

Sample answer – REA Excellence Awards 2026

Game Changer of the Year, Question 1

This is a fictional sample written by Good News Travels. In a real entry, every claim is drawn from the kick-off call and the client's own data.

Question 1 (judging weight 40%)

How have you 'changed the game' in 2026? Explain the problem, opportunity or market need and describe the approach you took, including any technology, AI tools or new ways of working that made it possible.

Judging criteria: Demonstrates a genuinely new, improved or unconventional approach that challenged the status quo and differed from what came before, with effective use of technology, AI or new ways of working. Aim for 300 words per question.

In 2026, we changed the game with tenants we used to turn away. In 2025, our six offices across Sydney's west and northwest averaged 1,460 applications a month against 118 leases, which meant around 1,340 applicants a month were discarded. Other offices in our group had vacancies they suited. Days on market averaged 23, and every vacant week cost a landlord an average of \$780 in lost rent.

In January, we added a consent tick-box to our application form and built a shared tenant pool in our CRM, [name], tagged by budget, suburb and move date. Since mid-February, a CRM automation rule has matched the pool against every notice to vacate logged anywhere in the group, and an AI assistant summarises each match in seconds, so the property manager calls pre-qualified tenants within the hour, before the listing goes live.

Then we put our own money behind the pool. From March, we promised every landlord in writing a lease within 21 days or their first month's management fee waived. No one in our market had guaranteed leasing before. Internally, it was the harder sell, because office managers gave up applicants they saw as theirs and the group carried the risk of a slow lease. So we gave them a reason to share. When one office's applicant leases through another, the office that found them keeps half the letting fee. Sharing pays better than hoarding.

The pool and the guarantee were both live inside 10 weeks, for 120 hours of an administrator's time. By September, days on market had fallen from 23 to 12. The guarantee had won us 112 new management contracts, mostly from competitors, and cost us a month's fee on four of 790 leases. The applicants we used to discard are now our fastest route to a lease.

(300 words)