

# advice from the jury



2018  
**effie  
awards**  
united kingdom

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# introduction

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This document was created to help entrants submit an effective entry for the 2018 Effie Awards UK Competition.

The insight presented comes directly from past juries. These statements do not represent the opinions of The Effie® Awards organisation, board of directors, steering 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 2018 Effie Awards UK competition.

In addition to this document, please take note of the following Effie resources:

- 👉 [Effie UK Website](#) for access to Eligibility, Deadlines & Fees; Various Entry Materials and Case Study Samples
- 👉 [Case Study Database](#) (read past winning Effie submissions from Effie competitions around the world)
- 👉 [Twitter](#)
- 👉 [Facebook](#)
- 👉 [Effie Effectiveness Index](#)



# judging & scoring

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## Judging Process

Your entry will be judged by some of the brightest and most experienced business leaders hand-picked from around the UK. Entries are judged in two phases. Scoring is done anonymously and confidentially.

- 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.
- Judges also have the opportunity to discuss the cases in both rounds before finalising their scores.

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 – have minimum scores required in order to be eligible for finalist status or for an award. Effie trophies are awarded at the discretion of the judges. It is possible that a category may produce one or multiple winners of any level or perhaps no winners at all – no matter the number of finalists. **Not all finalists become winners.**

Judges read your written case first and then immediately watch your creative reel/video. Make sure your team reviews both to ensure they work seamlessly together before submitting your entry. It is important to remember that judges are reviewing 6-7 cases in a session. Brevity, clarity, and strong storytelling are key to make your case stand out.

## Scoring System

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

<b>Strategic Communications</b>	<b>23.3%</b>
<b>Challenge &amp; Objectives</b>	
<b>Idea</b>	<b>23.3%</b>



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<b>Bringing the Idea to Life</b>	<b>23.3%</b>
<b>Results</b>	<b>30%</b>

Judges also have the opportunity to discuss the cases in both rounds before finalising their scores.

## Scoring Trends

In the 2017 Effie UK Competition for example, the **Results** and **Bringing the Idea to Life** sections scored highest on average, while the **Strategic Communications Challenge & Objectives** and **Idea** section scored the lowest on average across all entrants.

## Effie Finalist & Winner Case Studies

We encourage entrants to visit the [Case Study Database](#) to read past-winning cases and to view the accompanying creative assets. While the full Case Study Database is a subscription-based service, a few sample complimentary case studies are available on [Effie UK website](#).

## judge advice | crafting an effective entry

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### General Advice

• **"Be clear. Be concise. Be honest."**

• "Make sure your story is tight. It's easy for good stories to get lost in overwriting."

• **"Make sure your effort meets the criteria of the Effie UK Competition."**

• "Because judges are reviewing 10-15 cases in a (full) day, brevity is appreciated. Clear, concise and personable entries tend to stand out over long, overwritten entries filled with jargon."

• "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."

• **"Storytelling is important."** The person with the most heart for the campaign needs to be involved in the writing of the case study. Too dry case studies kill great results."

• "Every part of the story should logically tie back to the points being made. Simpler is better. Nix as much marketing jargon from the narrative as you can. Trying to sound like a marketing textbook causes my BS metre to go off. **MAKE your case.** Don't just answer the questions."

**"Present the case in a clear and concise manner. Don't be afraid to use visuals to highlight the data you are presenting versus typing it all out - it can be more impactful when seen in a chart."**

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effie insight: You can't write your way to an Effie, but you can certainly write your way out of an Effie.



"A strong case should read like a story, each section should connect with the one that follows, and it should be compelling to read. There should be a business foundation

- 👉 "Be a storyteller. Entertain me with the submission. I want to hear your voice."
- 👉 "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."
- 👉 "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."



## How Judges Described Entries They Liked

"The best cases were simple, powerful, and were based on a powerful insight."

"It's always about the strategy. A good idea is only good if it has a reason for being."

**"Strong connection to results."**

"A brilliant insight that inspires a unique and truly **ENGAGING** idea."

"A great case of brand experience in different markets. A truly global idea with great engagement."

"Truly global campaign that was locally rooted."

**"Big ideas, great executions."**

**"Impressive, verifiable metrics."**

"If results are weak, the whole case is weak."

**"Business results-oriented."**

**Visual display of results.  
Minimised hyperbole."**

**"Keep it simple, logical."**

"The idea scales nicely across regions and issues."

"A great case tells a story. It draws you in and makes you want to read more."

## How to Improve an Entry

- “The entrants should ensure that the results tie to the objectives, that they include **performance against benchmarks**, and that they seem **real** and **not manufactured** to make the case seem better.”
- “Include more measurable objectives, behavioural and business.”
- “Nail the insight. Keep market overviews brief. Make sure the insight is a connective thread throughout the response.”
- “Don’t create objectives to fit the results – it’s obvious.”
- *“Be clear and concise. Edit, edit, edit. Remember that judges are people, they like a friendly tone of voice. They like short sentences. They like charts and graphs that are easy to understand.”*
- “Many entries were way over-written. **Simple and succinct is better.**”

**“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!”**

## Context is Key

- “Do not underestimate the importance of benchmarks - and providing reason for those benchmarks. For instance, a 4 week period out of a year is not helpful unless you explain why you used that 4 week period - it just looks like you are manipulating results.”
- “Demonstrate clearly how your idea was relevant in the market rather than making it templatised.”
- “More context around the challenge; more specific, quantifiable results. Without these two components, it was incredibly difficult to judge the case's effectiveness.”

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- “**Lots of what, not enough why.** Why do you want to increase awareness by X%? What would that mean to your company/client in real-world terms? Context was missing on many of the results.”
- “Where possible, show how your results compare to the relative success of your competition. Just competing against yourself and past results doesn't seem as compelling.”
- *“Industry context is so important and often missing (with the exception of share of sales and comparative sales growth, which only tells a small part of the story).”*

## Review Internally Before Submitting

- “Write your entry not for a member of your team but for someone who knows absolutely nothing about your category, client, or client’s business problems. Take special care to answer all questions (and sub-bullets therein) as they were designed to be answered in that manner for a reason.”
- “Have someone outside the team read your case. Too often category specific knowledge was assumed and broad context not given.”
- “Make the context clear enough for someone who doesn't sit in your office every day and may just be reading their 10th case. Have more than one writer look at it; preferably someone from outside your group. Same for results. With the creative reel, be clear about what elements are actual marketing pieces vs. context.”

If you are interested in a copy of 2017 Effie UK Judging Instructions, please contact us at

[effieuk@effie.org](mailto:effieuk@effie.org)



## judge advice | key question areas

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Entrants should detail both the UK marketing challenge and the specific challenges faced in bringing the case to the UK markets. They should include a definition of the audience that they were trying to reach and describe the attitudes, behaviours, demographics, culture, etc. that define them.

### Strategic Communications Challenge & Objectives

- “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.”
- “A large number of entrants seemed to omit critical information around the challenge. Why is it important? Why is it an issue for their consumers / brand / business? Who is the strategic target and why?”

**“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.”**

- “Provide ample **context** on the competitive set to help judges understand the challenges being faced by your brand. Clearly identify your KPIs and then prove how your program met or exceeded those KPIs.”
- “Be careful your KPIs don't look like they were retrofitted. Help me understand why they were important and why they were set at that level.”
- “More **context** on the marketplace challenges, the brand challenges, the opportunity, the audience

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and the key drivers that lead to the solution/idea.”

- “Make it clearer if these are challenging or typical objectives. Every marketing goal is to grow share/sales but what makes it particularly challenging? Also, be clearer on expectations and how you set those benchmarks **so it doesn't look like you sandbagged results.**”
- “Telling me what your objectives were, and more importantly telling me **why** those objectives matter is the difference between passing through Round One and not.”

**effie insight:** When writing your entry form, carefully read and answer the detailed instructions under each question. Often judges complain they felt the entrant did not provide full information.

## Insight

- “The best cases were simple, powerful and were based on a powerful insight.”
- “Clearly explain how you arrived at your insight and why it's relevant to your marketing challenge.”
- “The stronger the business and consumer insight, the better the communication plan.”
- “Always make sure the idea/insight has some discussion of the target audience. What makes it particularly relevant to this audience segment?”
- “Did the entrant know the audience? Was the insight consistent with the audience's beliefs and did it actually drive an insightful notion that a strategy could be developed from? And did the work reflect the audience, insight and strategy consistently?”

## Idea

- “Dig deeper into their consumers and draw links to their brand. A great idea is meaningless if it doesn't reflect on the brand.”

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- “The **idea** is the pivot which turns the smart analysis of the problem into a **unique solution** that none of our competitors could emulate. Too many idea statements were generic and displayed no deep consumer understanding.”
- “Make the idea crystal clear. **Simplify, simplify, simplify.**”
- “The idea needs to tie directly back to the consumer 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 is **easy to understand** how the team arrived at this idea and why it is **meaningful** to the brand and campaign.”
- “The idea is **not** a recitation of the tagline!”
- “Many of the idea articulations were not ideas. They were descriptions of the goal of the program or they were an articulation of what the program was, not the idea behind it.”

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

## Bringing the Idea to Life

- “Tie the communication strategy directly back to objectives and insights. Without that it's just a media plan, not a communications strategy.”
- “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.”
- “Clearly depict how the campaign was executed in each market. Was there a “path” you wanted consumers to go on and what was it?”
- “Show the connection between communication strategy and media.”

**effie insight:** Describe and provide rationale for the communications strategy and how the creative + media strategies worked together to reach the specific audiences per market. Describe how local challenges impacted the way the idea was carried out, and how it was made culturally relevant to the UK.



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- “Regarding bringing idea to life, more needs to be said about brand media strategies and executions. Very little demo data, lifestyle data, medium strengths and weaknesses.”
- “While the campaigns are delivering on the insight, it's not clear how the media plan pays off or translates that insight into a communications plan. Often there is a disconnect.”
- “With so many channels available to marketers now, part of the challenge is conveying how you achieved reach across them. How did you place importance of some over others, etc.”
- “Integrate the media strategy and show how it links to the full execution as well as, potentially, how it evolved with the campaign. Show how you were able to “test and learn” if digital was a key component. Ensure that the creative reel is not redundant.”

## Creative Reel

- “In many cases the creative failed to live up to the story. In others, the video totally obscured the ability to view creative. It became a rehash of the story/case and a lot of salesmanship vs. a true showcase of the work.”
- “Be sure the written case and video **complement each other** and **do not repeat** each other. It isn't about the quality of the video itself but more about the content.”
- “Creative reels often do not reflect all the tactics cited. Too TV-centric.”
- “I found that the videos were often more streamlined and clearer than the papers. Are creatives doing the videos? Maybe the authors of the papers should go back to their cases and streamline to align more closely with the video submissions.”

**“Make sure your creative reel complements your case by demonstrating something discussed in your case. It should not be an exact replica of your case wording OR something completely additive to yours.”**

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- “Don't completely repeat the case in video form. Use the video to bring to life the key elements of the campaign. We've read the written case.”
- “Most of the reels did a good job to demonstrating the work. The best cases told a cohesive story, but did not spend a lot of time on the set up given we had already reviewed the written material.”
- **“Don't turn the reel into a pitch** – it reduces credibility.”
- “My biggest issue was that the videos seemed to gloss over the creative rather than showcasing it. Don't give me a video version of an over dramatized case. Showcase the creative and tell a rich compelling story via your writing

## Results

- “There was a significant amount of obvious hyperbole and loose connection to strategic goals. Entrants should focus on using the results to tie up their story in a neat bow.”
- “Too many entries failed to quantify the true impact of their work. Many could benefit from more extensive measurement before, during and after campaigns to show the net change in perceptions or behaviours. Too many squishy KPIs.”
- “Some of the cases used very soft measurement for results like CTR, or visits to sites. These measures are a start but should not be the ultimate goal. There needs to be concrete business results.”
- “Add historical perspective to the results - we need to see the effect of greater media investment and consistent copy vs. past performance.”
- “There should be clear proof that the communication campaign played a role in driving success.”
- “Describe what the results mean in your market.”

**“Anticipate objections/questions and address them. Exhaustively eliminate variables. Prove your work led to your results.”**

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**effie insight:** Entries that provide an explanation of **why** the results are significant to the business of the brand tend to perform **better** in the Effie competition.

“Some results were just sloppy and did not align with the objectives established upfront. If you set a sales goal, give some context as to why that goal is relevant; **don't just report a metric without some context.**”

“Saying things like ‘exceeded by 520%’ just makes me think that the objectives were stupid rather than results being good.”

- “Talk about the scale of couponing, price cuts, marketplace activity, etc. - no information or context on these means a downscore.”
- “It's all about the results, right? I felt that many cases could show that the work was somehow linked to a movement in sales, but they were weak in being clear about specifically how the work was effective in driving sales and/or what specifically the work affected in order to drive sales.”

## Presenting Results Effectively

“Charts, comparisons from a year ago, sales versus years.”

“The strongest cases immediately and overtly **tied back to objectives.**”

“While they all cite results, sometimes the results are not adequately tied to the stated objectives, or the KPIs aren't appropriate for the goals.”

“Make sure results are clearly sourced.”

“Clearly tie results back to your initial objectives. When the results presented felt vague or disconnected from the case objectives, I found myself assuming that this was due to an absence of truly convincing positive metrics to be shared.”

“Relate the results back to the objectives and do so in a storytelling matter, instead of a data dump.”

**“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.”**



# final tips | reasons cases receive lower scores

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- **Retrofitting Objectives.** Retrofitting objectives to results achieved or creating objectives after the fact, rather than explaining the situation you were faced with accurately.
- **Disconnect between Objectives & Results.** Not addressing all objectives and KPIs completely in the results section. Your objectives and results should align – do not list awareness in the objectives and solely provide sales numbers in the results. Provide evidence that it was the marketing communications that drove the results. If you did not meet one of your objectives, explain why. Judges value the honesty.
- **Too much backstory in the video.** Not including examples of key work on the video or not making it clear what the work is on the video versus “effects.” Judges consistently say that they want to see more examples of the work. Because judges read the case before watching the reel, spending too much time re-stating the written case cuts out valuable time that could have been spent showing creative elements. Do not include any **results or competitive work** in the video.
- **Missing media strategy.** Omitting a clear description of communications and media strategies.
- **Entering with no collaboration with partners.** Not reaching out to all partners, collaborating with and crediting them – thereby leaving missing data points or work in the case.
- **No context for data.** Not providing context for data vs. prior year, vs. competitors, vs. past year’s media spend, the difficulty of the challenge, etc.
- **Poor proofreading.** Math mistakes, spelling mistakes, grammar mistakes or typos.
- **Lack of a future focus/continuing story.** Talk about learning as a result and your future focus. What will you change going forward? What didn’t you achieve but are making a

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change to do going forward? Did you adapt your strategy as you went to market in response to new things learned? Judges respect cases that are honest and talk about the real marketing situation.

- **Unfamiliar terms.** No explanation of unfamiliar terms/jargon.
- **No explanation of the significance of the Objectives and Results.** Not providing context for and defending objectives and results – why were they significant and important? Simply stating results without this context leads to low marks from judges.
- **Lack of brevity.** A shorter video and brief are better than padded versions of either.
- **Not addressing the Insight.** Not explaining the insight and what led to it.
- **Leaving the judges with unanswered questions.** When judges notice unanswered questions, they usually assume a negative reason for why the information is missing. Thoroughly review the detailed instructions/questions on the entry form to make sure you are addressing all points.

# final tips | reminders

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- Review the definition of categories you to ensure your case is truly eligible. If you are unsure, reach out to Effie UK with your question.
- Do not assume judges are experts in the marketplace. They may not know what equals strong success in your particular market.
- **Brevity** is essential. Judges are reviewing 6-7 cases in a judging session, so the easier it is for them to understand your case, the better. Judges often say they wish the entry form page limit was lower.
- Answer all questions. Carefully read the **detailed instructions** below each question.
- Review in detail the Reasons for Disqualification and Formatting Requirements section in the Entry Kit/Rules & Regulations document
- Make sure **all data** throughout the entry includes a **specific, verifiable source**.
- Do not cite **any** agency names anywhere in the entry form or creative materials – Effie is an agency-blind competition.
- Do not include results, including any sort of social media metrics, in your creative reel.

**"Make the context clear enough for someone who doesn't sit at your office every day and may be reading their 10<sup>th</sup> case. Have more than one writer look at it; preferably someone from outside**

### Before Submitting Your Entry...

- Ask a strong writer or editor to review your case for spelling, grammar, logic flow errors, mathematical miscalculations, etc.
- Have senior team members on both the client and agency side review the case to ensure the case is well-rounded with context and personality.

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- Hold a **mock judging** session with other individuals/teams at your company. Find out how they would score your case and request feedback on length and jargon. Ask them what questions they have after reading the case, what the weakest areas are, what holes they can poke in the argument, and what parts of the case were confusing. If you'd like a copy of the 2018 Effie UK judging instructions, email us at [effieuk@effie.org](mailto:effieuk@effie.org).

## contact

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