



 **YouTube Works Awards**

# **Submission Guide**



YouTube Works Awards 2026: Netherlands

# A Guide to the YouTube Works Awards 2026: Netherlands

Welcome to your official guide for the YouTube Works Awards 2026! This guide contains everything you need to know to create a winning submission, from understanding the categories to mastering the submission process.

## What are the YouTube Works Awards?

The YouTube Works Awards celebrate and champion the brilliant minds producing the most innovative and effective campaigns on YouTube in the Netherlands over the past year. It's a platform to honor the incredible digital content that drives powerful results.

New for 2026: We're introducing an exciting change to how we award our highest honor, the Grand Prix. While our expert jury will select the winners for each of the five categories, these winners will then go head-to-head in a public vote to decide the ultimate Grand Prix champion. The winner will be crowned live on stage at the YouTube Festival, making this prize a symbol of both industry excellence and public acclaim.

### Key Dates

Submissions Open	April 8, 2026
Submissions Close	May 6, 2026
Category Winners Announced	June 18, 2026
Grand Prix Public Voting	June 18 - September 10, 2026
Grand Prix Winner Announced	September 10, 2026 (Live at YouTube Festival)

## Categories & KPIs: Your Blueprint for a Winning Entry

This section combines the description of each category with the specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) you'll need to prove your case. Use this as your blueprint for building a compelling submission.

### New! AI Visionary

**The Story:** This category celebrates pioneers who used Google AI to achieve something previously impossible, breaking the traditional constraints of time, budget, or human capability.

**The Challenge:** Show how Google AI turned a “what if” into a reality, such as hyper-personalizing thousands of assets, creating world-class visuals without filming, or using real-time data to weave cultural signals into ads.

**The Rule:** Your campaign must have used a core Google AI tool (like Gemini, Veo, or Demand Gen) as its strategic engine.

**Winning Criteria:** Judges are looking for the “Difference Maker”—would the campaign have been even a fraction as ambitious without Google AI?

#### How to Prove Your Case with KPIs

**Core Narrative:** Demonstrating a quantum leap. The story must prove how Google AI was the essential engine that allowed your campaign to overcome fundamental constraints.

#### Primary KPIs (The “Quantum Leap” Story):

- For Unprecedented Creative Production: Prove effectiveness with Production Cost & Time Savings and strong Creative Performance (Brand Lift, VTR).
- For Massive Scale & Personalization: Showcase the Volume of Unique Assets Deployed and the direct Lift from Personalization (Conversion Lift, Brand Lift).
- For Real-Time Cultural Relevance: Highlight your Speed to Market and the Relevance-Driven Performance (CTR, VTR) of your ads.

#### Secondary KPIs (The “Business Case” Story):

- Sales Impact & ROAS
- Reach & Impressions

### The Underdog

**The Story:** This category honors small-to-medium brands (SMBs) that out-thought rather than out-spent the competition, using limited resources to create an outsized impact.

**The Challenge:** Explain how you turned a modest budget into a major market result through clever insights or strategic shortcuts.

**The Rule:** Include the total campaign cost (creative / PR and Media) in your submission.

**Winning Criteria:** Judges will look for “Resourceful Brilliance”—how a sharp audience insight and smart use of YouTube delivered results that would normally require a big-brand budget.

#### How to Prove Your Case with KPIs

**Core Narrative:** Proving exceptional efficiency with limited resources.

#### Primary KPIs (The “Efficiency Story”):

- Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)
- Cost Per Acquisition (CPA) / Cost Per Conversion
- Conversion Volume & Rate

#### Secondary KPIs (The “Market Impact Story”):

- Brand Lift & Search Lift
- Click-Through Rate (CTR)

## Creative Excellence

**The Story:** This award honors creative ideas that prove a brand truly “speaks” YouTube, creating work that people choose to watch, not skip.

**The Challenge:** Show how your creative execution mastered the YouTube canvas, using the platform’s unique language or culture to turn viewers into fans.

**Winning Criteria:** “Resonance over Polish” is key. The winner will be the campaign that best leveraged YouTube’s unique environment to drive a massive business result.

## Masterful Media Planning

**The Story:** This category honors the strategists who prove that how and where a story is told is as important as the story itself. It recognizes campaigns that took a “media-first” approach.

**The Challenge:** Demonstrate how your media strategy turned YouTube into an indispensable growth engine, perhaps by remixing creative across formats like Shorts, long-form, and CTV.

**The Rule:** Submissions must articulate a clear “Media Unlock,” such as a novel audience insight, a contextual masterstroke, or a sophisticated multi-format orchestration.

**Winning Criteria:** Judges are looking for “Media Ingenuity.” The winning campaign will feel like a unified symphony across devices, where the media plan directly amplified business results.

## Changemakers

**The Story:** This award celebrates brands that use YouTube’s cultural influence to drive real progress on social or environmental issues.

**The Challenge:** Show how you used YouTube’s storytelling power to lead on a cultural issue that matters, from sustainability and social justice to diversity and inclusion.

**Winning Criteria:** Judges will prioritize “Authentic Impact.” The winner will be the campaign that best used its voice to shape culture for the better, proving that purpose-driven leadership builds a brand for the long term.

### How to Prove Your Case with KPIs

**Core Narrative:** Proving deep audience resonance by creating content people choose to watch.

#### Primary KPIs (The “Audience Connection Story”):

- Brand Lift (Ad Recall, Favorability, Consideration)
- Average Watch Time & Audience Retention
- View-Through Rate (VTR)

#### Secondary KPIs (The “Viral & Business Story”):

- Organic Views & Earned Media
- Sales Impact

### How to Prove Your Case with KPIs

**Core Narrative:** Demonstrating strategic media brilliance through a specific “Media Unlock.”

#### Primary KPIs (The “Strategic Unlock Story”):

- Incremental Reach (vs. TV or other channels)
- ROAS & CPA (analyzed by audience/format)
- Full-Funnel Lift (Brand, Search, and Conversion Lift)

#### Secondary KPIs (The “Execution Story”):

- New Buyers / New-to-File Customers
- Frequency & Reach curves

### How to Prove Your Case with KPIs

**Core Narrative:** Proving authentic and meaningful impact on an issue, which in turn benefited the brand.

#### Primary KPIs (The “Cultural & Brand Impact Story”):

- Brand Lift (Favorability, Purchase Intent, “Brand That Cares”)
- Earned Media Value & PR Mentions
- Views, Watch Time, & Engagement on Core Content

#### Secondary KPIs (The “Business & Action Story”):

- Website Visits to “Learn More” pages or Petitions Signed
- Sales Impact / ROAS

## How to Create a Winning Submission

Our judges are looking for campaigns that creatively, strategically, and effectively leveraged YouTube to achieve a clear business impact. Follow these best practices to make your submission shine.

Guideline	Description
Tell a Compelling Story	Structure your entry with a clear beginning (objectives), middle (your approach), and end (the impact).
Collaborate	Co-write your submission with both media and creative partners to tell the full, comprehensive story.
Be Clear and Concise	Get straight to the point. Simple and concise language is more powerful.
Provide Context	Help the judges understand your creative choices, your market, and the challenges you faced.
Show Your Work	Include all relevant media referenced in your submission for the judges to review.
Use Data and Metrics	Share as many metrics as you can. Clearly state your objectives, KPIs, and benchmarks to prove your success.
Acknowledge External Factors	Be transparent about any factors outside of YouTube that could have influenced your results.

### How to Submit Your Entry

1. **Prepare Your Case:** Write your submission following the guidelines above.
2. **Visit the Website:** All entries must be submitted via the official Contest website at <https://business.google.com/en-all/ad-solutions/youtube-ads/works-awards/>
3. **Submit on Time:** The submission window is from April 8, 2026, to May 6, 2026. Late entries will be automatically disqualified.

## Judging Process & Criteria

An independent panel of industry experts will judge all entries based on the four pillars of a successful campaign. The following criteria and weighting will be applied across all categories to ensure a consistent standard of excellence.

Criteria	Weighting	Judges will be looking for...
<b>Insight &amp; Strategy</b>	20%	The 'why'. The insight and strategic thinking that inspired the campaign. Did the strategy address the business problem? Was the insight at the heart of the idea fresh? Did it unlock a new opportunity for the brand?
<b>Creative Idea</b>	30%	The 'what'. The creative idea at the heart of the campaign. Was the idea brave, bold, and creative? Is it an idea that will build the brand for the long-term?
<b>Media &amp; Amplification</b>	25%	The 'how'. The way the campaign was brought to life and amplified. Was the media strategy creative? Was YouTube used effectively? Was the content tailored for the platform?
<b>Impact &amp; Results</b>	25%	The 'proof'. The results of the campaign. Did the campaign achieve its objectives? Did it deliver a real impact for the business? How did YouTube contribute to the success?

## How Winners Are Chosen:

- An initial panel of independent judges will score all entries based on the criteria above.
- Submissions that score above a certain threshold will be declared the winners of the five main categories.
- The category winners will then enter a public vote to determine the Grand Prix winner.

## Key Rules & Eligibility

- **Location:** Your business must be established and have a billing address in the Netherlands.
- **Campaign Timing:** YouTube campaigns must have gone live, at least in part, during 2025/2026.
- **Compliance:** Submissions must comply with YouTube's advertising policies and community guidelines.
- **Exclusions:** Campaigns associated with gambling or betting services are not eligible.

For a complete list of rules, please refer to the official Terms & Conditions on the submission website.