

RULES, CLASSIFICATIONS & CATEGORIES
2025 IFAF Gem Awards Creative Competition

IFAF Definition of Terms:

LOCAL – Any single market.

REGIONAL – Two or more markets in the Northwest. NATIONAL –
Two or more markets outside of the Northwest.

Note: A market is geographically defined as Nielsen Designated Market Area (DMA) or Nielsen Total Survey Area (TSA) and such comparable standard media market definitions for broadcast and print entries.

CLASSIFICATIONS & CATEGORIES

Questions as to clarifications of The Gems Submissions, Classifications and Category requirements may be directed to: Gems Chairman Steve Fischbach, steve@mightymcs.com, 208.317.7723.

1. TELEVISION

Local TV (One DMA)

TV commercial of any length (:15, :30 or :60) that is broadcast on TV station(s) in no more than one local market (DMA). *Note: Refer to The Gems Rules & Eligibility for clarification as to budget parameters.*

- 1) Single entry, budget under \$5,000
- 2) Single entry, budget \$5001 to \$20,000
- 3) Single entry, budget over \$20,000
- 4) Campaign, not more than 3, budget under \$5,000:
2-3 TV commercials of any length (:15, :30 or :60) broadcast in no more than one DMA and produced under \$5,000.
- 5) Campaign, not more than 3, budget \$5,001 to \$20,000:
2-3 TV commercials of any length (:15, :30 or :60) broadcast in no more than one DMA and produced between \$5,001 to \$20,000.
- 6) Campaign, not more than 3, budget over \$20,000:
2-3 TV commercials of any length (:15, :30 or :60) broadcast in no more than one DMA and produced for more than \$20,000.

Regional/National TV (Two or more DMAs)

TV commercial of any length (:15, :30 or :60) that is broadcast in two or more local markets (DMAs) or via national broadcast, cable or satellite networks.

- 7) Single entry
- 8) Campaign, not more than 3:
2-3 regional/national TV commercials of any length (:15, :30 or :60).

Self Promotion TV

Any advertisement broadcast by a local TV station to promote that TV station.

- 9) Single entry
- 10) Campaign, not more than 3

2. RADIO

Note: Commercial audio messages that appear via digital streaming or satellite radio services such as Pandora, Spotify or SiriusXM should be entered in Regional/National Radio categories.

Local Radio (One TSA)

Radio commercial that is broadcast on radio station(s) in no more than one local market (TSA).

- 11) Single entry, :30 length
- 12) Single entry, :60 length
- 13) Campaign, not more than 3

Regional/National Radio (Two or more TSAs)

Radio commercial that is broadcast on radio stations in two or more local markets (TSAs) or on national radio networks or streaming outlets.

- 14) Single entry, :30 length
- 15) Single entry, :60 length
- 16) Campaign, not more than 3

Self-Promotion Radio

Any advertisement broadcast by a radio station or outlet to promote that radio station.

- 17) Single entry or Campaign

3. PRINT ADVERTISING

Advertisement published in either newspaper, whose primary purpose is to inform the public about current events or issues, including daily, weekly or monthly newsprint publication; or in periodical magazines whether annually, bi-annually, quarterly, monthly, weekly, etc.

Local Newspaper (One market only)

- 18) Single entry, B&W or Color, Fractional page:
Newspaper ad of less than a full-page size, regardless of color or newspaper size, that publishes in one market only.
- 19) Single entry, B&W or Color, Full page:
Newspaper ad of one full-page size, regardless of color or newspaper size, that publishes in one market only.
- 20) Single entry, B&W or Color, Multi-page spread, Insert or Specialty:
Newspaper ad of more than one page, an insert or specialty ad, regardless of color, that publishes in one market only.
- 21) Campaign, B&W or Color, Any Size:
2-4 ads as described above that publish in one market only.

Regional/National Newspaper (Two or more markets)

- 22) Single entry, B&W or Color, Fractional page:
Newspaper ad of less than a full-page size, regardless of color or newspaper size, that publishes in more than one market.
- 23) Single entry, B&W or Color, Full page:

Newspaper ad of a full-page size, regardless of color or newspaper size, that publishes in more than one market.

24) Single entry, B&W or Color, Multi-page spread, Insert or Specialty:

Newspaper ad of more than one page, an insert or specialty ad, regardless of color, that publishes in more than one market.

25) Campaign, B & W or Color, Any size:

2-4 ads as described above that publish in two or more markets.

Self Promotion Print

Any advertisement published by a newspaper to promote that newspaper.

26) Single entry or Campaign

Consumer Magazine

Advertisement published in a periodical magazine with circulation/distribution intended for the general public (Consumer)

27) Single entry, Fractional page:

Consumer magazine ad of less than a full-page size.

28) Single entry, Full page:

Consumer magazine ad of one full-page size.

29) Single entry, Spread, Multiple page or Insert:

Consumer magazine ad of more than a full page such as a spread, multi-page execution or insert.

30) Campaign (3 or more):

Any consumer magazine campaign that includes three (3) or more ads from any of the above described consumer magazine categories.

Trade Publications

Advertisement published in a periodical magazine with circulation/distribution intended for a business or industry target audience (Trade).

31) Single entry, Fractional page:

Trade publication ad of less than a full-page size.

32) Single entry, Full page:

Trade publication ad of one full-page size.

33) Campaign (3 or more):

Trade publication campaign that includes three (3) or more ads from of the above described trade magazine categories.

4. OUT OF HOME & AMBIENT MEDIA

Outdoor display of advertising messages commonly associated with standardized structures that are delivered to mass transit audiences via streets, roadways, sidewalks, buses, arenas, etc.

Local Outdoor (One market only)

34) Single entry, Flat:

Includes outdoor posters, outdoor boards, billboards, billboard extensions, outdoor painted bulletins, and outdoor vinyl posters.

35) Single entry, Other (electronic, digital, animated, super-sized, etc.):

Includes digital or animated outdoor boards, or any unit that has movement or changes. Includes closed circuit boards, such as commercials that run on a jumbo-tron at a sporting event. Also includes site wall or super-sized displays.

36) Single entry, Site Interior or Exterior:

Interior or exterior signage that is restricted to malls, airports, train/bus stations, places of business, bus shelters, etc. *Note: Does not include Posters as defined under Collateral Material.*

37) Campaign-Billboard, Flat, Extension, Digital, Animated:

An outdoor campaign that includes 2-4 of any of the above components in one media market only.

38) Guerrilla/Ambient:

Any local, unconventional way of performing advertising and/or promotional activities, including vehicle wraps. Guerrilla Marketing entries must be accompanied by proof of usage. Entries in this category should be accompanied by a written or digital (video) summary not to exceed 250 words (written) or 90 seconds (video).

Regional/National Outdoor (Two or more markets)

39) Flat, Extension/Dimensional, Other (electronic, digital, animated, super-sized.), or Campaign billboards:

Includes outdoor posters, outdoor bulletins, outdoor vinyls, electronic or animated outdoor units, or a campaign of 2-4 executions in two or more media markets.

40) Site Interior or Exterior:

Interior or exterior signage that is restricted to malls, airports, train/bus stations, places of business, bus shelters, etc. in two or more markets. *Note: Does not include Posters under Collateral Material.*

41) Guerrilla/Ambient:

Any regional/national, unconventional way of performing advertising and/or promotional activities, including vehicle wraps. Guerrilla Marketing entries must be accompanied by proof of usage. Entries in this category should be accompanied by a written or digital (video) summary not to exceed 250 words (written) or 90 seconds (video).

Mass Transit

42) Interior or Exterior:

Advertisement displayed via panels or inserts inside and/or outside public transportation vehicles, such as airplane, bus, train/rail, street car, subway, taxi, etc.

Self-Promotion

Advertisement by an out of home company promoting that company's out of home media. 43) Single entry or Campaign

5. DIRECT MARKETING

Any advertising or promotional material that is mailed via USPS or delivered via special courier (private, FedEx, etc.) with the purpose of eliciting, provoking or effecting a consumer reaction (response card, phone number to call, order form, sale/event dates, etc.) should be entered in the appropriate direct marketing categories. Merely mailing a piece does not necessarily qualify it as direct marketing; method of shipment (self-mailer, mailer indicia, envelope, etc.) MUST be evident and included with entry.

Single

44) Flat:

Any printed sheet or sheets, flat, folded or bound printed material that has been mailed as part of an advertisement or promotional effort.

45) Three-dimensional:

Includes single or multiple pieces, and the container and its contents. Dimensional also includes “pop-ups” that might mail flat, but take on dimension in their final forms. Entries typically include some element/item (other than paper) as part of the marketing message (premium item, baseball, ink pen, etc.), which is included as PART of the message. The method of shipment (box, envelope, etc.) MUST be evident and included with the entry.

Campaign

46) Flat or Three-dimensional:

2-4 of the above direct mail categories.

6. ONLINE VIDEO AND PODCASTS

Entries for categories within the Online Video and classification will require a URL and video to be provided through the online submission. Judging of these entries at the regional level will be done online, using the digital upload. Entrant may submit a brief description of the project and its purpose (max. 300 words or 90 second video) to help judges understand the objective.

Video

47) Webisodes:

An episode or series that airs initially as an Internet download or stream as opposed to first airing on broadcast or cable television. Entries in this category can be up to four webisodes that must advertise a product or service. Entry must be submitted as a digital upload.

48) Internet Commercials

Any commercial that is created to run on the Internet. Broadcast commercials that also receive Internet runs are not eligible in this category, unless there is substantial change in content (*see Qualifications of Competition*). Submit entry as a digital upload.

49) Branded Content & Entertainment for Online Film or Video

Original content that may or may not directly promote the brand or product but is created on behalf of the brand. All forms of audio/visual branded content and/or branded entertainment created for and distributed via online and interactive channels.

Podcast

50) Podcasts:

A digital media file, or series of such files, that is distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media or computer. Entries in this category should be podcast advertising a product or service.

7. DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Entries for categories within the Digital Advertising classification will require a digital submission only. Judging of these entries will be done online, using the digital content provided via URL or by JPEG screenshots during the online entry process.

Websites

Submit a digital video summary of 3 minutes or less, which must be digitally uploaded by the entrant (not via URL). This video should demonstrate the design and functionality of the website as well as the most important user benefits and attributes of the entry.

NOTE: The Gems judges will not be given access to the URL or screenshots, but URL and screenshots will be judged should the entry forward into Northwest competition.

51) B-to-B:

Any website created primarily for business-to-business commerce.

52) Consumer:

Any website created primarily for consumer use.

53) Microsites:

Any web page or series of pages that are part of a larger website but intended to feature specialized information. Although a microsite may have a unique message or purpose, it should support the overall parent website. When entering a microsite, indicate the direct URL of the microsite, not the main site URL of which the micro is a part.

Social Media

Entries must be submitted via URL and display within the original platform in which it delivered. Supporting screenshots will be accepted.

54) B-to-B or Consumer:

Creative execution of brand advertising, marketing and/or promotion on a single social media platform (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.).

55) Campaign:

Creative execution of brand advertising, marketing and/or promotion across multiple social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.). Entry may include 2-4 executions.

Branded Content & Entertainment

56) Branded Content & Entertainment for Online/Interactive

Original content that may or may not directly promote the brand or product, but is created on behalf of the brand. Branded Content or Branded Entertainment for any online/interactive category, excluding Online Film & Video, which should be entered in Category 49.

Advertising and Promotion

57) Banners, Rich Media or Standard:

Static or animated web banner ads regardless of size. Excluding video.

58) Email:

Single or multiple (campaign) email occurrences.

Blogs & Digital Publications

59) Blogs

Eligible blog content must support a brand or advertise a product or service.

60) Digital Publication—Single/Campaign

Online publication in support of a brand, such as annual reports, magazines, newsletters or books.

Apps, Games & Virtual Reality

Apps, Games and VR must advertise a product or service. Entries will be judged using a digital video summary of 3 minutes or less, which must be digitally uploaded by the entrant (not via URL). This summary should describe and demonstrate the design and functionality of the entry as well as the most important user benefits and attributes of the entry. Judges will not be given access to the app or VR headsets themselves.

61) Mobile App:

Interactive mobile apps for tablets, smartphones and wearable devices

62) Web-based (browser):

Interactive apps for desktop and laptop-based web browsers.

63) Games, Utilities, and/or Virtual Reality:

The computer-generated simulation of a three-dimension image or environment that can be interacted with in a seemingly real or physical way by a person using special electronic equipment.

8. COLLATERAL MATERIAL

Annual Report

64) Annual Report:

Yearly communications piece, usually with financial data, intended primarily for stockholders or members as a statement or record of a company's or organization's annual performance or status.

Brochure

65) Less than four-color, Four-color, or Campaign:

Multiple panel piece (usually folded) that advertises, presents and/or describes the advantages, capabilities, worth and/or reasons to buy a product or service.

66) Multi-page Brochure:

Multiple page/panel piece (usually bound) that advertises, presents and/or describes a company or branding initiative in more depth than a brochure.

Publication Design

67) Cover, Editorial Spread or Feature, Series, Magazine or Book Design:

Layout and design of the front exterior of a magazine, book, editorial spread or feature. Book entries should include design from cover-to-cover.

Poster

68) Single:

A single sheet, advertising or promotional piece intended for mounting and display for a product, service or event. *Note: Does not include Point-of-Purchase materials, nor any Outdoor Signage.*

69) Campaign:

2-4 of the above.

Special Event Material

70) Card, Invitation, Announcement, or Campaign:

Promotional and/or informational items, usually relating to a specific event/affair at a given location, date, time, etc. *Note: This category does not include Advertising Industry Self Promotion or Public Service entries, which must be entered in their respective categories.*

Specialty Advertising

71) Apparel:

Clothing and/or promotional apparel with an advertising message, such as shirts, caps and jackets.

72) Other merchandise:

Specialty and/or promotional products with advertising messages, including: pens, bumper stickers, umbrellas, paper-weights, etc. that are created to promote a company, corporate image, brand or event.

9. IDENTITY PROGRAMS

73) Logo or trademark design:

An icon, symbol or trademark designed to represent a product, service or organization. Entrant may submit a brief description of the client company and its purpose (max. 50 words) to help the judges understand the logo design objective.

74) Letterhead, envelope, business card:

Stationery entries in this category may contain one or more pieces of letterhead, envelope and/or business cards.

75) Packaging or Label Design:

All product and label packaging, may be a single unit or campaign that includes 2-4 packaging/label elements.

10. ELEMENTS OF ADVERTISING

Copywriting

76) Copywriting for any advertising media.

Visual

77) Illustration:

Flat, dimensional or animated illustration (crafted digitally or by traditional methods), any number of colors.

78) Photography - B&W, Color:

Photographic images utilized for any advertising media, color or black & white.

79) Photographic Illustration:

Photographic images whose content has been digitally altered to create a new image (often creating an image not possible using traditional photo techniques). Photo retouching, color correcting or photo editing alone does not qualify an image for this category. A sample of the original photo(s) MUST be supplied for proper judging.

80) Animation or Special Effects - video, film or digital:

2D or 3D visual effects, regardless of the creative method for any motion picture project that qualifies as advertising may be considered eligible, regardless of the method of distribution.

81) Cinematography:

Cinematography is defined as the art and process of creating motion picture images including considerations of lighting, photography, camera movement and angle. Cinematography for any motion picture project that qualifies as advertising may be considered eligible, regardless of the method of distribution.

Sound

82) Music only, Music with lyrics, or Sound design:

Any original musical score, with or without lyrics, which was recorded for use in any advertising and/or any combination of non-musical elements, sound effects, ambience and other sonic devices incorporated into a film or video presentation, television commercial or radio commercial to enhance the mood and/or message. Does not include music intended for purchase including music in music videos.

Digital Creative Technology

83) User Experience:

The totality of elements that make up the interface of an advertisement, brand message or campaign—including layout, visual design, text, brand, sound, responsive design, interaction, interface & navigation. Learnability, usability, usefulness, and aesthetic appeal are key factors in users' experience.

84) Innovative Use of Interactive Technology:

Creative, novel and ground-breaking uses of digital technology in the design, development and execution of an advertisement, brand message or campaign. Could include Data Driven Media, Mobile Interaction, GPS & Location Technology, and Augmented Reality.

11. SALES PROMOTION

Product or Sales Service Presentation

85) Printed Catalog or Menu:

A printed piece – usually a booklet, folder, menu or brochure to sell products or services via a “call for action” and a procedure for ordering and/or buying.

86) Printed Sales Kit, Product Info or Dealer Aid:

An informational package (folder, binder, envelope, box, etc.) usually with multiple inserts/sheets designed to advance the sale of a product/service and could include: the entire sales kit, container and inserts; the container wrapping itself; or one or more of the sales sheets, minus the container. If you enter a piece in this category, you may not enter it in the Brochure category (7 A or B). If there are additional pieces included to make a brochure a sales kit, then it can be entered into both.

Point of Purchase

87) Countertop or Free standing:

A POP piece that requires additional support or elevation for proper product or service presentation, including product hangtags.

88) Trade show or Consumer Exhibit:

Design and build-out of temporary or permanent branded tradeshow, kiosk or consumer exhibit displays.

Campaign

89) Sales Promotion Campaign:

2-4 of any of the above Sales Promotion categories.

12. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Note: Public Relations entries do not auto forward to the Northwest American Advertising Awards.

90) Open Classification for PR, submit single entries or campaigns:

Open to all categories of entry related to Public Relations (PR). Entrant may submit a brief description of the public relations project and its purpose (max. 300 words or 90 second video) to help judges understand the PR objective.

13. AD INDUSTRY SELF PROMOTION - Creative Services and Industry Services

Collateral

- 91) Brochure, Posters, Stationery Package, Newsletter, Cards, Invitations, or Announcements:
Advertising industry self-promotion stationery, invitations, point-of-sales materials, newsletters, sales kits, etc.

Print

- 92) Print, Magazines, Newspapers, etc.:
Any print advertisement promoting that agency or an ad industry entrant.

Broadcast/Digital

- 93) TV:
Broadcast television commercial to self-promote an agency or an ad industry entrant.
- 94) Radio:
Broadcast radio commercial to self-promote an agency or an ad industry entrant.
- 95) Digital:
Digital advertisement to self-promote an agency or an ad industry entrant.
- 96) Website:
Website for agency or an ad industry entrant.

Non-Traditional

- 97) Out-of-Home, Non-Traditional, Guerrilla/Ambient or Direct Marketing:
Advertising industry self-promotion using any non-traditional, out-of-home or direct marketing media. Guerrilla Marketing entries must be accompanied by proof of usage.
Entries in this category should be accompanied by a written or digital (video) summary not to exceed 250 words (written) or 90 seconds (video).

Campaign

- 98) Single or Integrated Media:
Any 2-4 of the above advertising self-promotion categories.

14. PUBLIC SERVICE

Advertisements for non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs should be entered in a Public Service category. Other Public Service submissions may include advertising in support of civic, charitable, spiritual, educational, local, state or national governmental bodies, public safety, and environmental causes.

All Public Service advertising, regardless of whether the agency creative and media placement were paid, must be entered in these categories and does not qualify for entry in any other categories.

Individual creative elements may be entered, however, in the Elements of Advertising categories.

Advertisements for arts and sciences organizations such as museums, science centers, zoos, orchestras, film & music festivals etc. should NOT be submitted in Public Service categories but only entered in the appropriate general advertising categories provided.

Broadcast/Digital

- 99) Television:
Broadcast television commercial promoting non-profit social organizations or causes, charities

or NGOs.

100) Radio:

Broadcast radio commercial promoting non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs.

101) Digital:

Digital banner ads or websites promoting non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs.

102) Audio/Visual:

Any videos, internet commercials, webisodes, or branded content promoting non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs.

Out-of-Home

103) Out-of-Home

Any Non-Traditional, Guerrilla/Ambient, out-of-home advertisement(s) promoting non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs. Guerrilla Marketing entries must be accompanied by proof of usage. Entries in this category should be accompanied by a written or digital (video) summary not to exceed 250 words (written) or 90 seconds (video).

Collateral

104) Collateral Material:

Brochure, Posters, Stationery Package, Cards, Invitations, Sales Kit, Newsletter, or Announcements promoting non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs.

105) Annual Report:

Yearly communications piece, usually with financial data, (intended primarily for stockholders or members as a statement or record of a company's or organization's annual performance or status), on behalf of non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs.

Print

106) Magazine, Newspaper, Direct Marketing or Specialty Items:

Any print advertisement promoting non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs.

Campaign

107) Campaign:

Single or Integrated campaigns containing 2 or more of the above materials and promoting non-profit social organizations or causes, charities or NGOs.

15. POTPOURRI

Note: Potpourri entries are not included for Best of Show consideration in The Gems and do not auto forward into the Northwest competition of the American Advertising Awards.

Potpourri

108) D.B. Cooper Award:

For the best ad that never saw the light of day. Any creative advertisement that was produced but never approved for publication by client.

109) Open Category:

For brand books and/or any advertising entries that do not fit into any other category of

competition. Submit single entries or campaigns.

16. COMPLETE CAMPAIGNS

Complete campaigns require the use of a consistent theme in two or more media. Entrants may submit a written or digital/video summary of the campaign not to exceed 250 words or 90 seconds.

Business-to-Business Campaign

110) Local:

B-to-B campaigns that include two (2) or more elements from any of the Gems classifications that have broadcast and/or published in only one market (one DMA). *Note: Campaigns placed in more than one DMA (even if placed on only one station or form of media) do not qualify as "local."*

111) Regional/National:

B-to-B campaigns that include two (2) or more elements from any of the Gems classifications that have broadcast and/or published in two or more local markets (DMAs), including via national broadcast, cable or satellite networks.

Consumer Campaign

112) Local:

Consumer campaigns that include two (2) or more elements from any of the Gems classifications that have broadcast and/or published in only one market (one DMA). *Note: Campaigns placed in more than one DMA (even if placed on only one station or form of media) do not qualify as "local."*

113) Regional/National:

Consumer campaigns that include two (2) or more elements from any of the Gems classifications that have aired in more than two or more local markets (DMAs) including via national broadcast, cable or satellite network.

17. STUDENT-CREATED ADVERTISING

This category is exclusively for advertising and promotional materials created by students from accredited U.S. post-secondary educational institutions. It celebrates the ingenuity and creativity of student teams in developing marketing campaigns for products, services, or events. Entries should emphasize originality, strategic thinking, and effective communication skills, with the crucial stipulation that this work is not paid work.

114) Print and Collateral Materials:

Printed promotional materials for products and services, excluding traditional mass media. This includes stationery packages, annual reports, brochures, and special event materials created by student teams.

115) Publication Design:

Layout and design of magazines or books created by student designers.

116) Direct Marketing:

Creation of materials for postal or courier delivery aimed at eliciting consumer responses. This includes specialty marketing and apparel with advertising messages, all developed by student teams.

117) Logo Design:

Design of icons, symbols, or trademarks representing a product, service, or organization by

student creators, with a brief description of the client company's purpose.

118) Magazine Advertising:

Advertising designed for periodic publications created entirely by student teams.

119) Newspaper Advertising:

Advertising for publications informing the student audience about current events or issues, exclusively created by student teams.

120) Out-Of-Home Poster:

Single-sheet advertising or promotional pieces intended for mounting and display, excluding point-of-purchase materials and outdoor signage, all created by student teams.

121) Ambient Media (Guerilla Marketing, Installations, and Events):

Unconventional advertising methods, branded environments, and event executions created by student teams with accompanying proof of usage.

122) Websites:

Design and functionality of desktop or mobile websites, developed by student teams.

123) Social Media:

Creative executions of brand advertising, marketing, and promotion on social media platforms, both single executions and campaigns, all ideated and produced by students.

124) Apps:

Mobile or web-based apps advertising products or services, with a digital summary demonstrating functionality and design, exclusively created by student teams.

125) Web Banner Ads, Blogs & Digital Publications:

Static or animated web banner ads, blog content supporting brands, and online publications in support of a brand, all produced by student teams.

126) Audio/Radio Advertising:

Commercial audio messages conveyed to students via mass media transmission, either as a single entry or a campaign, developed by student teams.

127) Video/Television Advertising:

TV commercials or executions targeting students, as a single entry or a campaign, created by student teams.

128) Integrated Campaigns:

Campaigns utilizing more than one medium, with options for integrated advertising, B-to-B campaigns, consumer campaigns, and integrated brand identity campaigns, all conceptualized and executed by student teams.