1. Poor photography

Photographs are one of the most important features of your entry notebook. Our judges can't visit each hospital, so your photos must serve as a virtual tour through your facility. Follow the guidelines in Section IV of the entry form, which contains the proper format for organizing your photos.

We strongly recommend hiring a professional photographer. You may know your hospital, but a photographer knows how to set up the right angles and lighting to present your facility in the best possible manner. It costs a little extra, but hiring a photographer is the first step you can take to increase your chances at winning an award.

2. Dark photographs

Lighting is one of the most important aspects of photography. If the judges have to squint to view the features of your storage room, they're not getting the full picture. Also, if your practice is chosen for an award but your photos are too dark, we'll have trouble presenting them clearly in the pages of Veterinary Economics.

3. Unclear photo labels

It may be clear to you what each photo contains, but an outsider might not recognize the difference between a cat exam room and a dog exam room. Make sure photograph labels match floor plan labels so judges get a sense of where each room is located when viewing your photos.

4. Too many photos

Sometimes less is more. Judges appreciate a thorough entry, but including 15 or 20 exterior photos is a bit much. Show off the special features of your hospital, but don't go overboard—one or two shots of each room is usually sufficient. Stick to the format described in Section IV of the entry form when choosing photos.

5. Incomplete room detail

When showing off your exam rooms, our judges need more in a photo than an exam table in front of an empty wall. Show us your cabinets and client seating. Make sure the flooring is visible. Flaunt the

custom art hanging on the wall. And feel free to include team members and clients in photos to give judges an inside peek into how your clinic operates.

6. Not all areas shown

Again, refer to Section IV of the entry form to determine what photos you should include in your entry. A wide-angle panoramic shot of your facility's exterior is one of the most important aspects of your entry. And your staff lounge may seem like an uninteresting part of your facility, but it's a necessary part of your photograph section.

7. Unlabelled floor plan

This is a major no-no. Your hospital's floor plan is one of the first thing judges evaluate, and not including floor plan labels makes it nearly impossible for them to assess your facility accurately and fairly. Each version of your floor plan (traffic flow, HVAC zones, etc.) should include labels.

8. Illegible floor plan

Floor plan labels may be easy to read on your computer screen, but are they still legible on standard-sized paper? Always review your floor plan and make sure each label is clear and accurate before submitting your entry.

9. Unfinished hospital features

To enter the Design Award **2019** competition, your hospital must have been completed between June 2017 and June 2019. So don't feel rushed to enter as soon as you move in to your facility. Allow your landscaping to flourish before taking exterior photographs. Finish any lingering design projects and hang art on the walls. Stock your pharmacy with the medications and supplies you use on a daily basis. Give yourself plenty of time to enter and put your best foot forward.

10. Missing documents

Your entry isn't complete without a signed entry form, as well as signed license agreements from your architect and your photographer. Don't risk disqualification - review the entry form and make sure you've completed all required documents before submitting your notebook.