

2026 Effie Awards India

CATEGORY OVERVIEW

CATEGORY RULES

To honor even more great work, efforts can be entered into a maximum of four categories. Of those four categories, only one category submission may be an industry category. You are not required to enter an Industry category; you may enter four specialty categories instead.

- Each entry should be customized to speak to the specifics of each entered category whenever applicable. Judges are often frustrated & express difficulty in effectively evaluating a case when an entry wasn't tailored for the entered category.
- You will need to complete a separate entry form and pay the entry fee for each additional category.
- The Effie Awards reserves the right to re-categorize entries, split/redefine categories and/or refuse entry any at any time. Test market entries are not eligible for the Effie India Awards competition.

INDUSTRY CATEGORIES

Category definitions provide guidance regarding the types of products/services that may enter that category; however, it is not an exclusive list. If you are unsure what category best fits your brand, please contact us at the Effie India Secretariat.

You may only enter one industry category per effort.

SPECIALTY CATEGORIES

The Specialty Categories are designed to address a specific business situation or challenge.

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.

INDUSTRY CATEGORIES (CATEGORIES 1-21)

- 1. Agricultural, Industrial & Building**
All related products, materials, tools and services, cement, tiles, paints, floorings etc.
- 2. Automotive**
Gasoline, motor oil, tires, batteries, paint, quick-lube, oil change, muffler, transmission, windshield wipers, enhancements, etc.
Cars, trucks, motorcycles, vans, both brand and model advertising.
- 3. Beauty & Fragrance**
Includes cosmetics, fragrances, hair products, nail products, skincare treatments, salons, spas, etc.

4. Beverages Non-Alcohol

Diet and non-diet soda, coffee, tea, juices, milk, milk substitutes, bottled water, sparkling water, energy drinks etc.

5. Consumer Electronics & Services

All products and services related to:

- Electronics: Devices may be aimed at consumers or businesses – TVs, radios, mobile devices, home entertainment, laptops, tablets, cameras, computer hardware, game consoles, drones, external or integrated VR/AR devices, sound systems, etc.

6. Education

Educational products and services including schools, colleges, universities, courses/ programs, coaching classes, self-study modules, distance learning courses, subscription channels run by DTH providers, extra-curricular education programs (such as sports coaching, music coaching, arts etc.). The specific offering could be in one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many, live or pre-recorded formats and could be delivered online or offline. However, please note that one-off programs conducted by organizations whose core business is not education will not be eligible for this category (for example, a toy store that runs a popular toy-making workshop will not be eligible for this award)

7. Fashion

Brands of clothing, jewelry, handbags, accessories, eyewear, shoes, etc.

8. Finance

Financial products and services including: communications promoting overall image and capabilities of a financial institution; specific products or services including financial planning, mobile payment services, retirement funds, investment, home banking, loans, mortgage, mutual funds, traveler's checks, etc.

9. Food, Snacks & Desserts

The foods category includes all foods that are sold on shelf or online. These could include wholly natural, organic, processed, semi-processed, ready-to-eat, ready-to-cook, diet versions etc.

9A. Foods – Staples (incl. attas, pulses, oils, cooking aids and masalas etc.)

9B. Foods – Desserts, Chocolates and Confectionary

9C. Foods – Savory Snacks (chips, noodles, namkeens, Ready to eat foods etc.)

10. Healthcare Products

- 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.

- Efforts for prescription required drugs that are directed to patients and/or consumers. Entrants must detail any regulatory challenges that impacted the effort.
- Efforts that were developed for devices that address specific health conditions that require a prescription for surgical placement, use or purchase.
- Efforts may be targeted to healthcare professionals and/or patients. Entrants must detail any regulatory challenges that impacted the effort. Efforts for prescription-required drugs and other healthcare products that are directed to healthcare professionals. Entrants must detail any regulatory challenges that impacted the effort.

11. Healthcare Services

Efforts that were developed for hospitals, HMOs, referral services, dental and medical care services, pharmacies, or chronic care facilities. Efforts may be targeted to healthcare professionals, patients and/or consumers.

12. Home Furnishings & Appliances

Kitchen and laundry appliances, air conditioners, carpeting, furniture, decorator's supplies, paint, wallpaper

13. Household Supplies

Cleaning products, waxes, detergents, floor-care products, fabric softeners, paper products, lawn care, etc.

14. Insurance and Related Products

Financial products that fall under the insurance category, such as term insurance, moneyback plans, ULIPs, health insurance companies, Health Insurance, and General Insurance (Car, accident, fire etc.). Beyond these categories, any products where insurance is an add-on feature (eg: insurance of cab rides, flights, mobile phones etc.) can also be eligible, provided the work you enter focuses on the insurance feature and not the thing it insures. For example, if your campaign focused on screen breakage insurance as the USP for a mobile phone, it would be eligible. However, if it's a campaign for a mobile phone, where insurance is one of the features being highlighted, it would be ineligible.

15. Media, Entertainment & Events

TV networks, streaming services (audio and video), websites (entertainment, lifestyle, news, trade, etc.), magazines, newspapers, consumer or trade media, radio stations, broadcasters, and related products can enter in this category. Please note that to be eligible in this category, you need to have created, curated, or commissioned a majority of the content available on your platform. Any platforms that are essentially 'networks' that crowd-source their content through their user base would not be eligible under this category. Campaigns promoting sporting events such as tournaments, one-off matches, leagues etc. would be eligible under this category. These campaigns/ promotional activities could be commissioned by event organizers, sporting authorities, media companies airing the events or other related parties.

16. Other Products

Products that do not fall into the other categories

17. 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. (Items focusing on beauty should be entered in the Beauty & Fragrance category.)

18. Professional services and solutions

This category covers digital and physical professional services such as accounting, consulting, legal, employment, etc. The mode of delivery of these services could be online, offline, or hybrid and the service itself could be delivered through human intervention, pre-programmed software, groupware, SaaS, and could be delivered on-premise, on-device or on cloud. Service aggregators who connect professionals offering these services with prospective clients can also submit entries in this category.

19. Retail

Will consider any service where the brand engages and delivers on a customer need through one or more channels like a Physical store, website, app, calling service etc. Such brands could offer own-brand products or could simply operate as a platform for other brands to reach customers. The only condition is that the brand that is entering the award must have played a significant role in providing the right product mix, the right ambience, the right delivery mechanism or the right customer interface so that it added significant value to the customer's buying experience. We expect that conventional retailers, department stores, e-commerce brands, aggregators and marketplaces would be typical entrants for this award.

20. Telecom products & Services

Mobile network providers, high speed internet access services, online services, bundled communications internet, telephone, TV, handset manufacturers and DTH providers etc.

21. Travel & Tourism

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

SPECIALTY CATEGORIES (CATEGORIES 22 - 43)

22. Corporate Advertising/Reputation

Communications to promote corporations, not exclusively their products include sponsorships, image & identity.

23. B2B

This category is for marketing efforts from businesses targeting other businesses. Business-to-business efforts for any type of product or service, from any marketplace segment, are eligible to enter. B2B cases can also enter any other category of the Effie competition.

24. Digital Advertising

This category is meant to reward campaigns and brand initiatives with interactivity at the core of the idea. While the overall initiative may have multiple touchpoints (including mass media and on-ground activations etc.), to be eligible in this category, it is mandatory to have an interactive technology as the lead aspect of the program. This could include innovations in content, branded utilities, digital assets, games, social media programs, conversation handles, etc. Campaigns where interactive tools are used largely for display/reach, with no clear evidence of user interactions will not be eligible to enter in this category. Examples include a version of a brand film/TVC put online, web banners and SEM.

25. Small Town & Rural Marketing

This award recognizes efforts by marketers that have effectively engaged with audiences in small towns and rural part of India, connecting with the audiences and driving success for the brand, organization and business. Identify any elements in the creative work or strategy that are specifically directed to the community. Entries are welcome across all products and services, ranging from Agri-products to durables to FMCG etc.

Entrants to this category must demonstrate how the case leveraged understanding of the small town and rural Indian audience to produce effective work that is tailor-made for the community.

NOTE: For the purpose of this award Cities / Towns with population less than One lakh will be considered together as 'Small Town and Rural'.

26. Regional

India is a vast country with unmatched diversity and a multi- dimensional personality. Entrants must demonstrate communication effectiveness at a regional / local level, capturing the local nuances, trends and traditions, across different products and services.

26A. Regional – Products

26B. Regional – Services

27. Direct Marketing

Entrants to this category must demonstrate effectiveness in meeting objectives of prospect identification, customer acquisition, customer retention, customer loyalty and increasing customer lifetime value across various products/categories. Formats may include direct response print, direct response TV, direct response radio, direct response digital, direct response mobile, flat mailers and dimensional mailers or are led by other forms of direct marketing.

28. Experiential Marketing / Brand Experience

This category is meant to showcase how brands can create a brand experience (and not just communicate a brand message) – either literally or virtually - beyond traditional advertising. You may have reinvented the product demo, created a pop-up store, or led a bricks and mortar retail overhaul; you could have created a new game or interactive film experience that effectively showcases a new product feature, or the brand's personality, etc. What will win is work that shows how advertisers are reaching out to their audiences to establish meaningful relationships, memorable, engaging experiences and unique connections with their brands. You can enter whether your work brought the brand to life as the entire marketing effort, or as part of the larger marketing program. Experiential Marketing / Brand experience cases in both the online and the real world are eligible.

28A. Brand Experience – Products**28B. Brand Experience – Services**

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 marketing. The program has two tracks - Environmental and Social Good.

29. Positive Change Environmental

The Positive Change: Environmental category celebrates 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.

Winners of this award showcase 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 the marketing.
- Entrants should address how the sustainability goal relates back to the overall brand and business strategy.
- Criterion for this award is the result of behavior change toward more environmentally sustainable choices, with these elements
- 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.

Recognizing brands with marketing programs that have measurably shifted audience (B2B or B2C) behavior toward more environmentally sustainable choices, and/or grown demand for more sustainable products and services by incorporating environmentally conscious messaging into their marketing.

Recognizing non-profit organizations and associations with marketing programs that have measurably shifted audience (B2B or B2C) behavior toward more environmentally sustainable choices, grown demand for more sustainable products and services, and/or measurably drove positive impact for their cause by incorporating environmentally conscious messaging into their marketing.

30. The Positive Change:

Social Good category celebrates marketing efforts proven to address a social problem or expand an existing program in ways that benefit our society. Any effort that sets out to give back in some way for the greater good is eligible to enter. Maybe it was for profit, maybe not. Maybe you got paid, maybe you didn't. Any and all marketing efforts, whether full campaigns or unique efforts within a campaign are eligible to enter as long as measurable results exist that can be attributed to the social change efforts in particular, if they were part of a larger marketing campaign.

30A. Positive Change - Social Good – Brands:

Recognizing brands that are making the world a better place by using the power of their marketing platforms for "good." This category celebrates for-profit brand efforts that effectively combined business goals with a social cause (health, education, community, family, etc) and successfully related that cause back to the company's overall brand strategy, resulting in positive business and social impact.

30B. Positive Change - Social Good – Non-Profit

Recognizing non-profit organizations and associations whose marketing efforts have effectively driven positive change for society and successfully contributed back to the organization's purpose. Campaigns must show measurable impact and proven results in support of the cause.

30C. Positive Change - Social Good – Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

This category applies to any campaigns, brand or non-profit, whose success was dependent on effectively and authentically connecting with specific cultural, ethnic or underrepresented groups or communities (example : LGBT, differently abled, indigenous peoples, etc.) Efforts may include equal rights messages, stereotype elimination, anti-prejudice or other that work to positively impact said groups or communities. If the entry had multiple audiences, it is necessary to demonstrate results for the specific audience detailed in the entry. Identify any elements in the creative work or strategy that are specifically directed to this community and any relevant cultural

differences, dynamics and/or nuances, traditions, values, linguistic characteristics, and their significance with respect to your submission. Judges may not be familiar with your particular segment, so this is your opportunity to showcase the details that they may miss.

31. David v/s Goliath

This is an award for smaller, new or emerging brands making inroads against big, established leaders. You must define your competitive landscape, including the market difference between the David and Goliath players. Entrants must detail the business challenge and demonstrate how their business succeeded despite the odds, by outsmarting / outthinking the competitor. In that spirit, the spends of the David brand need to be less than half the share of spends of Goliath. A new entrant, if a sub-brand of an established brand will be permitted.

32. Integrated Advertising Campaign

32A. Integrated Advertising Campaign: Products

32B. Integrated Advertising Campaign: Non-Products

The award in this category will be given to the campaign that demonstrates how the campaign Idea has been successfully adapted, interpreted and applied across different touch points in the consumer journey. Winning entries will make a strong case for how the “big idea” has been adapted/ interpreted differently at different touch points and how each interpretation shapes consumer behavior differently. It’s not just about multi-media campaigns per se. The campaign channels should include at least three different media/channels (e.g., print, radio, TVC, digital, retail, on- ground activation, app-driven engagement etc.). Duplication of an idea at multiple touch points and simple uploads/ posting of the same idea at multiple points in the consumer journey, do not count as integrated campaign.

33. Sustained Success

33A. Sustained Success: Products

33B. Sustained Success: Services

Products or service marketing efforts that have experienced sustained success for 3 or more years are eligible for entry. At a minimum, the case results must date back to 31st March, 2021 and you must include the current year’s results. Entries 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.

To enter you must be able to provide data about the case in its first year, an interim year and the most current year. The current year’s results must be included.

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 section and the Sustained Success entry form.

34. New Product or Service

Any communications effort used to introduce a new product or service that is not a line extension.

Effie defines line extension as:

- Any variation of an existing product that shares the same brand name and is in the same category as the existing product and shares the same characteristics as the parent but offers new benefit (flavor, size, package, type, etc.)
- A derivative product that adds or modifies features without significantly changing the price.
- Products that bear the same brand name and offer the consumer varied options (e.g., Diet version of drink).

Brand new products or new products in a new category are eligible. Innovation can be a part of it. It should be a launch that did great things for the brand.

Your entry must be written to address how your product and service was new and the situation you faced as a result of it being new. For example, what specifically was new? Why did the newness matter? Write the entry to address the category situation (new product/service introductions) similar to what you would do when writing your entry to address a category situation like sustained success, etc.

34A. New Product

34B. New Service

35. Influencer Marketing

This category honors those brands that effectively worked with key influencers to reach their target audience to achieve short or long- term marketing goals. Key influencers/opinion leaders may be social media / vertical platform leader, brand ambassador, bloggers, etc. from micro to macro.

Clearly identify what the strategy was, who your audience was, and why the influencer was important to your audience. Explain what the influencer did for your audience. Explain why the brand selected that influencer, how they were used to carry out marketing activities, and what consumer behaviors were impacted and how the business was impacted.

36. Data-driven

Data-driven is the application of data and/or technology to connect people to the brand at the right moment/s. These efforts should prove how they specifically utilized data to drive creativity or to optimize media to improve business outcomes (brand kpis, ROI, performance marketing measures, etc.).

The best examples will recognize the interplay and application of data, inclusive of automation and AI, to engage with and/or deliver to a precise audience and achieve the best results. To enter, your case must detail the role that data had within the creative and/or media strategy in achieving the brand and business goals.

Submissions are expected to:

- Utilize personalized/custom-tailored creative messages.
- Explain how data impacted the media plan through clear measurement & analytics.
- Demonstrate the insights captured from data used to understand audience.

37. 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 capitalized on a season, holiday, or annual cultural event to drive results for their business.

Submit in one of two sub-categories:

37A. Seasonal Marketing –Products

37B. Seasonal Marketing –Service

38. 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. Enter in one of two sub-categories:

38A. Marketing Disruptors – Products

38B. Marketing Disruptors – Services

39. Small Budgets

39A. Small Budgets – Products

39B. Small Budgets – Services

Cases eligible for this category must represent the only communications efforts for this brand (brand defined as listed in the “brand” question of the Effie entry form) during the time period that the effort entered ran.

To be eligible, an entry may not be for a line extension. Effie defines line extension as: a variation of an existing product with the same brand name and same category but with a new characteristic, a derivative of the product or service that offers modified features without significantly changing price; a product bearing the same name and offering a varied option (e.g., new flavor, diet version, etc.).

Value of donated and non-traditional media as well as activation costs must be included. When completing your entry, be sure to select the appropriate category: “Small Budgets – Products” or “Small Budgets – Services”.

Budget eligibility is as follows:

Local Efforts: Rs.10 Lakhs or less

Regional Efforts: Rs.20 Lakhs or less

National Efforts: Rs.50 Lakhs or less

40. Carpe Diem:

The Carpe Diem category celebrates brands that have done one of two things:

- They created an iconic moment in their timeline by saying, doing or supporting something that immediately put all eyes on them and got the world talking about them. Such moments could be experiences created by the brand, an opinion voiced, a cause supported, an action taken or even an action not taken.
- Brands that identified a powerful moment in the cultural zeitgeist and leveraged it through messaging. These are brands that are often 'switched on' and deeply clued into the present moment. They notice emerging conversations early and have a point of view on them quickly. As a result, they come across as opinion leaders and early entrants in most cultural conversations of the moment.
- If your brand has done work in either of these scenarios that led to a sharp spike in brand metrics, then this category is right for you. The best examples in this category are likely to see live experiences, moments, stunts, and tactics, online & offline, perhaps amplified through PR, social media, digital engagement, or even the use of content created in the moment to fuel paid campaigns.

40A. Carpe Diem – Products

40B. Carpe Diem – Services

41. Commerce & Shopper Marketing

This category honors the most effective integrated campaigns designed to engage the shopper and guide the purchase process. Eligible campaigns include those for single or multiple brands, and/or a category solution. Entries may be brand-driven, retailer-driven, or a combination of the two.

42. Consumer apps

(Products which have an app as the first and primary interface that allows consumers to pay, book or access services). Apps for music and movie streaming, e-commerce, quick-commerce, booking tickets, transport services, deliveries, automated voice and device control, payments, investments, online banking, fashion. Their primary existence is as an app and neither extension of physical products or stores.

43. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

For the AI Category, entrants are required to showcase their effective use of artificial intelligence to drive meaningful business outcomes. This category recognizes outstanding campaigns and initiatives where AI was leveraged as a pivotal tool to achieve specific business goals, whether it be enhancing customer engagement, optimizing operations, increasing sales, or any other measurable objective.

Entrants must provide clear evidence of how AI was integrated into their strategy and demonstrate the tangible impact it had on their business growth and desired results. This includes detailed metrics, analytics, and any other relevant data that highlight the effectiveness of the AI implementation. The judges will be looking for entries that not only display creativity and technical proficiency but also a profound understanding of how AI can be harnessed to produce real, quantifiable success.