



LOOK UP THE STARS ARE CALLING.

2026 Call for Entries

Deadline for Entries – Thursday 12 February 2026

#StarAwards26 | @MarketingSocSco
www.starawards.marketingsociety.com



WELCOME/ FROM OUR AWARDS CHAIR

MARKETING SOCIETY SCOTLAND STAR AWARDS 2026 THE STARS ARE CALLING

The Star Awards celebrate excellence across Scotland's marketing community, recognising enlightened thinking, innovation and creativity.

This year, our promotional campaign *The Stars are Calling* – developed by **MULTIPLY** – is an invitation to lift our heads from the day-to-day, look up, be inspired, and transform your brightest ideas into award-winning case studies.

The Awards identify and reward marketing talent—from students in schools, colleges, and universities to rising stars and the inspirational leaders in our industry.

Collaboration is at the heart of the awards, with clients and agencies working together to craft entries before coming together to celebrate at the gala dinner. Each year we welcome new entrants from a wide range of sectors and organisations, large and small.

Each year we review our awards categories and judging criteria to ensure we retain a balance between consistency and making changes to ensure we remain in line with the dynamics of our industry. So please look out for some exciting new award categories.

As one of the objectives of the Star Awards is to demonstrate best practice across our industry, entrants are encouraged to share a copy of their entry on our website once we have announced the shortlist. This can be a redacted version if required.

The judging process is designed to be inclusive, consistent, and transparent, with all Future Leaders and Leader level members of The Marketing Society encouraged to participate.

With rising standards and an increasing number of entries, winning a Gold, Silver, or Bronze Star is a significant accolade—but being shortlisted is also an achievement in itself.

The Stars are Calling and we look forward to celebrating shining examples and exceptional talent from across our marketing community.

Victoria Best
Principal Global Brand Marketing Manager, Skyscanner
Chair of the Star Awards 2026

CATEGORIES/ AWARDS

1. DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY

- 1.1 Star School Award
- 1.2 Star Marketing Student
- 1.3 Aspiring Creative Star
- 1.4 Rising Agency Star
- 1.5 Rising Creative Star
- 1.6 Rising Marketing Star

3. COMMUNICATION CATEGORY

- 3.1 Advertising
- 3.2 Brand Experience
- 3.3 Design, Creativity and Craft
- 3.4 Digital First
- 3.5 Media
- 3.6 PR

2. STRATEGIC CATEGORY

- 2.1 Brand Development
- 2.2 International Marketing
- 2.3 Integrated Marketing
- 2.4 Marketing Planning, Research and Insights
- 2.5 Marketing in Society
- 2.6 Small Budget, Big Impact

4. SECTOR CATEGORY

- 4.1 Financial and Professional Services
- 4.2 Food and Drink
- 4.3 Leisure and Lifestyle
- 4.4 Public Sector
- 4.5 AI, Automation and Emerging Tech
- 4.6 B2B

5. CHAIRMAN'S AND CHAMPIONS CATEGORY

- 5.1 Chairman's Award for First Time Entry
- 5.2 Chairman's Award for Small and Medium sized Enterprises
- 5.3 Star Agency of the Year
- 5.4 Star Marketing Team of the Year
- 5.5 Inspirational Agency Leader of the Year
- 5.6 Inspirational Marketing Leader of the Year

PLANNING CHECK LIST/

- 1 Check out the Call for Entries brochure or website for reference and to help decide which categories you will enter.
- 2 Go to our website: www.starawards.marketingsociety.com and read through the previous shortlists, judging criteria and case studies. Start pulling together the information, results, and references for your entry.
- 3 Volunteer for judging by end of January 2026 by registering [here](#)
- 4 Please note there is a maximum of 4 judges per organisation permitted to participate as judges.
- 5 Members at Future Leader level are encouraged to score allocated entries online as a useful training and development exercise helping to appreciate how to write award winning case studies.
- 6 Join our virtual Star Awards Showcase event in December for insights and inspiration for writing winning entries.
- 7 Watch our virtual Judges Briefing Session in January for judging guidance.
- 8 Decide which Rising Stars you will nominate – Rising Creative, Rising Agency and Rising Marketing Stars. Nominate on the entry platform by February 12, 2026.
- 9 Nominations for the Champions Category – Inspirational Agency Leader and Inspirational Marketing Leader should be submitted by February 12, 2026. Nominations for these awards can also be recorded as part of a case study entry.
- 10 Make sure you submit your entries by the awards deadline of 23:59 on February 12, 2026. There will be an additional fee for late entries.
- 11 Look out for the announcements of the shortlists in April 2026.
- 12 Book your tickets for the Star Awards Celebration Dinner in Edinburgh on June 18, 2026.

ENTRY GUIDELINES/

- Refer to the scoring criteria for each category.
- 1500 is the maximum word count (not the target) and includes wording in graphs and/or infographics.
- Your word count must be shown on the front page of your entry.
If you omit to do so or exceed the word limit, you will be deducted points.
- Please give permission to provide a link to your entry on the Star Awards website to be shared after the awards dinner. Alternatively please provide a redacted version if you are shortlisted by 31 May.
- The title of your entry should have a maximum word count of 6.
- Entries should relate to work that was planned, developed, or evaluated in 2025.
- Entries should be from, or entered on behalf of, Scottish based organisations but can relate to activity anywhere in the world.
- You do not have to be a member of The Marketing Society to enter.
- Each case study can be entered in a maximum of TWO categories.
Please note this applies across agencies, so if you are working collaboratively, you will need to agree who is submitting and named in the entry.
- Ensure all details on the entry form are completed.
- Entries should be submitted in the form of a PDF document.
- The PDF should be a maximum of 10MB.
- URL links may be included in the field provided on the entry site.
Please do NOT embed them directly within your entry.
- A maximum of 2 videos can be included as separate attachments.
- Late entries will be subject to additional charges (details on page 22).

JUDGING INFORMATION/

- Members at Future Leader level are invited to be involved with the Star Awards judging and will be allocated categories to score the case studies online.
- Members at Leader level and invited judges with category insights will be invited to sit on the panels which decide the shortlists and winners.
- If you'd like to take part as a judge, please register [here](#) by the end of January 2026.
- The judging dates are 17 and 18 March and 6 May 2026. Judges will be allocated either a two-hour morning or afternoon session assessing entries where there is no conflict of interest. If there is any potential conflict of interest the judging chair should be informed at the start of the session.
- Judges must score the entries online at least 48 hours prior to attending a panel session.
- Judges can bulk download their assigned entries on the Awards system by clicking 'bulk download' at the bottom left of their judging view.
- The online scoring may influence the judging but may not determine the shortlists or winners. The average scores provided to the judging panels will include those provided by the Future Leaders member scores.
- The final decision will be made by the judging panel with the Judging Chair having the casting vote if required.
- The Judging Chair also reserves the right to recommend reviewing entries in other categories.
- A maximum of 6 entries will be shortlisted in any category.
- Gold, Silver and Bronze awards will be awarded in most categories if a minimum standard has been achieved. Entrants will be provided with their average scores, across the various judging criteria, if requested.
- Judging will be held virtually via Zoom.

**IN 2026,
WE LOOK UP.
NOT TO ADMIRE.
BUT TO IMAGINE.
AND TO MAKE
ROOM FOR THE
ONES READY TO RISE.
YOU BELONG AMONG THE STARS.**

DEVELOPMENT CATEGORY/

There is no cost to enter the Development Awards.

The Rising Marketing Star, Rising Agency Star and Rising Creative Star categories are by nomination only. If you know someone or work with a Rising Star that you would like to nominate, please do so with a nomination of 200 words here via the online platform no later than February 12, 2026

Candidates will be contacted, asked to complete a questionnaire and if shortlisted, will be invited for interview on Zoom on May 06, 2026.

1.1 STAR SCHOOL AWARD IN ASSOCIATION WITH YOUNG ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND

This award will be presented to the team of pupils that produces the best marketing strategy as part of their business plan for a new product or service developed in line with the YES Business Award involving schools throughout Scotland.

1.2 STAR MARKETING STUDENT

Star Marketing Students are nominated by universities and colleges from across Scotland and assessed at an Apprentice Day involving several team tasks as well as individual interviews. The finalists will be invited to the Star Awards Celebration Dinner with the overall winner receiving a paid placement with Edrington.

All nominated students are rewarded with a full year's membership with The Marketing Society sponsored by Edrington. *This award is sponsored by Edrington*

1.3 ASPIRING CREATIVE STAR

The Aspiring Creative Star Award has been developed to encourage entrants from all backgrounds who may be interested in a career in advertising and the range of creative disciplines in marketing communications.

The finalists will be invited to the Star Awards Celebration Dinner as well as receiving a full year's membership with The Marketing Society *sponsored by Edrington*

The overall winner of the award will be offered a paid placement at Union Direct. *This award is sponsored by Union and Union Direct*

RISING STARS/

Candidates can be of any age but should have less than 7 years' experience working in the marketing industry. Candidates should be nominated based on their achievements in 2025 and potential to become an inspirational leader.

Nominations should be less than 200 words. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a questionnaire, and interviews will take place via Zoom on May 06, 2026.

1.4 RISING AGENCY STAR

The judges will score the following areas:

- Achievements in 2025 – **40 points**
- Experience – **10 points**
- Expertise – **10 points**
- Ambition – **10 points**
- Interview – **30 points**

1.5 RISING CREATIVE STAR

The judges will score the following areas:

- Achievements in 2025 – **30 points**
- Portfolio – **20 points**
- Experience – **10 points**
- Ambition – **10 points**
- Interview – **30 points**

This award is sponsored by John Doe Group

1.6 RISING MARKETING STAR

The judges will score the following areas:

- Achievements in 2025 – **40 points**
- Experience – **10 points**
- Expertise – **10 points**
- Ambition – **10 points**
- Interview – **30 points**

This award is sponsored by StudioLR

STRATEGIC CATEGORY/

The scoring in this category has increased weighting to the strategic thinking, effective planning as well as the scale and evidence of results.

THE FOLLOWING AREAS WILL BE SCORED:

- Ambition and clarity of objectives – **15 points**
- Strategic thinking and innovative planning – **25 points**
- Effective execution and implementation of plans – **15 points**
- Scale and evidence of results – **25 points**
- Presentation of entry – **10 points**
- Quality and craft of writing – **10 points**

Projects or campaigns can be Business to Business or Business to Consumer and to an internal or external audience.

2.1 BRAND DEVELOPMENT

Submissions can cover all aspects of brand development from a new product, service or innovation to a brand extension or brand revitalisation. *This award is sponsored by VisitScotland*

2.2 INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Submissions can cover any aspect of marketing used to develop business and brands in an international market or markets.

STRATEGIC CATEGORY/

2.3 INTEGRATED MARKETING

Submissions are invited from any project or campaign that demonstrates integrated strategic and creative excellence as well as effectiveness across all communications including sales promotion and direct marketing.

2.4 MARKETING PLANNING, RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS

Submissions can cover all aspects of marketing planning and strategy from the development of resources and capabilities to market research leading to clear and useful insights.

This award is supported by Jump Research – The Marketing Society Scotland Research Partner

2.5 MARKETING IN SOCIETY

This category recognises campaigns that demonstrate both marketing effectiveness and a meaningful, positive contribution to society. Submissions are welcomed from cause related, charitable, or not-for-profit initiatives, and may address areas such as environmental sustainability, public health, and social inclusion. This includes (but is not limited to) work focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion across gender, race, LGBTQIA+ communities, disability, and mental health. *This award is sponsored by The Scottish Government*

2.6 SMALL BUDGET, BIG IMPACT

Recognises marketing campaigns that achieve exceptional results on limited budgets, demonstrating strategic creativity, efficiency, and measurable impact while maximising resources to deliver meaningful business and audience outcomes. (Eligible campaigns should have a total budget of £25,000 or less, including all creative, media, production, and associated costs.)

LOOK UP.
IF YOU LAUNCHED
SOMETHING
BRILLIANT
– SHOW US.



COMMUNICATION CATEGORY /

The Communication Category is sponsored by **essence**mediacom****

Judging criteria in this category has a greater emphasis on creative execution and implementation as well as scale and evidence of results.

THE FOLLOWING AREAS WILL BE SCORED:

- Ambition and clarity of objectives - **15 points**
- Strategic thinking and innovative planning – **15 points**
- Originality, creativity, execution, and implementation – **25 points**
- Scale and evidence of results – **25 points**
- Presentation of entry - **10 points**
- Quality and craft of writing – **10 points**

Projects or campaigns can be Business to Business or Business to Consumer and to an internal or external audience.

3.1 ADVERTISING

Recognises campaigns that combine strategic insight, creative excellence, and measurable effectiveness across all media and channels, delivering impactful, engaging advertising that drives results, resonates with audiences, and achieves clear business objectives.

3.2 BRAND EXPERIENCE

Recognises campaigns creating immersive, experiential, event-driven or sponsorship led brand experiences that engage audiences, showcase creativity, and deliver measurable impact, leaving lasting impressions through strategic, innovative, and multi-sensory execution.

3.3 DESIGN, CREATIVITY AND CRAFT

Celebrating work where creativity and skill meet precision, showcasing exceptional execution in design, copy, content, or production that brings ideas to life and delivers meaningful impact.

3.4 DIGITAL FIRST

Recognises campaigns that combine creative excellence with digital innovation, including AI, ecommerce, social media, influencer, and mobile marketing, delivering measurable impact, audience engagement, and transformative digital experiences.

3.5 MEDIA

Recognises campaigns that demonstrate strategic, creative, and effective use of media, from traditional to digital channels, delivering measurable impact, audience engagement, and results through insight-driven planning and innovative execution. *This award is sponsored by The Scotsman*

3.6 PR

Celebrates campaigns that combine strategic PR, influencer partnerships, and creator collaborations to deliver authentic engagement, creative storytelling, and measurable impact, strengthening brand reputation and achieving meaningful outcomes.

SECTOR CATEGORY /

The Sector Category *is sponsored by*  JACK RYAN

In this category the scoring will be evenly weighted across all areas.

THE FOLLOWING AREAS WILL BE SCORED:

- Strategic thinking and effective planning - **20 points**
- Originality, creativity, execution, and implementation - **20 points**
- Scale and evidence of results - **20 points**
- Presentation of entry - **10 points**
- Quality and craft of writing - **10 points**

Projects or campaigns can be Business to Business or Business to Consumer and to an internal or external audience.

4.1 FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Submissions are invited for any campaign or project that demonstrates marketing effectiveness from the financial sector and other organisations providing professional services including law, accountancy, health, architecture, education and fintech.

4.2 FOOD AND DRINK

Submissions are invited from any campaign or project that demonstrates marketing effectiveness from the food or drink sector. *This award is sponsored by Scottish Water*

4.3 LEISURE AND LIFESTYLE

Recognises marketing campaigns in tourism, culture, sport, retail, and hospitality that showcase creativity, strategic thinking, and measurable impact, delivering memorable experiences and driving engagement, growth, or awareness within the leisure and lifestyle sectors.

4.4 PUBLIC SECTOR

Submissions are invited for any campaign or project that demonstrates marketing effectiveness from public sectors organisations based in Scotland.

4.5 AI, AUTOMATION & EMERGING TECH

Recognises marketing campaigns that leverage AI, automation, or emerging technologies to drive innovation, efficiency, and measurable impact, demonstrating creative application and strategic insight in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

4.6 B2B

Recognises marketing campaigns targeting business audiences that demonstrate strategic insight, creativity, and measurable results, effectively engaging decision-makers, building relationships, and delivering tangible impact for brands, products, or services in the B2B sector.

CHAIRMAN'S AND CHAMPIONS CATEGORY/

The Chairman's & Champions Category *is sponsored by* **SUNTORY**
GLOBAL SPIRITS

5.1 CHAIRMAN'S AWARD FOR A FIRST TIME ENTRY (FTE)

The Star Awards Judging Chair will review FTEs from across all categories for this award. This award is not open for general entry.

5.2 CHAIRMAN'S AWARD FOR A SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISE (SME)

The Star Awards Judging Chair will review entries from SMEs from across all categories for this award. SME Clients must have less than 100 staff and SME Agencies must have less than 10 staff. This award is not open for general entry.

5.3 STAR AGENCY OF THE YEAR

Agencies are shortlisted based on the overall performance of their Star Awards entries and will be invited to complete a questionnaire and nominate 2 papers they wish to be considered by the final judging panel.

Star Awards performance is scored with 4 points for a Gold, 3 points for a Silver, 2 points for a Bronze and 1 point for a shortlist. This award is not open for direct entry.

THE JUDGES WILL SCORE THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Performance of Star Award papers - **40 points**
- Overall achievements and performance as an organisation – **30 points**
- Commitment to training and development – **10 points**
- Employer Brand reputation – **10 points**
- Involvement in and support of the industry – **10 points**

Shortlisted organisations will be contacted in April.

5.4 STAR MARKETING TEAM OF THE YEAR

Marketing teams are shortlisted based on the overall performance of their Star Awards entries and will be invited to complete a questionnaire and nominate 2 papers they wish to be considered by the final judging panel.

Star Awards performance is scored with 4 points for a Gold, 3 points for a Silver, 2 points for a Bronze and 1 point for a shortlist. This award is not open for direct entry.

THE JUDGES WILL SCORE THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Performance of Star Award papers - **20 points**
- Overall achievements and performance as an organisation – **20 points**
- Commitment to training and development – **20 points**
- Employer Brand reputation – **20 points**
- Involvement in and support of the industry – **20 points**
- Made a significant contribution to a Star Awards entry - **20 points**

Shortlisted organisations will be contacted in April.

5.5 INSPIRATIONAL AGENCY LEADER OF THE YEAR

This award is entered by nominations of less than 500 words. Please submit your nomination within the entry form of another category across the programme no later than February 12, 2026.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE:

- A story which is an inspiration to others – **25 points**
- Demonstrated bravery, original thinking, or outstanding leadership – **25 points**
- Shown real achievement with their agency – **25 points**
- Contributed to thought leadership in the industry – **25 points**

This award is free to enter, and shortlisted candidates will be invited to complete a questionnaire which our judging panel will use to select the winner.

CHAIRMAN'S AND CHAMPIONS CATEGORY/

5.6 INSPIRATIONAL MARKETING LEADER OF THE YEAR

This award is entered by nominations of less than 500 words. Please submit your nomination within the entry form of another category across the programme no later than February 12, 2026.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE:

- A story which is an inspiration to others – **25 points**
- Demonstrated bravery, original thinking, or outstanding leadership – **25 points**
- Shown real achievement with their brand or organisation – **25 points**
- Contributed to thought leadership in the industry – **25 points**

This award is free to enter, and shortlisted candidates will be invited to complete a questionnaire which our judging panel will use to select the winner. *This award is sponsored by Denholm*

For full entry details and judging criteria visit www.starawards.marketingsociety.com

ENTRY FEES/

	<i>Early Bird Rates 2026</i> Until 31 Dec 2025	<i>Standard Rates 2026</i> From 1 Jan – 12 Feb 2026
Member of The Marketing Society	£205.50	£230.00
Member of The Marketing Society SME*	£189.50	£210.00
Non-Member	£243.50	£270.00
Non-Member SME*	£225.50	£250.00
Not for Profit Organisations	£189.50	£210.00

* less than 100 employees for client and less than 10 for agency.

There is no cost for the schools, students and individual nominations in the Development and Champions Categories.

EXTENSION FEES/

EXTENSION FEES

There will be an additional fee for those seeking an extension to the deadline.

These will be priced as follows:

- **One-week extension:** Additional £50 + VAT (deadline February 19, 2026) per entry
- **Two-week extension:** Additional £100 + VAT (deadline February 26, 2026) per entry

FIRST TIME ENTRY

If the organisation has never entered the Star Awards, their first entry is half price.
Please select '*first time entry*' when submitting your award and it will discount the fee automatically.

MEMBER BENEFITS

The Marketing Society is a not-for-profit organisation which operates for the benefit of its members. Any surplus made with these awards is reinvested to the benefit of the members in Scotland. Join now to benefit from members entry and ticket rates.
Contact Anna Barber annab@marketingsociety.com for details on membership.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

If you are interested in getting involved as a sponsor please get in touch with Partnership Manager, Pippa Barker pippa@luxevents.co.uk

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the entry or judging process or the Awards in general, please get in touch with Lux Events marketingsociety@luxevents.co.uk

THE STARS ARE CALLING.

Submit your work now





Communication Category Partner

essence**mediacom**

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