Ad Age 40 Under 40

Awards entry kit 2026

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What is the Ad Age 40 Under 40 Program?
It is an annual list of 40 people who have been responsible for helping to advance a business or a brand at an advertiser, agency, media, tech or marketing company in a demonstrable way within the past 12 months.

When will Ad Age publish the next class of 40 Under 40?
The 40 Under 40 honorees will be announced on **AdAge.com** on Oct. 19, 2026.

What's new this year?
We're excited to announce the return of our mentorship program with Columbia University School of Professional Studies. The program is designed to address the industry's challenges around recruitment and retention, and create impactful connections between students and rising leaders from the Ad Age 40 Under 40 class of 2026. Entrants will have the opportunity to opt into the program in the entry form. For additional information, please email **awards@adage.com**.

When do nominations begin?
The nominations open May 18 and close on July 23. When nominations are open, the link to enter can be found on the **AdAge.com/40U40** award site.

What are the qualifications for 40 Under 40?
We are looking for people who will be 39 and under on Oct. 19, 2026 who have made a significant contribution to the worlds of media, tech, advertising or marketing within the last year. We are looking for paradigm breakers, smart thinkers and thought-leaders who are really making a difference and who are poised to climb company ladders. The goal is to identify the people who are reshaping marketing and making important contributions to a company or business. International entrants are accepted.

What does the entry form require?
The entry form asks for details about the nominee's role, work and measurable impact within the eligibility period. Specifically, entrants must provide:

- Eligibility window: All work, initiatives and contributions must have debuted or run between July 1, 2025 and July 23, 2026.
- Current role and scope of responsibility: What the nominee does today and what they are responsible for (such as teams, products, platforms, campaigns, clients, regions or functional areas), including length of time in the role.
- Key work, initiatives or contributions: The most significant work, campaigns, projects or initiatives the nominee led or played a major role in during the eligibility period.
- Evidence of impact or outcomes: Up to three results or indicators of impact from this work. Quantitative metrics are preferred where available and may include performance or growth indicators, reach and engagement, business outcomes or notable milestones.
- Career context: A brief, factual summary of the nominee's career path, including prior roles or companies as relevant.
- Supporting materials (optional): Additional materials such as case studies, creative examples or links to live work that help illustrate the nominee's contributions. These should add context rather than repeat information already provided. Accepted formats include .doc, .pdf, .jpg, .mov and .mp4, with a maximum upload size of 2GB (or a link for larger files).

Who decides who will be in 40 Under 40?
A panel of Ad Age editors and reporters.

How can I nominate someone for 40 Under 40?
Nominations must be submitted online at **AdAge.com/40U40**. The entry fee is tiered; all pricing is in U.S. dollars.

- Regular pricing $375 per entry. Ends June 22, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET
- Final deadline pricing $425 per entry. Ends July 23, 2026, at 5 p.m. ET

Will I be informed if my nominee was not selected?
No. Only selected nominees will be informed in advance of publication of the annual 40 Under 40 feature.

If I have not heard from Ad Age by mid-September, does that mean my nominee was not selected?
That would be a fair assumption, but not all honorees will be contacted. For questions please reach out to **awards@adage.com**.

Can an executive be honored as a 40 Under 40 multiple years?
No, a 40 Under 40 recognition is a one-time honor.

Can I just call you or send you an email with the name of the person I'd like to nominate?
No. We need to have the online entry form filled out, including contact information for the person you are nominating and the fee must be paid.

Can I self-nominate?
Absolutely! Judges look at those who self-nominate in exactly the same way as a nominee who was nominated.

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I want to nominate my boss, but would it be better if someone higher up nominated him? Can I nominate a family member?
You can nominate yourself, a client, a family member, your boss, an employee or an acquaintance. The most important thing is that you state a clear, business-oriented reason for the nomination.

Will more than one nominee from the same company be accepted?
You can nominate multiple executives from one company, but it is more than likely that only one will be chosen. However, multiple candidates from separate divisions of large conglomerates could be chosen. No team entries will be accepted.

I would like to nominate someone, but they will turn 40 before your publication date. Can I still nominate that person?
No. Nominations for anyone who does not meet the age requirement are not eligible.

How does the process work?
After we receive a nomination, reporters and editors vet the candidates. The editors and reporters then hold a series of meetings to determine which candidates will be chosen, usually from several hundred nominees. We strive to come up with a diverse and inclusive list that represents a broad spectrum of the industries we cover.

What is required of those who are selected?
Candidates who are selected must make themselves available for an interview with a reporter if applicable. Not all honorees are contacted before the announcement. Honorees will be asked to verify their age, for a recent headshot and any other pertinent information our reporters need to do a write up for the issue.

Can I contact you to see how my nominee is doing in the judging process?
No. We don't give status reports. If we need any further information, we will contact you. Please be patient.

I was not picked for 40 Under 40. Can you tell me why?
With hundreds of candidates and only 40 honorees, the majority of hopefuls will not be chosen. We cannot explain why you weren't picked because it won't be for any one reason, and may be for reasons that have to do with presenting a diverse range of professions and industries.

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Ad Age 40 Under 40

The 40 Under 40 program (the Program) is sponsored by Ad Age (the Sponsor), a business unit of Crain Communications Inc., 685 Third Ave., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10017 (Ad Age).

Eligibility

The Program is open to anyone in the industry who meets the General Requirements posted for the 40 Under 40 program. Employees of the Sponsor, their affiliates and members of their immediate families are not eligible. Eligibility is subject to change each year.

How to enter

Instructions on how to enter are posted on **AdAge.com/40U40**. Entries must comply with the instructions for the applicable Program. Entries into the competition are subject to a tiered pricing system, with standard fees for regular deadline entries, and additional fees for final deadline entries. You can submit as many entries as you would like. All entries must be received through our awards website. As a reminder, anything in an entry will be considered potentially public information. There's no space for explicitly confidential information, and we ask entrants to anticipate that anything in their entry could become public—mostly because we don't want to wind up trying to honor a winner without being able to tell anyone why we want to honor them. Entries will not be acknowledged or returned. Entries will be accepted until July 23, 2026 at 5 p.m. ET.

All work entered into 2026 Ad Age 40 Under 40 must be work that was legitimately created, commissioned and executed as described. This includes any use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools or processes in preparing entry forms, which must be transparently disclosed and accurately represented. Exaggerated results, inaccurate financials, misleading or fabricated case studies, speculative work presented as real, or undisclosed/inauthentic use of AI are grounds for disqualification. Ad Age may request verification at any point in the process and reserves the right to disqualify entries or bar future participation for any violations.

Certification/Acknowledgment/Consent

EACH ENTRANT CERTIFIES THAT THE MATERIALS SUBMITTED IN CONNECTION WITH THIS PROGRAM (INCLUDING ARTWORK, IMAGERY AND IDEAS) ARE THE ORIGINAL WORKS OF THE ENTRANT. ENTRANTS RETAIN THE COPYRIGHT AND OTHER INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INTERESTS IN THEIR MATERIALS. HOWEVER, EACH ENTRANT ACKNOWLEDGES AND IRREVOCABLY CONSENTS THAT ANY AND ALL MATERIALS SUCH ENTRANT SUBMITS FOR THIS PROGRAM MAY BE REPRODUCED, DISPLAYED, PUBLISHED (INCLUDING IN PRINT AND DIGITAL FORMATS), ARCHIVED (IN PRINT AND DIGITAL DATABASES) AND OTHERWISE FREELY USED WITHOUT LIMITATION OR RESTRICTION BY AD AGE, CRAIN COMMUNICATIONS INC, AND ITS PARTNERS AND AFFILIATES IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROGRAM. EACH ENTRANT ACKNOWLEDGES AND IRREVOCABLY CONSENTS TO THE USE OF ENTRY INFORMATION IN PUBLICATIONS, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL WEBSITES, ADVERTISING AND IN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE PROGRAM, UNLESS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

Winning

All category wins are at the discretion of our judges. Judges have the right to not select a winner if they feel materials submitted did not meet the standards, creativity or other qualities they are looking for in entries. The decisions of Ad Age and the judges are final and binding in all matters relating to this Program, including interpretation and application of the rules. For 40 Under 40, the program should produce 40 honorees. No duo or team entries will be accepted. This Program is based on the quality and other factors determined by the judges of the materials submitted and winning depends on the views of the judges. Winning is not based on the number of eligible responses received and Ad Age cannot predict the number of entrants who will participate in the Program.

General conditions

All entrants agree to release Ad Age, sponsors and its partners and affiliates from any and all claims and liability with respect to and in any way arising from participating in the Program, accepting of any award, prize(s), or technical, hardware, software or other failures of any kind, cost or unavailable network connections, incomplete, garbled or delayed transmissions, injury or damage to an entrant's or third person's computer, whether caused by Ad Age, sponsors, entrants, users or by any of the equipment or programming associated with or by any technical or human error which may occur in the processing of submissions which may damage an entrant's system or limit an entrant's ability to participate in the Program. Ad Age reserves the right to modify or cancel all or any part of the Program for any reason at its sole discretion with a refund of the applicable entry fee paid as the sole remedy for any entrant.

Subject to applicable laws, entrants irrevocably grant to Ad Age, Program sponsors and their successors, assigns and sub-licensees the right and permission to use their name, voice, likeness and/ or biographical material for advertising, promotional and/or publicity purposes in connection with the Program, in all forms of media and by any and all means and media (now and hereafter known), and on and in connection with related products, services, advertising and promotional materials (now known or hereafter developed), worldwide, in perpetuity, without any obligation, notice or consideration except for the awarding of the prize(s) to the Grand Prize Winner. All entrants agree to comply fully with each provision in the Program rules. Any person attempting to defraud or in any way tamper with the Program and any person who does not comply with the Program rules, will be ineligible for any award or prize. Program void where prohibited or restricted by law.