




Effective Entry Guide

Top tips to help you write the most effective entry



Contents


General guidance – page 4

 [4 top tips](#)


 [Considerations before submitting your entry](#)

Section-by-section guidance – page 8

 [Section 1: Challenge, Context, & Objectives](#)

 [Section 2: Insights & Strategy](#)

 [Section 3: Bringing the Idea to life](#)

 [Section 4: Results](#)

Category-specific guidance – Page 19

 [Retail](#)


 [Health & Wellness](#)

 [Media](#)

 [Positive Change](#)

Other resources for entrants – Page 24

 [Workshops & training](#)

 [Entry feedback](#)

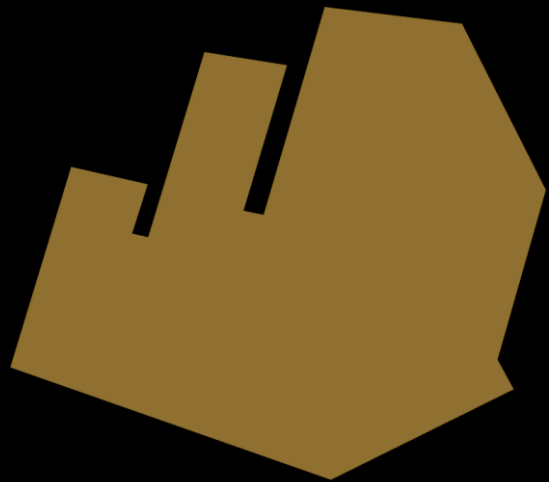
 [Entry form templates](#)

 [Case studies](#)

[Contact information – Page 26](#)

Click on each topic to link straight to the relevant page





General guidance

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4 Top tips

4 essential tips to keep in mind to improve your chances of winning an award. These have been gathered directly from our most experienced judges, so are worth a read:

TIP 1: KEEP IT SIMPLE

- Clear, concise and cohesive entries score higher
- Keep it pithy, don't overwrite, and avoid hyperbole. Think about how you can streamline your case into an easy read for the judges
- Use charts, graphs and tables to explain points succinctly (and make sure they're legible)
- Limit industry jargon, define any industry terms and explain assumptions to judges. Get someone who doesn't work on the project to read it and strip it of jargon

TIP 2: TELL A STORY

- Clearly connect each section of the entry form to the next. Avoid breaks in the logic-flow - don't think of the sections as separate pieces, link them together (like chapters in a book)
- Start with the Executive Summary before you try to write individual sections. Get your overall story crisp, clear and inspiring before you expand on it
- Avoid inconsistency in writing style & content – particularly important if your entry is being written by more than one person and/or at different times

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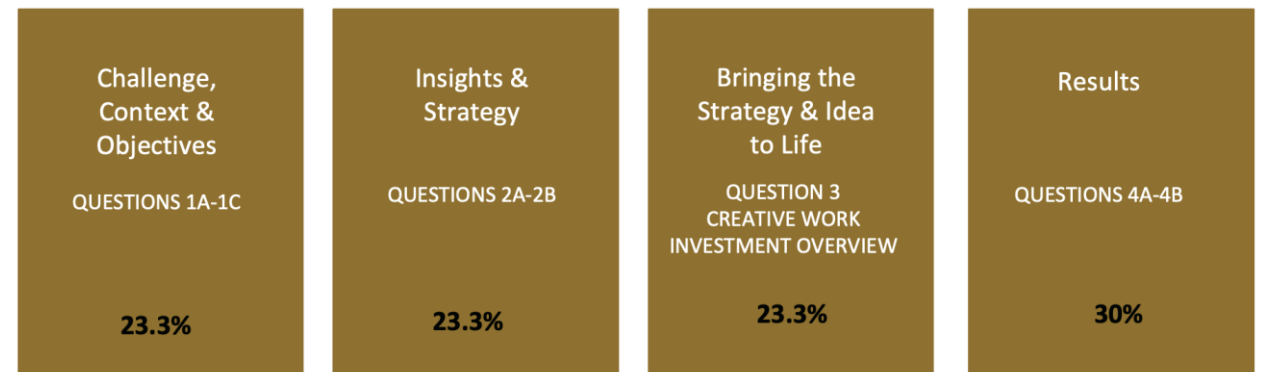
4 Top tips (cont.)

TIP 3: DRAW A CLEAR LINE BETWEEN YOUR WORK (THE CAUSE) AND THE EFFECT IT HAD ON RESULTS

- Ensure that you have strong evidence as to how your work led to these results, as opposed to it being anything else
- Clearly set out up front what your objectives are and set them succinctly
- Connect results back to objectives very clearly
- Make sure that the results connect to the narrative, so judges don't have to join the dots for themselves
- Judges will be looking at your case with a critical eye. Think about the questions they might have about your results and address them in your entry

TIP 4: ALTHOUGH EFFIE'S FOCUS IS ON EFFECTIVENESS ALL FOUR SECTIONS OF YOUR ENTRY MATTER

- While it's essential to have a strong Results section (Section 4), judges score all four sections of your paper (see % weighting to the right), so make sure they are all as good as they can be



Considerations before submitting your entry

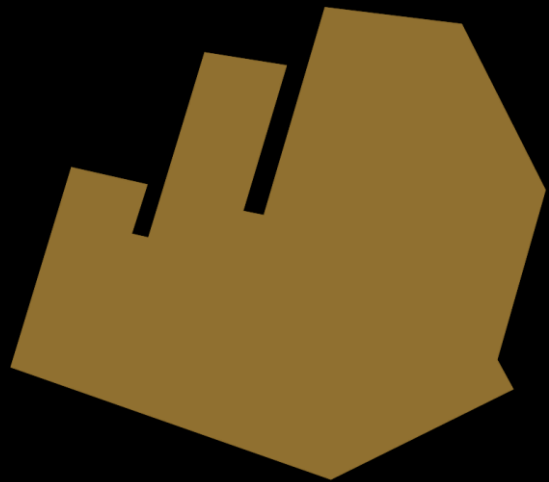
Judges will score your case against the category definition. It should be clear to the judges why your work is award-worthy in this Effie entry category, so keep the category definition in mind. Some categories require specific information to be included in the entry, and judges will deduct points if this information isn't included.

- This checking process might be helpful:
 - Ask a strong writer or editor to proofread your case for spelling, grammar, logic flow errors, mathematical miscalculations, etc
 - Share the case with someone who doesn't work on the project, brand, or even in the industry. Ask them what was unclear or where the case fell in interest
 - Have senior team members on both the client and agency side review the case to ensure it's well-rounded in context and personality. Collaborate with partner agencies
 - Look for past Effie judges within your company, or other companies you work with, and ask them to review your entry
- Think about what the judges might be skeptical of and make sure you address it
- Check the formatting requirements and reasons for disqualification in the Entry Kit
- Ensure all of the data throughout your entry includes a specific, verifiable source

JUDGE ADVICE: "Be extremely self-critical about the verbiage, story and length of your entry. The judges have limited time and are being asked to evaluate several different categories and cases. You must be succinct and draw the judge in, along with sharing the results you captured through the program."

JUDGE ADVICE: "Craft your entry per category, instead of creating one case that fits all."





Section-by-section Entry Form guidance

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Scoring Section 1: Challenge, Context, & Objectives

QUESTIONS 1A-1B

This section is the foundation that shapes the other elements of the case. It will be assessed for both suitability and ambitiousness of the strategic challenge.

Keep in mind that judges are looking for:

- Context that clearly frames the situation and the category, especially what success looks like in this particular area or industry.
- The challenges in relation to the category, competitors, the brand's history, and/or marketplace issues or trends.
- Clear objectives & KPIs that relate to the business challenge and are not retrofitted to match the results of the case.
- Explanation of the significance of the objectives to the brand/business/cause.

Judges often say that if this section is weak, the entire entry weakens because the context is needed to understand how big the problem was and how profound the results were. Judges may not be familiar with your brand or category, so use this section to tell them what they need to know to understand your case.



Scoring Section 1: Challenge, Context, & Objectives

QUESTIONS 1A-1B

JUDGES' ADVICE

"The best cases clearly articulated the challenge for the brand, the category and competitive landscape, and what the overall goals were. They also had KPIs that aligned well to that challenge that were clearly not retro-fitted to the resulting outcome"

"Make sure the objectives are clearly defined. If awareness is the goal, what lift were you looking for and from where to where? Leaving the goal broad makes it hard to give credit for the difficulty of the challenge"

"Share the context so judges understand the situation fully. Ensure that the difficulty in achieving the goal is clear and mitigate the impact of activity outside of the campaign"

"Be SPECIFIC and measurable with your objectives. Help the judges understand the context of that goal/objective"

"Set measurable objectives to help evaluate if the results were actually good, great or just okay."



Scoring Section 2: Insights & Strategy

QUESTIONS 2A-2C

Judges evaluate how inventive and effective the Idea & Strategy were in meeting the challenge.

Keep in mind that judges are looking for:

- Insights - not just facts or observations, but what came out from the data points/research. State your insights and explain how you came to them.
- An understanding of why these insights are unique to the brand and are positioned to address the brand's particular challenge and business situation.
- An explanation of how the insight links to the strategy, informed the strategic idea, brought to life the creative execution and, ultimately, delivered the the results.
- A clear definition of your audience, including demographics, culture, behaviours, etc. Why is this audience important to the brand and the growth of the brand's business?
- The core idea or strategic build that drove the work and led to a solution.



Scoring Section 2: Insights & Strategy

QUESTIONS 2A-2C

JUDGES' ADVICE

"Insights need to feel new and different, with a sense of tension and actionability. The idea needs to take the insight and activate it in an interesting, compelling and useful way. And, most importantly, in a way that helps achieve your stated objectives."

"The idea needs to tie directly back to the insight and not be the tactical execution that was deployed. The idea needs to be crisp but also tell the judge enough detail, so that it's easy to understand how the team arrived at this idea and why it is meaningful to the brand and campaign."

"Find a real insight, not an audience observation or category convention. It should be a deep human truth that not only drives emotions and behavior but enables the strategic idea and creative execution to be effective and successful."

"Ensure the strategic idea maps back to the brand."

"Make sure that the strategy and the idea really connect to the overall concept."



Scoring Section 3: Bringing the Strategy & Idea to Life

QUESTIONS 3A-3C + CREATIVE WORK + INVESTMENT OVERVIEW

In this section entrants should articulate the creative and media strategies (not just tactics) and how the idea and strategy were brought to life. Ensure your response details the 'why' behind your choices.

Keep in mind that judges are looking for:

- An understanding of how you activated your strategy (e.g. CRM programs, pricing changes, promotions) and the main marketing vehicles for your creative executions (e.g. headline, calls-to-action, format choices).
- The direct connection between the creative/media strategies and the objectives and insights.
- The importance of each channel and how each was used - why were your creative output(s) and channel choices right for your specific audience and idea? Why did you choose these over others?
- A clear depiction of how the campaign was executed in the public marketplace. Was there a 'path' consumers were meant to go on, and what was it?
- The evolution and optimisation of your marketing and communications over time.

Investment overview

- Details on budget, owned/earned/paid media, sponsorships, and all touchpoints used.
- Use the Media Budget Elaboration field to provide additional context for judges.



Scoring Section 3: Bringing the Strategy & Idea to Life (cont.)

QUESTIONS 3A-3C + CREATIVE WORK + INVESTMENT OVERVIEW

Creative Reel

- The creative reel is your place to show examples of your work, not repeat the written case, although entrants now have the option to include results in the creative reel. It should be a reel to show the judges what activity ran – at least 70% of the reel should be spent showing examples of the creative work as seen by the audience. If your activity didn't include moving picture content, just include still imagery of what you did.
- Judges are required to review the written case before watching the creative reel - use the creative reel to showcase your creative work & complement your responses to Questions 3A-3C.

Keep in mind that judges are looking for:

- At least one complete example of each integral touchpoint.
- The strategic idea in action - how it was brought to life.
- Creative work, not re-explaining the full written case.

JUDGE ADVICE: "The creative reel should showcase all of the work that I've just read about and want to see. I would rather clearly see the different executions over hearing a repeat of the setup."



Scoring Section 3: Bringing the Strategy & Idea to Life

QUESTIONS 3A-3C + CREATIVE WORK + INVESTMENT OVERVIEW

JUDGES' ADVICE

“Integrate the media strategy and show how it links to the creative strategy, and explain how it evolved with the campaign”

“Give the rationale for why these specific channels were selected. Why are they meaningful to the audience and the challenge? How and why did you place importance on some channels over others?”

“Keep the storytelling out of the creative reel, and highlight the creative, especially the different executions. The more different types of creative shown, the better. We all take judging seriously and read through the written case carefully, so there’s no need to duplicate the story – what I want from the reel is how everything was brought to life.”

“Be sure the written case and video compliment each other and do not repeat each other. It isn’t about the quality of the video itself but more about the content.”



Scoring Section 4: Results

QUESTIONS 4A-4B

Judges are looking for direct correlations between the objectives and the results of a case.

Keep in mind that judges are looking for:

- An explanation of how the results impacted the brand and the brand's business.
- A compelling argument to prove that the marketing led to the results achieved.
- Relevant context with historical brand data, industry benchmarks, competitors, etc.
- Explanation of why the results achieved are significant.

Make sure you address other factors that could have contributed to your results, whether positively or negatively. Judges value thoughtful, honest answers in Question 4B (vs. indicating that no other factors could have impacted your case). You can use this space to prove the limited impact of other factors on the results to give the judges more confidence in the results presented. When key metrics are withheld without explanation, judges might assume it is because the results were weak.



Scoring Section 4: Results (cont.)

QUESTIONS 4A-4B

- We receive entries that range from small cases in regional markets to nationwide blitzes. Judges consider the environment in which each case exists. It's important to include category/industry and year-over-year context, as judges may not be knowledgeable about the nuances of your industry. For example, a small percentage move in a highly segmented, high-volume category may be more difficult to achieve than a large percentage change in another category. Explain your business situation to the judges.
- Charts and graphs are useful tools to present your data clearly – but make sure they're legible. If needed for confidential reasons, proof of performance may be indexed or provided as percentages. If you cannot provide certain business results, explain why you cannot or why they are less important. Think through creative & meaningful ways to present the significance of the results you cannot share. For example, “the results achieved were the equivalent of opening a new 200,000 square foot store in the region” etc.



Scoring Section 4: Results

QUESTIONS 4A-4B

JUDGES' ADVICE

"Make sure you provide context. If you show results, help the judges understand if the results are good and why. Explain what the numbers mean."

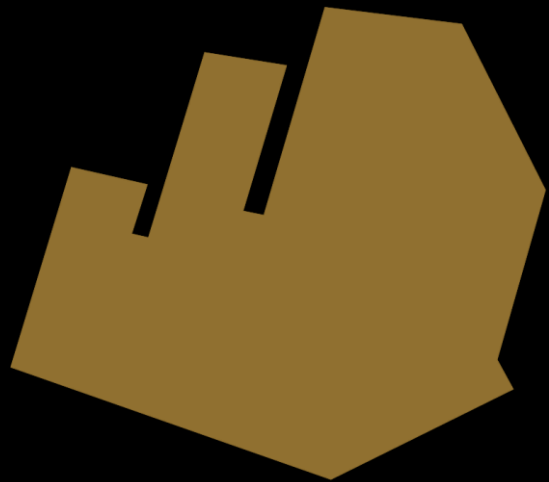
"Don't fudge the results. Your peers will know. Honesty is more effective. We have all had wins and we have all had fails. Every campaign does not need to be perfect."

"Articulate why the results are meaningful for longer-term impact (for the brand.)"

"Tie together the story of how your work drove the results - the best cases did this seamlessly, the worst cases just threw the results out there as somehow a self-evident proof of the value of the work without explaining why or how."

"Don't get caught lowballing or avoiding inconvenient other factors - judges are looking for it. Admit more and provide real-world context: give credit to things like economic trends, in addition to your activity. You'll gain credibility by being honest about all the factors that created success."





Some Category-specific guidance

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Retail

JUDGES' ADVICE

"It's very important to clearly lay out what's happening for the brand, the category and the retailer. The more specific the context on the situation and the shopper challenge, the better."

"When entering this category, (is is important to) stretch beyond brand strategy and consumer insights to consider the shopper's unique needs and mindset."

"There should be a shopper insight that uncovers a need (perceived by shoppers or not) that can be solved for or a beneficial behavioural change that can be made. Get into the details of retail activation when applicable."

"Connect the activations from across all the path to purchase for solving a shopper campaign."

"It takes more than simply being a retailer or having retail components to qualify ideas for this category. Focus your entry on the detailed integration of how you drove trips and conversion."

"Make sure your results are commerce driven. Doesn't have to be all sales, store traffic and brand consideration are important as well. But without the results there is no award."



Health and Wellness

JUDGES' ADVICE

"Show how your efforts have a positive effect on business or health outcomes."

"Focus on the real problem you're trying to solve, not just from a business standpoint but from a patient (human) standpoint, too."

"It is helpful to call out regulatory challenges and context."

"Given the challenges in healthcare with providing professional context, consumer competitors, market coverage, help frame how difficult it is to achieve results through creative DTC campaigns."

"Has it found a deep insight or customer audience truth? Has it successfully leveraged that insight? Has it produced provocative, surprising creative that will capture the attention of our customers and get them to engage in our experience?"

"How does what we do affect the individuals who need the treatment or those prescribing it? We gauge our creative output by seeing if it improves people's lives. If we can do this through information, tools, connection or other ways then we have all the items to be successful."



Media

JUDGES' ADVICE

"Given that these are media entries, the media strategy needs to breakthrough above the campaign idea. Detail a strong translation of the media strategy to execution."

"Clearly explain the media, data and/or partner selection."

"More directly emphasise the role of media as it is related to strategy development and creative execution. Given that the lines are often blurred, what was media's specific contribution to fueling the idea?"

"Make media the centerpiece of your entry. Utilise the creative reel to showcase media, not just creative. Thoughtfully visualise how the media tactic contributed to bringing the user experience/journey to life."

"Entries in the Media categories, specifically the Media Strategy & Idea category, should present a media idea that is uniquely tied to the brand, with a unique use of media."

"If you are entering the Media Innovation category, be sure to be crystal clear in pointing out the innovation."



Positive Change

JUDGES' ADVICE

"Be sure to describe the social issue being addressed with some detail, and explain why it was a good fit for your brand and/or organisation."

"The scope of the behaviour change is important to address. Help judges understand how wide the effect was and what that meant."

"Clearly link the marketing to the change achieved - the award recognises the most effective marketing that drove sustainable behaviour change. Make sure, as part of this, to articulate what the change in sustainable behaviour meant for the brand and organisation."

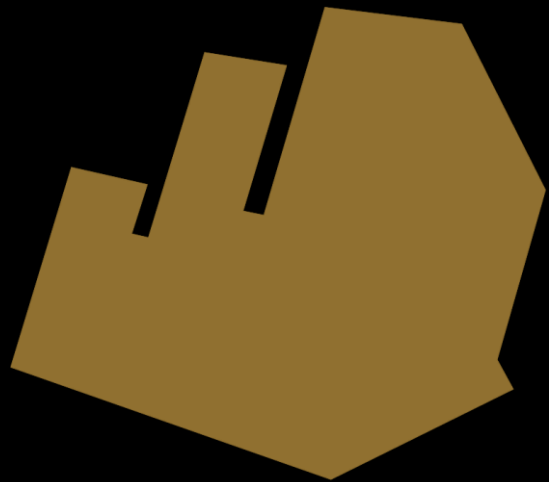
"What was it about this initiative that was sustainable? Tell us in a nutshell what the increase in sustainability is."

"Provide clear, true results - a clear sense of how the needle moved, in terms of actual awareness of the issue and change."

"If you are submitting for a social impact award, you must be able to illustrate clearly in the results the real-world impact of that campaign; judges cannot be expected to take you at your word that this campaign had any positive impact whatsoever"

"Treat not-for-profit marketing case studies as specifically as you would for-profit, sharing measurable objectives results and detailing out what you did to make it happen."





Other resources

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Useful resources for entrants

WORKSHOPS

Perfect for those who are entering for the first time or just want a refresher.

In 45 mins we'll guide you through what you need to know and you can ask us questions along the way.

It's free to join the online sessions—just [fill in this form](#) to register.

Should We Enter Workshop

If you've been involved in marketing that's had some sort of impact, this session will help you identify if your work could become an Effie winning case and explain what's involved in turning it into one.

How to Enter Workshop

The next step: Practical tips and guidance on writing your best Effie entry. We'll explain what a winning case looks like and tell you what judges are looking for.

INSIGHT GUIDES

After this year's winners are announced, Insight Guides will be available for entrants. These will help you to:

- Understand why your case achieved finalist status but didn't win
- Improve your future entries. Whether a case is a winner or not, there are lessons to be learned from the feedback the judges provide

If you'd like to order an Insight Guide for your entry, you can request one on the Entry Portal when you submit your case. Please note that there will be an admin fee for this.

Cont...



Useful resources for entrants (cont.)

ENTRY FORM TEMPLATES

These will help you prepare your entry. They mirror our online entry form, providing you with all of the questions as they appear on the online entry portal. On the portal some questions include dropdown lists for you to choose from, and these templates detail all the dropdown menu options so there are no surprises.

There's a different template for submissions into the Sustained Success category, and another for submissions into the Performance Marketing category. All other categories use our Standard Entry Form.

Once you're happy with your entry, please access the online Entry Portal, and copy/paste your answers from the form into it. You can access entry form templates here.

[Standard Entry Form Template](#)

[Performance Marketing Template](#)

[Sustained Success Template](#)

CASE STUDY SAMPLES

On the Awards page of our website, we've pulled together a few winning cases from previous years so you can learn from them.

Additional case studies can be reviewed through the subscription-based, [Effie Worldwide Case Library](#). This is a library of finalist and award-winning marketing cases from around the world, including summaries, videos of the winning work and hundreds of written case studies on effective marketing. For any questions on database subscriptions, please contact subscriptions@effie.org

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Wishing you success in this
year's competition!

Any questions? Email effieuk@effie.org

The insights presented in this guide come directly from the jury. These statements do not represent the opinions of Effie Worldwide organisation, board of directors, steering committee, or staff - all comments and data presented - except for the specified Effie advice - are straight from the industry executives who dedicated their time to serve on an Effie Jury.

