



**effie**  
**awards**  
asia pacific

**jury's  
advice**

Organised by:



The Confederation of Asian  
Advertising Agency Associations

**tenasia**



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## introduction

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Welcome to APAC Effie Awards! This document is created to help entrants submit an effective entry.

The insight presented comes directly from the past Effie Juries and does not represent the opinions of the APAC Effie Awards and Effie Awards organization, committee, or staff – all comments and data presented – except for the Effie advice – are straight from the industry executives who dedicated their time to serve on an Effie Jury.

We hope you find the information useful as you prepare your cases for the competition.

### Judging Process

The Jury is made up of some of the brightest and most experienced business leaders - CEOs, marketers, strategists, creative directors, media and research professionals. Entries are judged in two phases. The highest scoring cases from Round One will go to the Final Round. In both rounds, all elements of an entry – written case and creative elements – are judged and scoring is done anonymously and confidentially.

Judges evaluate specific criteria in scoring a marketing case's overall effectiveness, and provide four separate scores analyzing specific attributes of the work. The breakdown is as follows:

- |                                    |       |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| • Strategic Challenge & Objectives | 23.3% |
| • Idea                             | 23.3% |
| • Bringing the Idea to Life        | 23.3% |
| • Results                          | 30%   |

**100% of final score**

The judges' scores determine which entries will be finalists and which finalists are awarded a gold, silver or bronze Effie trophy. The finalist level and each winning level – gold, silver, bronze – has a minimum score required in order to be eligible for finalist status or for an award. Effie Trophies are awarded at the discretion of the judges. All judging scores are carefully reviewed for evidence of biasness.

It is possible that a category may produce one, two, three or four winners of any level or perhaps no winners at all.



## judges' advice

### crafting an effective entry

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#### "Be Clear. Be Concise. Be Honest."

- "A great case is a great story that tackles a well-understood challenge with great writing."
- "Be clear and straightforward about what impact you had and what results your work truly delivered. And we like reading cases that are interesting, so don't be afraid to inject a little personality!"
- "Concise written entries stand out. They are not only refreshing, they encourage high marks. Remember that The Effies are about effective communication. Entries that are long on words and light on substance or impact will leave a juror with the impression that the campaign was, too."
- "Story telling is important. The person with the most heart for the campaign needs to be involve in the writing of the case study. Case studies which are too dry kill great results."
- "Every part of the story should logically tie back to the points being made. Simpler is better. Nix as much marketingese from the narrative as you can. Trying to sound like a marketing textbook causes my BS meter to go off. MAKE your case. Don't just answer the questions."
- "Be sure to restate goals in results section and tie results directly to those goals."
- "Consider the fact that the person reading it may be a creative mind, a media mind, or an analytical mind. Try to appeal to all by making it a very easy, enjoyable, and entertaining read. Don't focus too much on creative strategy and leave media strategy out. Really give a full picture of what all the different departments contributed."

**"A Good Effie Entry: Is honest, clear and simple. Includes clearly stated measurable objectives and results. Clearly links KPIs with quantifiable results. Leave the BS at home...that's for other shows."**

**"The Effie judges work in this field. They know exactly how to reverse engineer goals, revise metrics, adjust goals... simple, honest statements work much better than things written for a cold, distant jury."**

**"Advertising principles should apply to case studies too: write them in a way that engages judges, focus on how your campaign helped achieve your brand's objectives and don't over-complicate it – less is more!"**



## judges' advice

### crafting an effective entry (cont'd)

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#### How Judges Described Entries They Liked

- "Clear, concise storytelling/narrative."
- "True innovation and leadership."
- "The ones that took a real challenge approach stood out the most."
- "Less is more. More factual, less exaggeration is best."
- "A great case tells a story. It draws you in and makes you want to read more."
- "Make it simple. Make it entertaining. Limit your objectives and KPI's."
- "Impressive, verifiable metrics."
- "Well prepared, honest."

#### Judges on How to Improve an Entry

- "Don't overpromise in word and disappoint in execution."
- "To all agencies, please have a senior person and a proofreader read your cases before submitting them. Typos and logic flow errors create a bad impression."
- "Putting everything, including the kitchen sink, into your case only serves to confuse and tire the judges. Less is more."
- "Clear concise summary of the situation and the idea – leave the lingo and flowery language at home! State clear goals upfront in the entry, then restate them at the end with results. Bullet points are especially welcome to make the entry easier to digest. Remember that we are reading A LOT of these. So the easier you make it to digest, the better!"
- "Avoid a disconnection between challenge, insight and execution."



## judges' advice

### crafting an effective entry (cont'd)

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- "I would have liked to have more context for what success looks like or benchmarks on what a good entry would look like at the start of the process. It was difficult to tell what a good entry was until halfway through the scoring process."
- "Check for grammar, typos, math, and inconsistencies"
- "Be clear, be concise and make sure your entry tells a story. It should have a beginning, middle and end. Don't get too in depth with facts that are irrelevant just because you have them, and don't assume people understand your category. A little set up goes a long way."
- "I think encouraging participants to not necessarily fill in all 6 pages would be a good idea. If I knew that before filling out Effies, that length does not mean success, I would have edited down my entries."
- "Don't create objectives to fit the results - it's obvious."
- "I was very disappointed that many people did not enter their work properly or take the time for more customization in the entry form for the category entered."

## judges' advice

### scoring sections

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#### I. Strategic Communications Challenge & Objectives

- "Be punchier, shorter, and more incisive."
- "Don't make up objectives to post-rationalize an idea."
- "I found the strategic challenges and objectives broadly unsatisfying. Too often people would frame up a marketing context but not a business one or a business one without the marketing. I also missed a clear statement of the difference of this year's approach versus earlier marketing efforts."
- "Provide ample context on the competitive set to help judges understand the challenges being faced during by your brand/retailer. Clearly identify your KPIs and then prove how your program met or exceeded those KPIs."
- "The biggest weakness was in setting and rationalizing objectives. Goals were cited without any basis for why they should be at a particular level - no context of previous performance, competitive, relationship to business objectives, etc."
- "Not enough focus on targets, key insights, and context. Some entries described industry-wide challenges that weren't specific to their clients."
- "Be more specific about the objectives so results can be clearly assessed."
- "Provide a clear articulation of the problem to solve."
- "Clearly outline the cultural challenge, brand challenge, and business challenge."

**"If the Strategic Challenge section was weak, it weakened the entire entry because the context wasn't there to understand how big the idea was, or how profound the results were. After reviewing these entries today, it's apparent that this section is key to a strong entry."**



## judges' advice

### scoring sections (cont'd)

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#### II. The Idea

##### What makes a great idea?

- "Clearly and solidly linking target, strategic message and visual identity with creativity."
- "A clear ownable manifestation of the strategy that will connect with people."
- "A great idea is one I wish I thought of myself."
- "Insight is key to executing a truly successful idea."
- "Something breakthrough, universally appealing, emotionally grabs you."
- "Simple, inspiring, big enough to drive lots of great tactics."

"If you can't explain an idea in one sentence, then you don't have an idea."

##### Judges' Advice

- "A restatement of what you needed to achieve is not an insight. I'm more likely to believe your campaign was effective if you acknowledge what other factors might have driven results and give me some reasons to believe they weren't responsible in this case."
- "Be careful to clearly articulate your insights. Be sure to recognize and attribute some part of your success to owned and earned channels"
- "The idea is often poorly articulated and ripped from a tagline rather than a true marketing communication strategy."



## judges' advice

### scoring sections (cont'd)

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#### III. Bringing the Idea to Life

##### What works?

- "Seamless and uncompromised execution."
- "Show the idea in action."
- "Outstanding creativity and thinking and engaging all touch points."
- "Multi-disciplinary efforts demonstrating the strength and elasticity of an idea."
- "Consistency. Integration by design (not default) across different platforms. Adapting the message to the channel."
- "Don't waste time in your video re-telling what you have already presented in the written entry. Use the video to show the depth and breadth of how you brought the idea to life."
- "Show the connection between communication strategy and media."

"Video and text should be used in a mutually supportive way – use the distinct advantages of each medium to emphasize different aspects of the case vs. just saying the same thing."

##### What judges want to see more of?

- "More about how the media mix was determined. Sometimes felt that everything was thrown at it to see what would stick."
- "More focus on media strategy. Entrants mentioned tv and print ads but didn't always mention where they ran and how they appealed to the target."
- "More strategic integration of media and tactics."
- "Inspired execution that lives up to smart strategic thinking."
- "Key learnings. What obstacles were encountered or what didn't work as well as expected? How did the entrant respond and optimize?"



## judges' advice

### scoring sections (cont'd)

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#### IV. Results

##### What makes for great results?

- "Include competitive context."
- "Tie back to objectives."
- "Sales, sentiment, ideas generated by customers."
- "Charts, comparisons from a year ago, sales versus years."
- "Clear, honest data. Easy to tell when something is omitted."
- "Sales, sentiment, ideas generated by customers."
- "The strongest cases immediately and overtly tied back to objectives."
- "When providing results, hard numbers and context will have a great impact on how you are judged. While there may be fear of providing confidential information, judges sign confidentiality forms and the process is too rigorous for us to retain individual results. Better detail is needed to really understand if these entries contain ideas that work."
- "Clearly articulated against objectives with baselines for comparison/reference."

**"Don't just quote performance against projections. Define it with the context of historical data, industry benchmarks, etc."**

##### Don't Inflate Results

- "Saying things like "exceeded by 520%" just makes me think that the objectives were stupid rather than results being good."
- "Clear, contextualized, and believable; too many set objectives low and then "exceed" them... it feels like they're reverse engineered."
- "It feels as if the cases were written in reverse, beginning with results and then results justified."
- "Talk about the scale of couponing, price cuts, marketplace activity, etc. - no information or context on these means a downscore."



## final thoughts

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- Make sure you link objectives and results together, but don't create objectives after the fact to make your story more pat. Judges can see right through this.
- Talk about the rest of the market and put your results in context. Maybe you didn't achieve your goal but in context of the bottom dropping out of the market and everyone else achieving stagnant growth – there's a story to tell.
- Don't assume judges know anything about your marketplace – judges are specifically matched with categories where they will not have a conflict of interest – hence they may not know what equals strong success in the luxury market or the automotive market – you need to tell them.
- Remember that judges represent a broad swath of the industry – if you are presenting PR results there will likely be a judge with extensive PR experience in your room – make sure you present the standard measures they would expect or explain why you don't have them. Same for digital, etc.
  - Judges expect you to make a compelling case for why your results are meaningful and to demonstrate that it was the communications that drove them.
- Learn from successful Case Studies and read through the helpful resources available on [www.apaceffie.com](http://www.apaceffie.com) to further prepare yourself in your case submission.

### Contact the APAC Effie Team for any questions!



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