

MEDIAEVOLUTION

Next is now!

AWARDS

ENTRY GUIDE

msa-awards.com

CONTENTS

1 WELCOME MESSAGES

- I. From The Desk Of The MSA President03
- II. From The Desk Of The Organising Chairperson And Jury Chair04
- III. From The Desks Of The Co-Organisers05

2 KEY INFORMATION

- I. Competition Calendar06
- II. What’s New For 2026?.....07
- III. Eligibility And Rules07
- IV. Entry Deadlines And Fees.....10
- V. Categories Overview.....12

3 ENTRY SUBMISSION

- I. Round 1: Online Submission.....25
- II. Round 2: Finalist Submission27

4 JUDGING29

5 USEFUL INFORMATION

- I. Key Reasons For Disqualification31
- II. Winning32
- III. Additional Information.....33
- IV. Additional Information For Vetting: Committee, Moderator & Jury34

6 CONTACT35

1

WELCOME MESSAGES

I. From the Desk of the MSA President



As President of the Malaysia Media Specialist Association, I am proud to introduce the theme for this year's Annual Malaysia Media Specialist Awards: "Mediavolution."

This theme reflects the reality of an industry in constant evolution. We are navigating shifting consumer expectations, an increasingly fragmented media landscape, organisational transformation, and the growing influence of technology and AI. These forces are not merely changing how we work; they are redefining where value is created, how differentiation is sustained, and why our role matters more than ever.

AI is accelerating transformation across our industry, enabling greater speed, precision, and possibility. Yet progress is not defined by technology alone. It is our people - their strategic judgment, creativity, and expertise who give innovation relevance and turn capability into meaningful impact.

At a time when our services risk being seen as interchangeable, "Mediavolution" is a call to demonstrate the depth of our craft and the distinctiveness of our contribution. These awards recognise work that goes beyond execution to deliver clarity of thought, originality of solution, and measurable value. I invite all members to submit their best work and join us in celebrating the ideas and achievements that will shape what comes next for our industry.

With best wishes,

Sheila Shanmugam

President, Malaysia Media Specialist Association

II. From the Desk of the Organising Chairperson & Jury Chair



The world of media has never moved faster. Platforms evolve overnight, technology reshapes how stories are told, and audiences move fluidly between screens, spaces, AI and experiences. In this environment of constant change, one thing has become clear: media is no longer simply a channel or a deliverer of reach. It is, rather, the increasingly powerful engine that powers modern marketing.

This year's theme for the Media Specialists Association's Festival of Media and Awards is **"Mediavolution: next is now!"**. It boldly captures this metamorphosis and transformation that is underway. It reflects a moment where creativity, data, technology and culture are converging to redefine how brands and media personnel can connect with people. From deriving AI-powered insights to architecting immersive content ecosystems, media specialists today are not just planners or buyers — they are constructors of influence and drivers of business growth.

While the landscape of advertising and agencies globally is seeing seismic shifts, here in Malaysia our industry has shown remarkable resilience and innovation. Despite rapid disruption, media professionals, with marketers and media owners, are working tirelessly to pioneer new approaches that blend execution with intelligence, and strategy with imagination. We invite you to submit work that represents the very best of this Malaysian spirit.

Our awards exist to recognise and applaud those who push boundaries, challenge conventions and shape the future of our industry.

Mediavolution is about change, but it is also **progress, possibility and the courage to rethink what media has and can achieve, in an era that desperately needs it.**

The next is already here, and it is now.

And it is your time: go forth and inspire us!

Sandeep M Joseph

CEO and co-founder of Ampersand Advisory
Organizing Chairperson and Chief Judge
MSA Festival and Awards 2026

III. From the Desk of Co-Organisers



Mediavolution. Some say It's about time. Others say it's long overdue. Well, we say, Now is the Time. Join us.

Fan Chen Yip

Executive Director
Yellow Paper Plane



Mediavolution is a reminder that media is always evolving, but the work that matters most still starts with people, insight, and purposeful growth. Let's showcase the work that deserves to be seen and celebrated.

Maaz A. Khan

Regional Client Partner (APAC)
WPP Media



The next chapter of media is being written right now, by the innovators in this industry. AI will master the science of media but the art of media will always belong to us - the people and we are here to celebrate media industry.

Shilpesh Gandhi

Head of PMX
Publicis Media

2

KEY INFORMATION

I. Competition Calendar

- **12 March, 2026**
Call for Entry
- **9 April, 2026**
Early Bird Submission Deadline
- **16 April, 2026**
Final Submission Deadline
- **23 April, 2026**
Extended Submission Deadline
- **6 May, 2026**
Last Chance Deadline
- **7 May - 11 May, 2026**
Entries Hygiene Check By Entrants
- **12 May, 2026**
Vetting (Clarification By 14 May)
- **18 May - 8 June, 2026**
Round 1 Judging (Online)
- **15 June, 2026**
Shortlist Notification
- **22 June, 2026**
Presenters' List
- **3 July, 2026**
Materials Submission
- **14 JULY, 2026**
Final Judging (Physical)
- **14 August, 2026**
MSA Festival Of Media & Awards 2026

Cut-off time for all Submission Deadlines is MALAYSIA time 3.00pm

Qualifying Period: 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

II. What's to Watch for

1. Refined Round 2: Finalist Submission Guidelines
2. New award point system.
3. New, rebranded and refined categories.

III. Eligibility and Rules

1. Media agency organizations based in Malaysia primarily performing below services are eligible to participate in this award:
 - I. Strategic Communications Planning
 - II. ATL & Digital Media Planning and Buying
 - III. Social Media Management including KOL management
 - IV. Full SEO services and management
 - V. DMP / CDP consultation and management
 - VI. Tech – Creation and development of websites, apps, microsites, etc.
 - VII. Business Analytics – Econometrics modelling, Full Funnel modelling, etc.
 - VIII. Full E-commerce consultation and management
 - IX. Ad serving
 - X. Branded content partnerships and Agile digital content creation
 - XI. Research and marketing consultancy
2. All entries must comply with advertising regulations, including The Malaysian Code of Advertising Practice, The Content Code, and guidelines from relevant authorities.
3. All entries require prior written permission from the advertiser/owner of the campaign rights. *** MSA reserves the right to verify with the client if there are any doubts.***
4. Each agency must appoint a single Person-in-Charge (PIC) for all communications. The PIC must thoroughly read the Entry Guide and be familiar with the rules. Any terms of communication with MSA will be directed to this agency PIC only. This shall be included in the entry guidelines. The login ID used to create the account will serve as the primary contact point (PIC) for MSA. Additionally agency shall nominate ONE (1) secondary PIC should the main PIC is unavailable.

5. Each agency may submit up to sixty (60) entries for the BEST USE OF Section and one (1) entry for the AGENCY Section. The limits are not interchangeable between these categories.
6. In the instance that there is more than one agency party involved in a campaign, only one party is allowed to submit an entry. All parties concerned must agree in advance as to which party will be nominated to submit the entry for the award.
7. All entries submitted must be designed for implementation/execution in Malaysia and must have been implemented/executed for the first time between 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 in Malaysia.
8. Campaigns that occurred between January 2025 and March 2025, with the last date falling in March 2025, but were not entered last year because of the eligibility period spanning from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, are eligible for submission this year.
9. All entries of external origin (Global/Regional campaigns) and not adapted to Malaysian market are not allowed.
10. All entries submitted must have been created within the context of a normal paying contract with a client.
11. All entries submitted must have originated from the agency entering the award. Award winners may be subjected to official objections, and if upheld by the MSA Awards Organizing Committee and Jury Chair, the award could be withdrawn.
12. All entry forms must be completed online at <https://msa-awards.com>. An entry sent online will not be considered complete until the required material and fee has been paid and delivered to the MSA Secretariat.
13. Entries must include the approval of the head of agency/network as the acknowledgment of the submission

14. BEST USE OF SECTION

- i. All entries must relate either to an advertisement or to one single advertising campaign. Entries relating to more than one advertising campaign (even if promoting the same product), must be submitted individually and paid for as separate entries.
- ii. In the BEST USE OF section, the same case can only be submitted into a maximum of six (6) categories within this section. Each entry requires a separate form and set of materials. It is highly recommended that each entry is tailored to highlight the elements most relevant to the chosen categories.
- iii. All entries must be acknowledged and approved by the client with a sign-off and company stamp on the Client Endorsement form. Any entries submitted without the client sign--off and company stamp will be disqualified immediately.
- iv. Please carefully check the credits you have submitted. If you are shortlisted or are a winner, these credits will be reflected on the certificate. Any amendments will incur administrative costs borne by you

15. AGENCY SECTION

All entries must be acknowledged and approved by the agency/network head with a sign-off on the hardcopy submission form. ***** MSA reserves the right to verify with the agency/client if there are any doubts.*****

IV. Entry Deadlines & Fees

ENTRY DEADLINES & FEES			FEE PER ENTRY	
			MSA MEMBER	NON MEMBER
*Cut-off time for all deadlines is MALAYSIA time 3.00pm	Early bird	9th April, 2026	RM400	RM600
	Final	16th April, 2026	RM600	RM800
	Extended	23rd April, 2026	RM700	RM900
	Last Chance	6th May, 2026	RM800	RM1,000

For clarity, and given the evolution in the industry, for this year holding companies (eg WPP, Publicis, Omnicom, Dentsu, IPG, Trapper, Invictus and others) must enter the Awards via their registered member companies and cannot enter as non-members. If the above enter as non-members these will be disqualified.

The Organizing Committee reserves the right to ask for clarification regarding membership status and would have the right to disqualify wrongfully entered submissions.

1. Payment methods:

BY BANK TRANSFER

Beneficiary Name : MEDIA SPECIALISTS ASSOCIATION
Bank Name : MAYBANK
Account Number : 5141 9633 0998

BY CHEQUE

Cheques should be made payable to “**Media Specialists Association**”.

2. Documentation required to complete your submission:

- a) Master List
- b) Proof of full payment must be made by 19th May 2026. [Only a Purchase Order is accepted as interim payment. Payment terms is seven (7) days from the date of our quotation. [Non-negotiable].
- c) MSA Members must have settled their respective membership subscriptions as of 2026 to enjoy member fee per entry.
- d) All items above must be emailed to amy.tan@macomm.com.my
- e) Any incomplete documentation or failure to comply will result in immediate rejection/disqualification of your entry/entries. No refunds will be entertained.

3. A tax invoice will be issued after entry fees is paid.

V. Categories Overview

BEST USE OF SECTION

BU 1: Branded Entertainment & Content

Submissions must clearly define and illustrate the effectiveness of innovative content marketing in achieving brand and/or business results. This category is not limited to standard advertising and can cover both traditional and digital media.

Submissions can include:

- Developing specific (own) media content to associate the brand with the values and emotional appeal of the content, telling the brand's story through it.
- Integrating a product or service into an existing content/program narrative to enhance brand awareness and improve brand perception.
- Demonstrate how the created and deployed content resulted in measurable outcomes. Highlight creativity in utilizing entertainment, content funded (or co-funded), and content sponsorship elements generated by the brand for online and/or offline sectors.

Entries should showcase how branded entertainment and content can effectively enhance brand visibility and achieve business objectives through innovative and strategic content marketing, demonstrating clear and measurable improvements. The goal is to demonstrate the power of creative content strategies in achieving exceptional business outcomes and driving brand success.

This category allows the engagement of KOL/influencers, but ensure it includes and utilizes other media channels.

Note: If the branded content relies mainly or largely on influencers, it should be entered into the Best Use of Influencer Marketing category.

BU 2: Media Collaboration

Entries should provide detailed examples of the creative and effective use of media channels to achieve business goals and objectives. Each submission must demonstrate how brands and/or partners collaborate to develop communication that contributes to brand and business objectives.

The media collaboration should highlight the most strategic, knowledgeable, and effective methodologies used to achieve their respective goals. It is the cross-promotional use of individual media (i.e., maximizing the use of partner media in the collaboration) that collectively generates a successful campaign.

Collaborations should emphasize not just paid media buys but also partnerships that embody media partners, brand collaborations, and sponsorships. Partnerships can include both commercial (paid media associations) and non-commercial (co-branded integrations).

Entries should showcase how media collaborations can effectively enhance brand visibility and achieve business objectives through innovative and strategic partnerships. The goal is to demonstrate the power of collaborative media strategies in achieving exceptional business outcomes and driving brand success.

BU 3: Data & Analytics

Each submission must showcase the effective use of data and insights to engage consumers and strengthen brand relationships, whether transitioning from online to offline, offline to online, or within the online space. Entries should emphasize how data is used to identify, profile, and target specific consumers, fostering innovative and insightful approaches that deliver measurable business or brand results. This category recognizes excellence in leveraging data to address business challenges and unlock opportunities across marketing and communication.

Outstanding entries should employ a clear methodology using 1st, 2nd, or 3rd party digital data, resulting in profound insights that are activated for robust business performance and meeting established KPIs. Evaluation criteria include data sources, types, insights generation, and transforming insights into potent strategic concepts for positive business or campaign outcomes.

Entries should demonstrate how data and insights can effectively enhance consumer engagement and brand relationships, showcasing clear and measurable improvements. The goal is to highlight the power of data-driven strategies in achieving exceptional marketing results, driving innovation, and addressing business challenges.

BU 4: AI (artificial intelligence)

Each submission must demonstrate how a media organization stays current with trends and incorporates AI technology to enhance efficiency and productivity, both internally and externally. Entries should highlight the process of leveraging AI methods and tools, including data models, algorithms, and machine learning, to generate customer insights for improved target audience engagement, optimized spending, content customization, and personalized brand journeys.

This category acknowledges exceptional digital products (e.g., Artificial Intelligence tools, automation tools, new products from existing digital publishers/agencies/brands, websites, microsites, mobile apps, etc.) that have made significant contributions to marketing campaigns, businesses, or consumers. Evaluation criteria include innovation, UI/UX, usage, adaptation, and their impact on the digital marketing landscape and/or consumer behaviors.

AI applications may encompass:

- Marketing Automation: Lead generation, lead scoring, and customer retention.
- Personalization: Creating customer profiles based on data collection.
- Forecasting: Using predictive analytics.
- Content Creation: For paid media platforms and other innovative uses.
- Entries are encouraged to provide insights into the tools used, whether external or proprietary. Given the category's novelty, the jury may seek clarification to ensure genuine AI usage, distinguishing it from other technologies such as Martech.

Entries should showcase how AI technology can effectively enhance media and marketing outcomes, demonstrating clear and measurable improvements. The goal is to highlight the power of AI in achieving exceptional media and marketing results, driving innovation, and influencing consumer behaviours.

BU 5: Best Use of Marketing Technology and Automation

This category seeks submissions that showcase the use of technology to drive superior media and marketing results. Each entry must effectively utilize data management, customer data, and marketing automation platforms as part of the strategy. This can include technologies such as cookie-less ID, AI, VR, AR, MR, XR, or any other innovative tech examples.

Submissions should demonstrate the use of big data, innovative tools, inventions, platforms, or other measures that lead to significant improvements or solutions. These solutions may or may not be directly related to the brand; they could, for instance, drive sales.

The marketing technology must clearly demonstrate technological innovation within a specific campaign or activation during the eligibility period, or show how it has created ongoing business improvements for the client or agency in the media and marketing sphere.

This category is distinct from the use of AI. The jury reserves the right to request re-entry of submissions, with the agency's permission, if they believe the entry is better suited to another category rather than Martech.

Entries should showcase how technological innovation can effectively enhance media and marketing outcomes, demonstrating clear and measurable improvements. The goal is to highlight the power of innovative technology in achieving exceptional media and marketing results.

BU 6: eCommerce

Entries should provide detailed examples of how a single strategy was used to unify an integrated campaign to deliver extraordinary business results. The campaign should include consumer insights and a big idea that utilized various media platforms to execute and bring to life, with results that exceeded expectations.

Key metrics to focus on in this category include ROI in real business terms and how it has been measured (e.g., offline to online attribution or purely online attribution).

A successful entry should combine strong shopper knowledge with digital marketing practices to increase online conversion. It should highlight the project's shopper insights and be shopper driven. Sales could be via a website, social apps, or other digital sales platforms.

The agency should clearly explain the strategy of how the effort went to market eCommerce. Submissions in this category are evaluated on strategy and eCommerce effectiveness, not overall sales during the campaign.

Entries should showcase how a unified strategy can effectively engage consumers, enhance brand recognition, and drive sales through innovative and strategic eCommerce campaigns. The goal is to demonstrate the power of a cohesive strategy in achieving exceptional business outcomes within the eCommerce landscape.

BU 7: Sports, Gaming & eSports

Each submission should clearly demonstrate the strategic and effective use of sports, gaming, and/or eSports platforms as key media touchpoints to achieve measurable results that enhance brand visibility and drive sales.

Entries can incorporate one or more of the following components:

- Sports: Football, badminton, hockey, pickle, etc.
- Gaming: Video games, casual games, etc.
- eSports: Competitive online games, etc.

The category also includes leveraging athletes, sports teams, sporting events, or associations to create engaging content that benefits the brand and boosts sales.

Entries should epitomize how insights and strategy drove execution to obtain exceptional results within the sports, gaming, and/or eSports ecosystem. The goal is to showcase how these platforms can be used to effectively engage a specific audience, enhance brand recognition, and drive sales through innovative and strategic campaigns.

BU 8: Influencer Marketing

Each submission should demonstrate the effective utilization of talents, celebrities, influencers, KOLs, and creators from any field on social platforms to engage consumers and enhance their relationship with the brand, whether short-term, intermediate, or long-term. The entry must identify the strategy, target audience, and the role of key personnel in developing the brand.

It is recommended that the submission includes the selection criteria (who, what, why) for the influencers and the methodology of marketing activities employed to drive increased awareness of the brand or product. Innovative use of influencers is more likely to win compared to standard content or reach provided by the influencers.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that demonstrate strategic excellence and creativity in leveraging influencer marketing to build strong consumer-brand relationships.

BU 9: Performance Media (Media Biddable)

Each submission must clearly indicate how the performance media effort has directly and effectively contributed to the business objectives. The entry should be well-founded and based on strategic principles, explaining how the media budget and strategy relate to the achieved objectives.

An integral part of the submission is to justify and ensure that the evidence based on the results is well-documented against the KPIs.

- **Media Budget and Strategy:** Show how the media budget and strategy relate to the objectives.
- **KPIs and Optimization:** Explain how and on which KPIs the campaign is directed and optimized, essentially the buying approach.
- **Evidence and Results:** Substantiate the results with research or demonstrable evidence, and please cite your sources/references.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that demonstrate strategic excellence and effectiveness in using performance media to achieve business objectives.

Note: This category excludes SEM and/or SEO

BU 10: Search & Discovery (SEM, SEO and AEO)

Each submission should showcase exemplary strategies that have significantly impacted marketing outcomes. Highlight the innovative and effective application of Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and/or Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to enhance online visibility, drive targeted traffic, and achieve measurable results. Entries can also include strategies for AEO (Answer Engine Optimization) and visibility within Large Language Model (LLMs) platforms.

Entries will be evaluated based on the ingenuity of SEM / SEO / AEO campaigns, or a combination of those, and their impact on search rankings, user engagement, and conversion rates. Successful submissions will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of search algorithms, audience behavior, and the integration of SEM and/or SEO and/or AEO to optimize digital presence.

Emphasize how these strategies have contributed to achieving specific business goals, whether through increased website traffic, improved conversion rates, or enhanced brand visibility. The jury will look for evidence of strategic planning, execution, and the overall effectiveness of the search and/or discovery initiatives.

BU 11: Smart Impact (under RM 200,000) – Including Digital

Each submission celebrates the ingenuity of a brand that has deployed a distinctive and smart strategy for a campaign with a minimal budget, with any and all media being integral to its success.

The entry must emphasize the insight and/or starting point of the campaign and detail the relevant KPIs that drove its success. It should also explain how the campaign fits within the broader communication strategy and to what extent paid media and content budgets were used to achieve the desired outcomes.

- **Budget Constraint:** Media and production investment for each entry must not exceed RM 200,000. Production costs include printing materials, talents, production setup costs for events, product barter value, and other supporting material costs.
- **Standalone Campaign:** This entry must be a standalone campaign and not part of a multimedia/integrated campaign. Supporting invoices signed off by the client must be uploaded.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that demonstrate strategic excellence and creativity in achieving significant impact with limited resources.

BU 12: Integrated Media

Each submission must demonstrate the use of at least THREE (3) different types of media platforms within the campaign, with a minimum of TWO (2) being non-digital platforms. Recognized media platforms include TV, Digital, Out-of-Home (OOH), Activation, Print, Cinema, and Radio. Please note that multiple different digital media platforms (e.g., social media, YouTube, influencers, banners) will still count only as digital, and an entry in this category needs to have at least TWO (2) non-digital/traditional mediums deployed as well.

The key element of an entry is the rationale for and integration of the selected media throughout the campaign. It should show how these individual media elements supplemented each other and built upon their distinctive characteristics to drive the brand's message and achieve desired outcomes. Entries should highlight the management of engaging the various media with a comprehensive strategy and integrating them to maximize results.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that effectively integrate multiple media platforms to deliver cohesive and impactful brand messages, demonstrating strategic excellence and innovation.

BU 13: Radio / Audio / Podcasts

Each submission must demonstrate creativity through the use of the audio medium, including radio, audio apps like Spotify, podcasts, and all forms of communication developed for radio or other audio media (e.g., radio spots, DJ mentions, radio promos). Other audio elements could include content developed for TV, cinema, web, mobile, outdoor, and any other audio streaming platforms.

The entry should highlight consumer insights, the rationale for choosing specific platforms, and how these platforms were activated to drive business and brand metrics successfully, with clear and measurable results.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that effectively utilize audio platforms to engage audiences and deliver exceptional business results through strategic media planning and execution.

BU 14: TV / Video

Each submission should demonstrate how key elements of video were strategically and effectively used as a primary touchpoint to achieve extraordinary business results for the brand, client, or product. The objective is to elaborate on how the strategy maximized the use of video mediums to deliver significant outcomes.

Platforms for the video medium include TV, cinema, video-on-demand, in-flight screening, digital and interactive screens, online film, OTT, and other online service providers. The entry should highlight consumer insights, the rationale for choosing specific platforms, and how these platforms were activated to drive business and brand metrics successfully, with clear and measurable results.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that effectively utilize video platforms to engage audiences and deliver exceptional business results through strategic media planning and execution.

Note: The emphasis is on the media aspects of using video, not on the creative aspect of the video itself.

BU 15: Interactive & Immersive Experiences

Each submission must demonstrate how mobile, interactive, and immersive experiences effectively engage the audience by creating a new virtual world using one or a combination of technologies. The most vital aspect of this category is to engage consumers through various media formats, including CPM, Rich Media, and Print (both digital and physical).

The entry should detail how the concept, strategy, and integration of mobile, interactive, and immersive elements managed to engage the audience and promote the brand or business to greater levels. The objective is to challenge conventional media and showcase brand or business results through innovative use of these mediums.

An integral part of this category is that the entry must have been made widely available to the public, with mobile, interactive, immersive, and/or participatory experiences being central to the project and essential to the storytelling.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that not only utilize mobile, interactive, and immersive technologies effectively but also demonstrate innovation, creativity, and strategic excellence in engaging the audience and promoting the brand.

BU 16: Activation & Experiential

Each submission must demonstrate the key influence of activation and experiential experiences in showcasing the customer journey, enhancing brand experience, and optimizing every touchpoint to increase brand adoption, sales, and revenue.

This category is open to agencies that have engaged consumers through experiential marketing concepts and executions, including brand activation, sensory interaction, audience participation, special events, and more. Both tech and non-tech engagements are welcome, but a physical/real-world component is required for any entry and must form the major part/significant part of it. If you are in doubt of that, or if your entry is largely about a virtual experience, can check with MSA or could please enter it into BU 15.

Submissions should include examples of brand and experiential experiences, as well as activations that create a space or use a more permanent feature to drive customer engagement. These can include exhibitions, trade shows, vending machines, signage, floor graphics, and similar initiatives.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that effectively utilize activation and experiential marketing to create memorable brand experiences and drive significant business results.

BU 17: MSA for Good

Each submission must demonstrate the powerful use of creativity and media to address a significant societal issue, leading to measurable positive impacts within Malaysian society. This category welcomes media usage for corporate social responsibility initiatives by brands, as well as media efforts by non-profits. The entry should showcase innovative ideas and solutions with a dedicated plan to create public, economic, cultural, or other benefits for the greater good. We seek to reward entries that embody both local and universal values, reflecting culture, religion, beliefs, traditions, language, insights, or context.

The core message of the work should highlight the transformative role of media in driving innovation initiatives that significantly improve the quality of life. The solutions may or may not be directly linked to the brand but should aim to advance social or gender equality, education, healthcare, human rights, environmental sustainability, or other critical social issues.

Entries should provide compelling examples of achievements in these areas, demonstrating why the campaign merits this distinguished award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that not only tackle pressing societal challenges but also exemplify innovation, creativity, and strategic excellence in leveraging media for the greater good.

BU 18: Outdoor (Static & Digital) and Programmatic OOH (pOOH)

Each submission must demonstrate the effective use of outdoor or programmatic Out-Of-Home (pOOH) media to engage the target audience, develop or enhance the brand, and showcase innovative planning, buying, creativity, and data analysis. The entry should highlight the significant advantages and capabilities of the chosen media, detailing how audience-focused data, insights, and tools were utilized to create an effective and innovative brand communication strategy. This category also includes cross-platform formats for Outdoor advertising, with an emphasis on channels such as sensory advertising and special outdoor formats (e.g., commute, mall advertising, signage).

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the campaign deserves this prestigious award. The goal is to recognize campaigns that not only effectively utilize outdoor and programmatic OOH media but also demonstrate innovation, creativity, and strategic excellence in brand communication.

AGENCY SECTION

BC 1: Growth Agency of The Year

This award honors an agency that excels in fostering a collaborative and inclusive culture, driving impactful change, achieving substantial business growth.

The agency should demonstrate inspiring leadership and management excellence, creating a positive and supportive workplace that retains and attracts top talent. In terms of business performance, the agency should highlight outstanding financial growth, significant client wins, and high retention rates. Innovation is key, so entries should detail creative solutions and strategies that set the agency apart from its competitors. The quality of client work is crucial, with examples of high-quality campaigns that delivered measurable results. Additionally, fostering a positive workplace culture, including talent development and retention, is essential. Social responsibility is another important aspect, with contributions to social responsibility and initiatives showcasing the agency's commitment to making a positive impact beyond business success.

Entries should provide detailed examples of achievements in these areas, highlighting why the agency deserves this prestigious award. The goal is to recognize agencies that not only drive business success but also contribute to a more inclusive and equitable world through their leadership, innovation, and social responsibility efforts.

BC 2: Best Agency Culture of the Year

Open to media and advertising agencies operating in Malaysia (excluding publishers and media owners). The award recognises agencies that have built a strong, values-driven organisational culture during the eligibility period. Entrants must demonstrate initiatives implemented within the award timeframe that positively shaped employee engagement, leadership effectiveness, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing, learning and development, and overall workplace experience. Submissions should reflect measurable outcomes such as retention rates, employee satisfaction scores, talent attraction, internal mobility, or productivity improvements. All examples, programmes, and results cited must have been active and delivered within the official award period.

Judges will evaluate aspects as per below:

- Clarity of Purpose & Values – A clearly articulated cultural vision aligned to business strategy.
- Leadership & Accountability – Visible commitment from senior leadership to culture-building.
- People Development – Investment in learning, mentorship, and career growth pathways.
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – Meaningful, measurable DEI initiatives and outcomes.
- Employee Wellbeing & Engagement – Programmes that support mental health, flexibility, and work-life balance.
- Business Impact – Tangible links between culture and performance, innovation, or client satisfaction.

Entries should demonstrate that culture is not cosmetic, but a sustained competitive advantage.

3

ENTRY SUBMISSION

There are two parts to a submission of an entry to be completed:

- Round 1: Online submission
- Round 2: Finalist submission – Only applicable to shortlisted entries.

The online submission will be used by the Jury for the shortlisting of finalists. The finalist submission will be used by the Jury for the final judging.

Any requests for changes after the entry has been made will be administered by the Organizer at their sole discretion, and an admin fee of RM200.00 applies. Changes may not be made to entries once judging has commenced.

I. Round 1:

Online Submission Guidelines

1. Please ensure that you have a submission account registered on **msa-awards.com**. You may use an account from previous years or register for a new one if you don't have any.
2. After confirming your registration, you may log in to begin submitting your entries.
3. Follow the instructions and fill all necessary fields about the entry. You may save any incomplete entries at any stage and return to continue before the deadline.

4. **Mandatory Entry Write-Up**
 - i. All entrants must complete the mandatory entry write-up online.
 - ii. For the BEST USE OF section, your entire write-up should not exceed 1,000 words.
 - iii. For the AGENCY section, your entire write-up should not exceed 800 words.
 - iv. Non-compliance will result in immediate disqualification.
 - v. In order to help keep within the word count limit, proper nouns, for example – ‘Kuala Lumpur’, should be written as ‘KualaLumpur’ without the space so that it can be counted as one word. Brand names could also be written in this manner to be counted as one word. Hyphenated words are strictly not allowed in the written submissions if the hyphens are used inappropriately. Should there be any instance of inappropriate hyphenated words, these words will be counted individually. Words appearing after the 1,000th and 800th word respectively will be automatically deleted.

5. Each entry must be approved by the Client with a sign-off (and ratified with the Company Stamp) on the client’s endorsement form. If a Company Stamp is unavailable, a written explanation by the Client is required for authentication.
*****The MSA Awards organizing committee may contact the client/agency for questions relating to the entry.*****

6. Please make sure that any material provided can be easily understood and shown to the jury. Entries which are not in English should be translated or accompanied by a full translation. It will be in your own best interest to explain or translate any specific word play or local social, cultural or political references and nuances.

II. Round 2:

Finalist Submission Guidelines

(ONLY APPLICABLE TO SHORTLISTED ENTRIES)

1. An email notification will be sent to all shortlisted entries.
2. For the “Best Use Of” categories, a presentation team of maximum two (2) persons per shortlisted entry will be invited to deliver a 10-minute presentation with 5 minutes for Q&A to the jury. If there is a video it should be part of the 10-minutes but a video is not mandatory.
3. No Client representation & Media Vendor/Partners are allowed, unless it was submitted by them as the Agency.
4. Each presenter is limited to presenting a maximum of six (6) individual presentations.
5. Agencies can send whoever they like as presenters, with 2 presenters at a maximum. Based on the age of the presenters, Agencies with presenters below the age of 40 will receive an additional 3 points to their total.
6. For Agency of the Year entries, all entries will advance to Round 2. Agency candidates will deliver the 10-minute presentation with 5 minutes for Q&A to the jury. Maximum 2 presenters, which can include Agency heads etc.
7. Any and only these presentation materials to the stated technical specifications, are allowed to assist in your presentations:
 - i. **Mandatory Submission: PowerPoint and PDF files.** The board size should be 1024 x 768 pixels/150dpi, OR a maximum file size of 50 MB each.
 - ii. Ensure that the long form case video is **NOT** embedded in both your PowerPoint and PDF files. **This file should be submitted separately along with mandatory submission.** The video should be in HD with 1080 lines, using 1920 pixels per line (1920 x 1080), OR 720 lines, using 1280 pixels per line (1280 x 720). Both formats must have an aspect ratio of 16:9.
 - iii. If the presenter chooses not to opt for any presentation or video presentation, an oral presentation is permitted.
 - iv. For the final round 2 presentation, the PowerPoint file will be used by the award committee for showcase.

8. Physical presentation format:
 - i. No physical presentation materials are allowed (e.g. props, handouts, etc.) Attire worn (including accessories) cannot carry any related branding, references to the advertiser and/or the agency. Non-compliance will result in IMMEDIATE disqualification.
 - ii. In the absence of any presentation materials, your on-line submission will be projected on screen for the judges' reference.
 - iii. For "Best Use Of" categories, please ensure all agency/company logo, name, trademarks, or any uniquely identifying collaterals are not included, mentioned or presented in any way or form in the presentation materials including references/ information from network sources. Non-compliance will result in IMMEDIATE disqualification.
 - iv. Entrants are responsible for ensuring that they have the rights to use any of the materials used (e.g., images, music). These could include use in, but is not restricted to delegate screenings, post-event promotions, festival websites, partner company websites, official DVD and other public domains.

4

JUDGING

1. The shortlist is decided by a first round of e-voting. The highest SIX (6) entries in each category voting will qualify for the final round.
2. At all voting stages, a juror's vote will not be counted for any entry submitted by his or her own company and network. The decision of the Jury Panel in all matters relating to the awarding of Awards will be final and binding.
3. Judges will evaluate and score each entry individually from across categories. The scoring will be based on the specific judging criteria listed below with varying percentage accorded to the specific fields that adds up to 100%.
4. Recusal policy: Judges must recuse themselves from evaluating entries in cases where a conflict of interest arises. They are required to recuse themselves from judging an entry if it poses a conflict of interest
 - i. Company Representatives: Company representatives should not judge their own work submitted by their company or group/network.
 - ii. Client Representatives: Client representatives should not judge their own brand's submissions from agencies.
 - iii. Media Owners: Media owners should not judge campaigns or projects that run on their platforms.
 - iv. Recent Departures: Judges who have left their former agency or company within the last 6 months should abstain from presiding over cases involving their former employer to ensure impartiality.
 - v. Direct Competitors: Judges should not evaluate entries from direct competitors in the industry. This applies whether brand level or advertiser.

BEST USE OF SECTION				
<p>BU1: Branded Entertainment & Content</p> <p>BU2: Media Collaboration</p> <p>BU3: Data & Analytics</p> <p>BU4: AI (Artificial Intelligence)</p> <p>BU5: Best Use of Marketing Technology and Automation</p> <p>BU6: eCommerce</p> <p>BU7: Sports, Gaming & eSports</p> <p>BU8: Influencer Marketing</p> <p>BU9: Performance Media (Media Biddable)</p> <p>BU10: Search & Discovery (SEM, SEO and AEO)</p> <p>BU11: Smart Impact (under RM200K) including Digital</p> <p>BU12: Integrated Media</p> <p>BU13: Radio / Audio / Podcasts</p> <p>BU14: TV / Video</p> <p>BU15: Interactive & Immersive Experiences</p> <p>BU16: Activation & Experiential</p> <p>BU17: MSA for Good</p> <p>BU18: Outdoor (Static & Digital) and Programmatic OOH (pOOH)</p>	<p>Objective & Challenge 10%</p>	<p>Insight & Strategy 30%</p>	<p>Execution 30%</p>	<p>Effectiveness 30%</p>

AGENCY SECTION			
<p>BC1: Growth Agency of The Year</p> <p>BC2: Agency Culture of the Year</p>	<p>The Context 20%</p>	<p>The Strategy & Execution 40%</p>	<p>The Results 40%</p>

5

USEFUL INFORMATION

I. Key Reasons For Disqualification

The following will result in disqualification and entry fees will be forfeited. Furthermore, no queries or discussions can be entertained, if these rules are violated.

1. Campaigns submitted failed to adhere to the qualifying period between 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. If a campaign spills over the period, the majority of the campaign must be within the specified period, and only results obtained within that period should be submitted.
2. Entries submitted without the Client's endorsement i.e. sign-off and company stamp. If a Company Stamp is unavailable, a written explanation by the Client is required for authentication. ***** MSA reserves the right to verify with the agency/client if there are any doubts.*****
3. For all **"Best Use Of"** categories, please ensure that **no agency or company identifiers** are included in the submission. This includes **logos, names, trademarks, proprietary tool names, or any uniquely identifying materials** in the written submission, supporting documents, or presentation materials, including referenced content from network sources.
Any inclusion of identifiers or non-compliance will result in immediate disqualification. No queries or discussions will be entertained.
4. Physical presentation materials e.g. props, handouts, etc. are used. Attire worn (including accessories) features related branding, references to the advertiser &/ or the agency.
5. Any other conduct or behaviour by the agency's representatives during the judging process that is deemed to be influencing the judges.

II. Winning

1. **Gold, Silver, and Bronze Trophies:** The winner will receive a gold trophy, while the runner-up and third place in each category will receive silver and bronze trophies, respectively.
2. **E-Certificates:** All winners and finalists will be awarded an e-certificate.
3. **Grand Prix Trophy:** This trophy will be awarded by the Jury to the best overall entry, based on the highest accumulated points for a single campaign.
4. **Agency of the Year Trophy:** This trophy will be awarded to the agency with the highest accumulated points from all “Best Use Of...” and “Agency” categories.
5. **Advertiser of the Year Trophy:** This trophy will be awarded to the advertiser with the highest accumulated points from all “Best Use Of” categories, regardless of the number of agencies involved.
6. **Brand of the Year Trophy:** This trophy will be awarded to a single brand with the highest accumulated points from all “Best Use Of” categories.
7. **No points will be awarded for shortlisted entries.**
8. **Points are awarded as follows:**

SCORING: POINTS AWARDED FOR WIN			
SECTIONS	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
BEST USE OF	18	12	6
AGENCY	15	10	5

III. Additional Information

1. The decisions of the MSA Awards Organizing Committee together with MSA President in all matters relating to the Malaysian Media Specialist Awards shall be final and binding.
2. The entrant grants MSA permission to show the entries at such times as deemed appropriate.
3. Incomplete or incorrect entries risk disqualification. Please observe the entry rules strictly.
4. The information you give in the credits section may be published and/or appear on recognition certificates.
5. In the event of a complaint against any entry, the MSA Awards Organizing Committee together with MSA President will conduct a full investigation into each case and will request detailed documentation from all parties concerned including the complainant, the entrants and the client.
6. The MSA Awards Organizing Committee together with the MSA President will have no hesitation in disqualifying an award in cases where the complaint is upheld. Any awards and/or certificate issued must be returned within three (3) working days to the MSA.
7. No refunds will be made for withdrawals once entries have been submitted.
8. The Organizer reserves the right to disqualify any entries which do not meet the entry requirements. No refunds will be made for any disqualification.
9. All decisions made by the Organizer in all matters relating to the competition shall be final and binding.
10. By entering the MSA Awards, entrants allow MSA to use any or part of submitted materials in any form or purpose whatsoever without any payment in return. If you don't want certain contents published, please highlight it in "yellow" ("xxxx")
11. Ensure your entry is built around a media strategy rather than relying on the creative content.
12. Campaign execution must be done in Malaysia only – for multi-country campaigns including Malaysia as a market; please focus on the Malaysian execution details.
13. All campaign implementations must have been executed for the first time between 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 in Malaysia. It should not be a repeat campaign. If an entry is an updated version from the previous year campaign – the entrant must explain the updated strategy or execution details that occur within the eligibility period.
14. Please carefully check the credits you have submitted. If you are shortlisted or are a winner, these credits will be reflected on the certificate as you have submitted them. Any amendments may incur administrative costs which would need to be borne by you.

15. Entry must originate from your agency or it can also be declared as a joint entry with a creative agency in the given option box when submitting online. However, the points are only awarded to the media agency.
16. Please ensure URL links shared are public and workable/valid for 6 months. This is crucial for the Round 1 judging [shortlisting] process.

IV. Additional Information For Vetting Committee, Moderator & Jury

VETTING

1. Each council member organization will nominate up to two (2) representatives for the vetting process prior to the online judging process.
2. Vetting representatives are prohibited from participating as jury members or award presenters to maintain impartiality in the process. Non-compliance will result in IMMEDIATE disqualification.
3. Vetting representatives are encouraged (not mandatory) to be a moderator during Round 2 Physical Presentation.

MODERATOR

1. Each council member organization will nominate one (1) representative for the physical judging process.
2. Moderators are reminded to act as the timekeeper and are not allowed to ask questions, participate in clarifications and/or deliberations. Moderators must ensure rules are followed and will be required to attend a moderator's briefing.

JURY

1. Each council member organization will nominate TWO (2) representatives for Client/Advertiser and ONE (1) representative from their organization for the online and physical judging process
2. The jury representatives are contingent upon them possessing a minimum of TEN (10) years of expertise in the field of Media, Marketing, Advertising, Digital, and Technology with a minimum THREE (3) years' experience in the Malaysian market. This is a mandatory requirement.
3. The MSA council member and organizing chairperson will be vested with the authority to propose additional industry participants as prospective jury members, contributing to the enhancement of the Awards evaluation process.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Need help or advice?

Visit <https://msa-awards.com>

Or call **03-7613 1510**

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