Ad Age Mid Size Brand Leaders

Entry kit 2026

Honoring the CMOs and marketing executives driving growth at mid-sized brands.

Ad Age Mid Size Brand Leaders recognizes senior marketers delivering measurable results at mid-sized companies—where teams are lean, budgets are tight and every decision has outsized impact. This honor spotlights CMOs, VPs and heads of marketing at brands with approximately $50 million to $1 billion in annual gross revenue—recognizing leaders driving growth and navigating complexity without the scale or resources of enterprise brands.

Honorees are featured on AdAge.com and recognized at the Ad Age Business of Brands summit in September. They also join The List—Ad Age's community of honorees across programs—creating opportunities to connect with peers across marketing, media and technology.

Entries open April 6, 2026 and close June 1, 2026. Honorees will be notified in July.

2026 Mid Size Brand Leaders Entry Requirements

Ad Age Mid Size Brand Leaders

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

All work and impact must have occurred between Jan. 1, 2025 and April 30, 2026.

Work may have launched prior to this period or continue beyond it, but entries must demonstrate meaningful impact within the eligibility window. Results outside this timeframe may be included only as context to help judges assess the significance of outcomes achieved during the eligibility period.

Work that falls entirely outside this period will not be considered.

All information submitted is considered publishable. The information included in your entries should be suitable for publication by the time honorees are announced in September 2026. This means anything in the entry can be published on Ad Age—any information marked confidential will be discarded and not considered in the judging.

Please note we require all entrants to disclose the use of AI and confirm the accuracy of information submitted. Work entered must be work that was legitimately created, commissioned and executed as described. Exaggerated results, inaccurate financials, misleading or fabricated case studies, speculative work presented as real 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.

TECHNICAL SPECS

File uploads must be 2GB or less. If your file is larger than 2GB, please provide a link and ensure it remains accessible through September 2026.

Keep in mind that the judges see a lot of work, so you want any videos and/or case studies to be short and sweet. Two to five minutes is recommended; anything approaching 10–15 minutes is unlikely to be reviewed in full.

WHAT MAKES FOR A STRONG ENTRY

Strong entries clearly demonstrate the nominee's direct role in driving measurable business impact. The most competitive submissions are specific, concise and supported by clear outcomes—showing not just what was executed, but how the nominee's decisions influenced results.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Describing team or company work without clarifying the nominee's role
- Including metrics without context or clear outcomes
- Submitting work that falls outside the eligibility period
- Providing overly long or unfocused supporting materials

THE ENTRY FORM

The entry form asks for information about the nominee's role, leadership and measurable impact. Entries should clearly distinguish the nominee's individual contributions from broader team or company efforts.

COMPANY INFO

- **Company revenue:** Annual gross revenue refers to the company's approximate total revenue before expenses. Use your company's approximate annual gross revenue in USD or USD-equivalent. Estimates are acceptable; financial documentation is not required.
- **Industry/category:** Primary industry or business category of the brand

ROLE, LEADERSHIP & IMPACT

- **Current role and scope of responsibility (200 words):** Describe the nominee's current role, including team size, budget oversight, business or brand responsibility and decision-making authority. Include any relevant context that helps define the scale and complexity of their role.
- **Leadership impact and results (200 words):** Describe how the nominee has led during the eligibility period, including key strategic decisions, initiatives and priorities. Focus on how their leadership shaped business or brand outcomes, not just what was executed.
- **Key results (up to three):** Provide up to three measurable outcomes achieved during the eligibility period. Include specific metrics such as revenue growth, market-share movement, acquisition, retention or efficiency gains.

  Each example should be concise and include a clear result (e.g., % growth, dollar impact, scale or reach).
- **Career background (optional, 150 words):** A brief, factual summary of the nominee's career path and notable prior roles or milestones.
- **Quote from the nominee (optional, 100 words):** One quote that may be published as submitted.
- **A headshot of the nominee**
- **Signature initiative:** Describe one initiative the nominee led that best represents their impact. Focus on the nominee's role, key decisions and measurable results achieved.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Provide up to three examples of work that illustrate the nominee's impact. For each example, you may include a link or upload supporting materials such as images, video or case studies.

2026 Mid Size Brand Leaders Submission Guideline FAQs

Ad Age Mid Size Brand Leaders

Who is eligible for Ad Age Mid Size Brand Leaders?

Senior marketers working in-house at brands or brand-led businesses with approximately $50 million to $1 billion in annual gross revenue (USD or USD-equivalent) are eligible. Entries outside this range may be considered at the judges' discretion if the brand operates at a comparable scale.

Eligible roles include CMO, VP of marketing, head of marketing, chief growth officer or equivalent senior titles. We also recognize leaders responsible for marketing strategy and growth, regardless of formal title—including founders or executives who directly oversee go-to-market efforts. Nominees must have driven meaningful brand or business impact during the eligibility period, between Jan. 1, 2025 and April 30, 2026.

Agency executives and independent consultants are not eligible.

Do nominees need to be based in the U.S.?

No. Executives may work anywhere in the world, but entries must be submitted in English.

What counts as a mid-size brand?

For this program, mid-size brands typically fall between $50 million and $1 billion in annual gross revenue, reflecting companies with meaningful business complexity but without the resources of enterprise brands.

Use your company's approximate annual gross revenue in USD or USD-equivalent. A best estimate is sufficient; documentation is not required. Brands operating at a comparable scale may be considered at the judges' discretion.

Can I nominate someone who leads a business unit within a larger company?

Yes. Eligibility is based on what the nominee actually leads day to day. Entries may represent a specific brand, region or business unit within a larger company, as long as that part of the business operates at a mid-market scale and the nominee has direct responsibility for marketing strategy and results. The size of the parent company alone does not determine eligibility. Please include relevant revenue or scope context in your entry.

What does the entry form require?

The entry form asks for details on the nominee's current role and scope, leadership impact, measurable results and one signature initiative, along with supporting materials.

What metrics should be included?

Metrics should demonstrate measurable business or brand impact. Examples include revenue performance, market-share movement, channel efficiency, customer acquisition and retention or brand strength indicators.

What results can I include?

Results must reflect performance achieved between Jan. 1, 2025 and April 30, 2026. Results outside this period may be included only as context and will not be considered in judging.

How should revenue be calculated?

Revenue refers to the approximate annual gross revenue of the brand, region or business unit the nominee leads. Entrants do not need to submit financial statements; estimates are acceptable.

Can I include confidential information?

No. All submitted information is considered publishable and may appear on AdAge.com. Do not include proprietary or confidential data.

How much does it cost to enter?

The entry fee is $425 per entry. Each nominee must be entered separately. Team entries are not permitted.

When is the 2026 deadline?

Entries open April 6, 2026. The deadline for all entries is June 1, 2026 at 5 p.m. ET.

When will honorees be announced?

Final winners will be notified in July 2026. Honorees will be featured on AdAge.com in September and recognized at the 2026 Ad Age Business of Brands event in Chicago.

Important info

All information included should be publishable by the time the honorees are announced in September 2026. Any information noted as "not for public" or "off the record" cannot factor into the juries' evaluation. Any requests to remove details from an entry during or after judging may result in disqualification.

Entries should accurately represent real, legitimately created work. Exaggerated results, inaccurate financials, misleading or fabricated case studies or speculative work presented as real may be subject to disqualification. Ad Age may request verification at any point in the process.

AI disclosure

Entrants are required to disclose whether artificial intelligence (AI) was used to help prepare the submission itself—including writing, editing or generating any part of the written entry, case study video, mockups or supporting materials. This disclosure applies to the submission materials only and does not refer to AI used in the work or campaigns entered. The disclosure is intended to provide transparency around how submission materials were created and presented.

2026 Mid Size Brand Leaders Terms and Conditions

Ad Age Mid Size Brand Leaders

The Mid Size Brand Leaders 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 Mid Size Brand Leaders 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/MidSizeLeaders. Entries must comply with the instructions for the applicable Program. Entries are subject to tiered pricing, with standard fees through the final deadline and additional processing fees for submissions received afterward. Fees are non-refundable once entries are submitted. The dates and entry prices are subject to change each year. You can submit as many entries as you would like. All entries must be received through the awards website at AdAge.com/MidSizeLeaders.

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 June 1, 2026 at 5 p.m. ET.

All work entered into the 2026 Ad Age Mid Size Brand Leaders 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. 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), world-wide, 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.