



**2026 D Show**

# **CATEGORIES & ENTRY GUIDELINES**

## ABOUT THE D SHOW AWARDS

The D Show recognizes the amazing breadth and depth of the creative talent in Detroit.

It's true, we create a lot of really great work, and the D Show is designed to be a celebration of ideas that are conceptually amazing AND well executed.

It's that super-powerful and uber-magical combination of both that will earn you that highly coveted D award.

In each and every category, and for our Best Of Show, we truly want it to be all about honoring the creamiest of the crop. So, may the best idea, executed the best, win.



## WHO CAN AND SHOULD ENTER

The D Show call for entries is proudly open to any Detroit-based agency, client, design studio, media shop, broadcaster, publisher, production house, freelancer, student artist or individual responsible for the development and/or execution of creative work.

All work must fall within the outlined categories (more to come on these in a sec). All entries must have been first published, posted or aired in their original form between **January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025** in a form of media and/or exposed to a substantial audience.

The creative concept must have roots in Detroit, whether it's work from a Detroit-based agency, production company, or post facility for a Detroit-based client. The D Council reserves the right to request proof of initial publication, posting or airdate, as well as proof of creation or production dates. Any submissions that have been previously entered in the D Show and are materially unchanged will not be eligible.



## JUDGING

Winning a D Show award is kind of a big deal.

That's because we have a wide variety of kick-ass judges from a wide variety of big-name agencies, hot design firms, cool creative boutiques, and killer production companies from across the U.S. and around the world.

Oh, and we tell all of our judges to not pull any punches. We want them to hold the work coming out of the D to a global standard, and insist they treat the work as if they were judging the biggest name brand award show ... because they are!



## 2026 KEY DATES

**December 11, 2025**

Entries Open

**February 13, 2026**

First Entry Deadline

**February 27, 2026**

Extension Deadline / Final Entry

**April 13, 2026**

Nominations announced

**June 11, 2026**

D Show at Gem Theatre

*Follow @AdcraftDetroit on social media for the most up-to-date info on D Show 2026.*



## ENTRY FEES

Entering early, often and in multiple categories is encouraged.

## SINGLE OR CAMPAIGN

\$175 // Dec. 11, 2025 – Feb.13, 5 p.m. ET

### Extension Pricing

\$250 // 5:01 p.m. on Feb. 13 – Feb. 27, 2026– 5:00 PM EST

## INTEGRATED CAMPAIGN

\$325 // Dec. 11, 2025 – Feb. 13, 2026, 5 p.m. ET

### Extension Pricing

\$400 // 5:01 p.m. on Feb. 13 – Feb. 27, 2026– 5:00 PM EST

## STUDENT ENTRIES & 1<sup>st</sup> Time Entries

Free



## ENTRY SPECS

### VIDEO

Upload standard definition or HD video files. Maximum video file size is 1GB.

Iceberg, our online entry system provider, is powered by Vimeo. Use this URL for video compression recommendations directly from Vimeo to ensure your videos are presented as clearly as possible: <https://vimeo.com/help/compression>.

### AUDIO

Upload an uncompressed audio file like .WAV files or compressed audio like .MP3 files. Maximum audio file size is 25MB.

### IMAGE

Attach image files including .GIF, .JPG or .PNG files. Maximum image file size is 25MB.

### DOCUMENT

Use the document fields to upload any .PDF files. Maximum document file size is 25MB.

### URL

Attach a URL/website address to your entry. (It does not matter if you include http or https before it.)

**CATEGORIES**



## 2026 ENTRY CATEGORIES

Each piece of work entered in a category can win a D Show award – and if it does, it will have also a chance to win a “Best Of” D Award for that category. Plus, each Best Of category winner is then considered for the Best Of Show award. Below are the categories. (Descriptions are on the following pages.)

- |                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Audio Marketing            | 14. Integrated Campaigns |
| 2. Creative B2B               | 15. Low Budget           |
| 3. Born in Detroit            | 16. Print                |
| 4. Branded Entertainment      | 17. Social Impact        |
| 5. Craft                      | 18. Student              |
| 6. Creative Use of Media      | 19. Video                |
| 7. Creative Use of PR         |                          |
| 8. Creative Use of Technology |                          |
| 9. CRM                        |                          |
| 10. Detroit Love              |                          |
| 11. Digital                   |                          |
| 12. D-Versity                 |                          |
| 13. Experiential              |                          |



## AUDIO MARKETING

Yep, this category used to be call “radio,” but now there so many ways we use sound and audio to get our marketing messages out there –radio spots (including digital radio), original music, jingles, branded podcasts, podcast pre, mid and post rolls, branded audio books and storytelling -even audio that brings a physical experience to life. If it’s music to people’s ears (sometimes literally, and definitely metaphorically) it gets entered here.



## CREATIVE B2B

This category recognizes outstanding creativity in the business-to-business sector. Work can be entered as Ambient & Activation, E-Commerce, Design, Digital, Print, & Video.

Photo from the [Detroit News Archives](#)



## BORN IN DETROIT

If Detroit is known for one thing, it's innovation. Detroiters have invented so many new ways to see and experience the world and solve modern problems, their stories literally fill library shelves.

This is an award for ideas that are groundbreaking, innovative, and at-the-root problem solving of specific brand or consumer challenges. This could be anything from creating a brand-new product, consumer experience or using technology in a totally new way.

Basically, if you've dreamt it and then turned it into reality, enter it here.





## BRANDED ENTERTAINMENT

Branded Entertainment recognizes the merging of advertising and entertainment content. It includes work that is built around a brand or product and goes beyond traditional product placement or sponsorship.

Photo by [Clément M.](#) on [Unsplash](#)



## CRAFT

A lot of times, the execution of the best big ideas all comes down to the attention paid to even the smallest of details. The colors, the sound, the words, the pace, the art and design, every part, every piece, every pixel painstakingly considered.

In this category, the judges will be asked to truly focus on those very details, be it the color correction, sound design, music choice (original score or the perfectly chosen licensed track), photography, or maybe the fantastic frame f\*cking that went into the edit, any or all of it that helped create something we can all agree (or at least the judges do) is well crafted. When you enter, you'll be asked to check a box for what part of the craft the judges should really focus on.

### SUB-CATEGORIES:

- Editing
- Cinematography
- Graphic Design
- Original Music
- Sound Design
- Motion Post (Including CGI, FX, Color)



## CREATIVE USE OF MEDIA

Sometimes the best ideas come from the wacky or interesting ways you develop work for a specific platform or media channel. If you came up with a killer way to make your brand stand out in a social feed or used a podcast to launch a new car or Tik Tok to convince kids to eat green beans, you should enter it here.

Photo by [Andre Hunter](#) on [Unsplash](#)







## CREATIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Groundbreaking creative ideas often need a whole new way to really stick the landing. Technology provides new mediums and tools for creative expression. It enables creativity to be more immersive, interactive, and personalized than ever before. It offers new ways to tell stories, evoke emotions, and connect with audiences. Creative Use of Technology recognizes work for which technology played an integral role in defining or communicating the brand's message.



## CREATIVE USE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Strategies and ideas that use PR methods as creative tools. Judges will be looking for innovative and creative 'PR first' ideas – those which prioritize the effective use of PR strategy to communicate the brand message.





## CRM

What happens after you grab the attention of the masses with those shiny broadcast spots or that hilarious social campaign? CRM, baby. This category is dedicated to the work that keeps the love alive between brand and audience, from that initial moment of awareness to that sweet, sweet moment of purchase. From email, SMS/MMS, website, social and OLA - anything your client or brand defines as “relationship building” can be entered here.







## DETROIT LOVE

Work that promotes or elevates our great city of Detroit. Ideas that promote our culture, work ethic, history and/or vibe. This work can be viewed locally or nationally. Video. Print. Social. Cause Marketing, Promotional, Event and Experiential. You made it. Enter it.

# DIGITAL

Yes, it seems this digital thing is really catching on and likely here to stay, so good thing there are plenty of talented folks who are doing a lot of great stuff that engages their audiences on devices and their respective platforms. By devices, we're talking about things like smart phones and computers and platforms including sites, social things like Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat.

## SUB-CATEGORIES:

- Website
- Online Advertising
- Social - Tik Tok / Facebook / Twitter / Instagram, Snapchat etc.
- Mobile

Photo by [Federica Galli](#) on [Unsplash](#)





## D-VERSITY

Recognizes an inclusive campaign that demonstrates a deep understanding of a specific diverse or multicultural consumer groups including consumers of color, race, gender, age, differently abled individuals, LGBTQIA+ and immigrants.

Photo by Northernstar-online.com



# EXPERIENTIAL

You should enter here if your idea is something that is 'experienced' - you know, like events, business conferences, trade shows, pop-up stores a festival or similar with a great idea at the center of it all. This category is a celebration of the best “live” experiences in real life or virtual, perhaps utilizing technology within the experience to reach a wider audience and deliver a measurable game-changing result for your clients. (not about results)

## SUB-CATEGORIES:

- Website
- Online Advertising
- Social - Tik Tok / Facebook / Twitter / Instagram, Snapchat etc.
- Mobile

Photo by [Melissa Askew](#) on [Unsplash](#)







## INTEGRATED CAMPAIGNS

Some of our best work and best ideas live in a multitude of mediums, so we want to be sure to give props to those who come up with the ideas big enough to be great across them all. These campaigns must have found a home in at least three different mediums. This is where a really great case study video can do wonders for your chances.





## LOW BUDGET

Yeah, there are still the occasional jobs that have big (or at least pretty decent) budgets, but it's becoming a lot more typical for us to be calling in favors and trying to find ways to stretch a few modest bucks to create something remarkable.

We believe these low-dollar, still-big-idea efforts should be rewarded – and not asked to go head-to-head with those chosen few jobs that are still properly funded.

### SUB-CATEGORIES:

- TV/Video/Moving Picture: All in under **\$50K**
- Print: All in under **\$5K**
- Audio Marketing: All in under **\$10K**
- Integrated: All in under **\$50K**



## PRINT

If it was printed, whether it be offset, digital, screen or other, you can enter it here. That means magazine or newspaper ads (of any size, and again, it could be a single execution or campaign), OOH, POS, posters, even direct mail.

Photo by [Bank Phrom](#) on [Unsplash](#)



## SOCIAL IMPACT

Coming up with (and often pro bono-ing) big ideas and amazing work (in any form or medium) to help a worthy cause, company or charity/non-profit promote its mission to make the world a better place is indeed a noble deed. And we think the greatest of this good works stuff should get a big ol' shout out and be rewarded with a heavy metal D.

Photo by [Marco Bianchetti](#) on [Unsplash](#)





# STUDENT

Easily one of our favorite categories, as it's always amazing to see the incredible ideas that the next gen of ad folks are coming up with – whether it's an official part of a school project or something they just did all on their own as a student side hustle. Not only are we continually impressed with the thinking and bigness of these ideas, but how truly resourceful students can be when it comes to executing them and making them feel like work done for real clients – because sometimes they are.

## SUB-CATEGORIES:

- [Print](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Social](#)
- [Integrated](#)







## VIDEO

This includes any moving picture, be it a TV spot, online video or video work shown in another context.

### SUB-CATEGORIES:

- TV/Broadcast Under :60
- TV/Broadcast :60 and Over
- Non-Broadcast/Digital Under :60
- Non-Broadcast/Digital :60 and Over

## QUESTIONS?

Please shoot any questions regarding entries, categories, really anything D Show-related to:

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**THANKS. AND GOOD LUCK.**