



EFFIE AWARDS SAUDI ARABIA 2026 CATEGORIES

CATEGORY LIMIT

To honor even more great work, a single effort can be entered into a maximum of four categories. Of those four categories, only one category submission may be an industry category.

- Each entry should be customized to speak to the specifics of each entered category whenever applicable. Judges are often frustrated when an entry clearly wasn't tailored for the category they are reviewing.
- You will need to complete a separate entry form and pay the entry fee for each additional category.
- Effie Awards Saudi Arabia reserves the right to re-categorize entries, split/redefine categories and/or refuse entry any at any time.

INDUSTRY CATEGORIES

There are 12 industry categories to choose from. Category definitions provide guidance regarding the types of industries that may enter that category; however, it is not an exclusive list. If you are unsure what category best fits your brand, please reach out to us. You may only enter one industry category per effort.

SPECIALTY CATEGORIES

The Specialty Categories are designed to address a specific business situation or challenge. There are over 14 specialty categories, with focuses on audiences, business achievements, health, media, commerce & shopper marketing, and industry trends.

When entering into these categories, you should present your entry in a way that addresses the situation or challenge as outlined in the category definition. It is critical to thoroughly review these category definitions to ensure your effort meets the criteria of the specific category definition.

Judges will down score your entry if you are missing information required by the category definition.

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CATEGORIES FAQ's

WHAT CATEGORY SHOULD I ENTER?

Review category definitions, if you are unsure if your case falls under the definition of a certain category, or which category it should be entered in, please email info@effiesaudi.com with a brief synopsis of the case, examples of the creative, and the categories you are considering.

WHAT CATEGORY GETS THE LEAST NUMBER OF ENTRIES?

Effie KSA does not reveal entry numbers. The number of entries in a category does not affect your chances of winning an award. There are minimum scores to be a finalist or winner in the competition. If no case meets the minimum, no recognition of that level would be given, regardless of number of entries. Similarly, if a category has more qualifying entries than can be recognized by the maximum number of awards in a category, we will look into ways of splitting a category in order to honor more great work.

DO I NEED TO USE A SPECIAL ENTRY FORM FOR MY CATEGORY?

There are three entry forms for the 2026 competition:

- Standard Entry Form
- Sustained Success Entry Form
- Performance Marketing Entry Form

INDUSTRY CATEGORIES

Automotive- Vehicles & Aftermarket

Cars, trucks, motorcycles, vans. Both brand and model advertising. Gasoline, motor oil, tires, batteries, paint, quick-lube, oil change, muffler, transmission, windshield wipers, enhancements, etc.

Banking, Finance & Insurance

Financial products & services including marketing efforts, promoting overall image and capabilities of a financial institution; specific products or services including credit/debit cards, reward/loyalty cards, financial planning, mobile payment services, retirement funds, Shari'ah compliant products, investment, home banking, loans, mortgage, mutual funds, etc. It also includes all types of insurance eligible (home, auto, financial, life, travel, business, etc.) except for health insurance.

Beauty & Personal Care

Beauty: Includes cosmetics, fragrances, hair products, nail products, skincare treatments, salons, spas, etc.

Personal Care: Soap, oral care, face & body lotions and cleansers, basic eye and ear-care products (e.g. cotton swabs, eye drops, etc.), deodorants, feminine hygiene products, razors, shaving cream, etc.

Electronics

TVs, radios, mobile devices, home entertainment, laptops, tablets, cameras, smart home devices, computer hardware, game consoles, drones, VR/AR technology, sound systems, etc. Electronic devices may be aimed at consumers or businesses.

Entertainment & Sports

Includes all forms of entertainment, including movies, TV shows, podcasts, books, music, comics, games, toys, entertainment apps, etc. Sporting events such as the Super Bowl, sports teams, etc. (See Gaming & E-Sports category for video games.)

Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages

Food: Fresh, packaged, and frozen foods.

Non-Alcoholic Beverages: Beverages including diet and non-diet soda, coffee, tea, juices, milk, milk substitutes, bottled water, sparkling water, energy drinks, etc

Gaming & E-Sports

All forms of e-sports and single and multi-player video games, including virtual reality, arcade, console, mobile, online and computer games.

Government & Public Service

Municipal or state economic development, lotteries, utilities, civil, diplomatic, or armed forces, parks, libraries, public services, etc. Includes political messages and recruitment efforts.

Healthcare Services & Healthcare OTC

Healthcare Services: Efforts developed for hospitals, HMOs, health insurance companies, referral services, dental and medical care services, pharmacies, or chronic care facilities. Efforts may be targeted at healthcare professionals, patients, and/or consumers.

Healthcare OTC: Efforts for products that are sold without a prescription that address specific health conditions. Efforts may be targeted to healthcare professionals, patients and/or consumers. Only products that address a specific health condition should enter this category – there are separate categories for Beauty & Fragrance, Health, Fitness & Wellness, and Personal Care efforts.

Internet & Telecom

Mobile network providers, high speed internet access services, online services, bundled communications (internet, telephone, and TV), etc.

Retail

All retail companies (online and/or brick and mortar) with general or specific merchandise such as department stores; clothing, shoes or jewelry stores; grocery stores; home and garden stores; movie/bookstores; discount/bulk retailers; pet care; toy stores; specialty stores; convenience stores; etc.

Travel, Tourism & Transportation

Travel & Tourism: Cruises, hotels, resorts, amusement parks, travel websites and booking services, travel tours, tourism campaigns, etc.

Transportation: All transportation methods: air, train, bus, taxi, rideshare services, subway systems, bike shares, scooter shares, car rentals, ferries, etc.

SPECIALTY CATEGORIES DEFINITIONS:

The specialty categories are designed to address a specific business situation or challenges. When entering these categories, you should present your entry in a way that addresses the situation or challenges as outlined in the category definition. It is critical to thoroughly review these category definitions to ensure that your effort meets the specific category definition. Judges will down score your entry if you are missing information required by the category definition.

AUDIENCE CATEGORY

Youth Marketing Products & Services

This category honors work that effectively engages teens or young adults. Your entry should clearly demonstrate how the campaign was crafted specifically for this audience and how it succeeded. Detail the elements and strategies tailored to the youth market, and explain how you addressed relevant dynamics, trends, values, and linguistic nuances that resonate with this demographic.

Note: Judges may not be familiar with this particular audience, so showcase details that may be overlooked.

BRAND CONTENT, ENTERTAINMENT & EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING CATEGORIES

As with all Effie categories, you can enter whether your work brought the brand to life as the entire marketing effort or as part of the larger marketing program. If the content was part of a larger campaign, demonstrate the contribution of the content as part of that campaign.

Brand Integration & Entertainment Partnerships

This category honors brands that have effectively reached their audience via strategic integrations and entertainment partnerships. Submissions should detail how the brand was seamlessly interwoven in an engaging way. Detail the strategic reasoning behind the partnership – why was this partner chosen over others? Clearly explain the selection process of the partner, and how this partnership led to the results that met the brand objectives.

Experiential Marketing

This category is to showcase brand experiences beyond traditional advertising – work that truly brought a brand or product to life and interacted with a specific audience to achieve desired objectives should be entered. It may include a re-invented product demo, re-imagined pop-up, or a “brick and mortar” retail overhaul; it may have created a new game, an alternate or virtual reality experience, or an interactive/immersive film experience that effectively showcases a new product or brand personality. Award winners will show how the brand is reaching out to their audiences to establish meaningful relationships, memorable, engaging experiences, and unique connections. Entrants must address how the experiential marketing related back to the overall brand strategy. Judges will expect to understand the ‘participation’ in the experience as a core factor.

Enter in one of three sub-categories:

- o Experiential Marketing: Live
- o Experiential Marketing: Digital
- o Experiential Marketing: Hybrid

BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT CATEGORIES

Corporate Reputation

Marketing efforts that promote corporations, not exclusively their products. Includes sponsorships, image, and identity. In addition to presenting metrics related to the reputation, entrants are encouraged to also address how these metrics relate to the business of the brand and why they are important.

David Vs Goliath

This is an award for smaller brands, or new/emerging brands that are less than five years old making inroads against big, established leaders, taking on “sleeping giants,” beyond their current category and set of competitors to tackle a dominant leader. Entrants must detail the business challenge, the competitive landscape, and how the business succeeded despite the odds. Define your competitive landscape, including the market difference between David and Goliath to demonstrate why the brand was David.

Note: Judges will deduct from the case without sufficient proof that the submission of the brand is a David.

Marketing Disruptors

For efforts that grew the business/brand by changing the marketing model in ways that drive the industry forward. A marketing disruptor of any size can enter. Detail the marketing challenge, the competitive landscape, and how the brand succeeded by changing the existing marketing model for the brand/category.

Note: Judges will deduct from the case without clear articulation regarding how the marketing was disruptive for the brand/category.

Small Budgets

Small Budgets: To be eligible, entry may not be for line extension and must represent the only marketing efforts for the brand during the time period. The value of donated and non-traditional media as well as activation costs must be included. Budget eligibility is as follows:

- Local Efforts: AED 300,000 or less
- Regional Efforts: AED 500,000 or less

Enter one of three sub-categories:

- Small Budgets – Non-Profit
- Small Budgets – Products
- Small Budgets – Services

Sustained Success

Efforts that have sustained success for at least three years are eligible for entry. At a minimum, include at least three years of creative work and case results, and include the current competition year's results. Work must have a common objective in both strategy and creative executions; with a continuation of core executional elements (e.g., spokesperson, song, theme, tagline, etc.) that demonstrates effectiveness over time. As part of the entry, specifically address how the effort evolved over time (e.g., media choices, targeting, insights, new products/services, etc.). Answer all questions for the initial year and describe how/why change occurred over time. Enter one of three sub-categories:

- Sustained Success – Non-Profits
- Sustained Success – Products
- Sustained Success – Services

To enter, you must be able to provide data about the case that spans at least 3 years – an initial year, an interim year and current competition year (11/01/2024 - 01/07/2026). Having a case that spans more than three years is fine but you must still provide specific data and creative for at least three years, including the competition eligibility period.

Note: There is a special entry form and different creative requirements for the Sustained Success Award. The creative requirements, including different rules for the creative reel, can be found in the Sustained Success form.

COMMERCE & SHOPPER CATEGORIES

Honoring the most effective integrated campaigns based on a specific shopper insight and designed to engage the shopper and guide the purchase process to achieve conversion

Digital - Commerce

This category is for campaigns that effectively use insights, strategy, creative, and analytics to drive digital shopper conversion. Show how, by utilizing data and a deep understanding of the shopper, the brand and/or retailer succeeded in a digital setting. A successful effort will combine strong shopper knowledge with digital marketing practices to increase conversion online. The effort must be based on a shopper insight(s) and be shopper driven. Explain the strategy of how the effort went to market. Submissions in this category will be solely evaluated on digital commerce effectiveness.

DIGITAL CATEGORIES

Honoring the most effective convergence of data, technology and all forms of creative that maximize end user engagement and conversion.

Influencer Marketing

This category recognizes brands that successfully partnered with influencers to achieve short or long-term marketing goals. Influencers can range from micro to macro and include social media personalities, brand ambassadors, and bloggers. Clearly define the strategy, target audience, and why the influencer was chosen. Highlight how the influencer engaged the audience, influenced consumer behavior, and contributed to the brand's success by driving measurable business results.

Social Media

This category celebrates campaigns designed around social media as the primary touchpoint, leveraging its influence to engage connected consumers. Focus on campaigns where social media was the core idea, not just an element. Provide a clear rationale for using social media, demonstrate its direct impact on audience behavior, and show how it drove measurable business results.

Performance Marketing

This category celebrates the most impactful performance marketing strategies, where a combination of tactics generated significant, incremental results and conversions. Describe how you leveraged the synergy between your organic and paid ecosystems to create a halo effect, using data-driven insights, agile testing, and continuous optimization. Your submission should be performance-led, demonstrating how approaches such as (but not limited to) affiliate marketing, paid search, SEO, email campaigns, personalization at scale, influencer or sponsored content directly drove measurable outcomes like increased revenue or leads.

POSITIVE CHANGE CATEGORIES

In collaboration with the World Economic Forum, The Positive Change Effies reward and celebrate the brands and non-profits that are promoting the greater good through purpose-driven marketing. The program has two tracks - Environmental and Social Good.

Environmental

For efforts that have measurably shifted audience behavior toward more environmentally sustainable choices, and/or grown demand for more sustainable products and services by incorporating environmentally-conscious messaging into their marketing. Show how effective marketing programs that incorporate sustainable strategies can make a positive difference for brands and for the environment. Over and above the standard Effie requirements to demonstrate a positive impact on business, there are specific areas of interest that relate to this award. Efforts entered must have as one of their main strategic objectives, changing audience behavior towards more environmentally sustainable choices and environmentally conscious messaging must be a part of marketing. Entrants should address how the sustainability goal relates back to the overall brand and business strategy.

The criterion for this award is the result of behavior change toward more environmentally sustainable choices, with these elements being considered in judging:

- Awareness – Making the audience aware of a sustainable product, service or action.
- Trial – Trying the sustainable product, service or action for the first time.
- Product/Service Substitution – Switching to a more sustainable product, service or action.
- Change in Use – Using a product/service more sustainably than before or taking a more sustainable action.

Enter in one of the two sub-categories:

- Environmental – Brands
- Environmental – Non-Profit

Social Good

For marketing efforts proven effective in solving/impacting a social problem or in expanding an existing program in ways that benefit our society. This is about creating positive societal and cultural change, challenging the established status-quo and changing accepted norms and stereotypes that create societal inequalities with inspired action. Examples include initiatives that tackle food poverty; access to healthcare or education; creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive society; or creating equal opportunities at work and in a wider society for all members of our society. Any effort that sets out to give back in some way for the greater good is eligible to enter, and any/all marketing efforts, whether full campaigns or unique efforts within a campaign are eligible to enter as long as measurable results exist.

Enter one of three sub-categories:

- Social Good – Brands
- Social Good – Non-Profit
- Social Good – Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

TOPICAL & ANNUAL EVENTS CATEGORIES

Seasonal Marketing

Seasons, holidays and annual events allow marketers the opportunity to build strategic efforts based on the time-based interests of their target audience. This category honors those efforts that effectively capitalize on a season, holiday, or annual cultural event to drive results for their business.

Submit in one of two sub-categories:

- Seasonal Marketing – Products
- Seasonal Marketing – Services