

How to Craft a Winning Submission

YouTube Works Awards SEA 2026

YouTube Works Awards Southeast Asia is a submission-based contest for paid YouTube campaigns. Winners will be selected by a jury of distinguished industry leaders with deep expertise and proven track records in advertising, marketing, creative storytelling and media. Multiple rounds of eligibility checks and jury deliberations will be conducted to arrive at our winning set.

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1) The big question on every entrant's mind - How can I win?

- Set the scene: your story should help judges understand the context in which you were operating, as they may not work in your industry or know about the challenges of your category or any creative challenges you faced. This includes providing cultural and/or category contexts, local insights, industry and/or category benchmarks and past performance.
- Clearly state your KPIs and business metrics to showcase your success. Judges will be looking for cases which have strategically and effectively leveraged YouTube to achieve clear business objectives and which can demonstrate clear business impact. Ensure that you close the loop on any KPIs indicated with concrete and verifiable results.
- Provide submission category nuance: Ensure that your write-up is tailored to the Award category/ies you're submitting for. While a single submission form can be used for a campaign being submitted for multiple categories, entrants are recommended to have separate paragraphs per category highlights the reason to qualify for the same.

2) Tips for answering each question of the submission form

1. Why the selected category/ies?

Why do you think your campaign is a good fit for the category/ies you have selected? How does this campaign best exemplify the category/ies?

Your response here will frame how the Jury will assess your entry's fit for the category/ies you submit for. Your category rationale should display how your campaign is deeply rooted, end-to-end, in the category description and KPIs, rather than simply the outcome of the campaign. The objective, strategy, execution and result of a campaign should justify its category submission. Provide separate rationale per category, if you are submitting for multiple categories.

2. Background and Business Context

What is the story you want to tell the judges about your campaign? Some important elements to cover are: What role does your brand play in the category? What is the competitive environment like? What important information about the market conditions specific to your industry should we be aware of? What barriers did you need to overcome? Who was your primary target for this campaign? What important information on your audience behavior and culture should we be aware of?

Your response here will frame how the Jury will assess your entry's fit for the category/ies you submit for. Your category rationale should display how your campaign is deeply rooted, end-to-end, in the category description and KPIs, rather than simply the outcome of the campaign. The objective, strategy, execution and result of a campaign should justify its category submission. Provide separate rationale per category, if you are submitting for multiple categories.

3. Campaign Objective

What metrics were set to determine the success of your campaign? Include concrete objectives that are quantifiable and as specific as possible. Include Media, Brand, and Business KPIs to showcase your campaign's full influence. Judges will be interested in any relevant background (e.g. targets, previous performance, KPIs etc.) around the goal set. Note that your response to this question will be considered when judges are assessing overall effectiveness with an eye to how business-critical the objectives were and how well they were achieved.

Clear outline of brand, media and business metrics should be provided, with an indication of benchmarks the metrics were set against (E.g. category, industry, or own past performance). It's often the difficulty jurors face - how to deliberate among entries that have different results within different contexts; by providing clear benchmarks with reasonable foundations, there will be a clear stage to lay out what true success means for your campaign.

4. Creative Strategy and Execution

What was the creative strategy, idea, and final execution? Include, if applicable, any customer or market research, organizational reality or imperative, human truth or audience insights (wants, needs, attitudes, behaviors), or any other context that led to the idea and final execution.

Be sure to expose the tangible and measurable human insight or truth behind your creative idea, with some backing of how your team distilled that truth. Your insights should also be rooted in the category or product type of the brand, to emphasize a deeply tailored campaign. This question tells us the role of creativity in engaging with audiences, specifically in a digital video. Judges will assess how the actual creative compares to the stated creative idea and how well the core idea, insights, imperative, context, etc. referenced translate to and manifest in the actual creative. How well did the creative placement on YouTube work to execute on the stated goals?

5. YouTube Strategy and Execution

What was the YouTube strategy you used to bring your campaign to life? Include the YouTube capabilities you had chosen and why they made most sense given your target and core idea. If you are able to share your budget or scope, that would help the judges understand your approach. Judges will look at a unique-to-YouTube strategy and innovative media thinking, planning and execution to justify YouTube's suitability to meet the objectives set.

Plotting out the specific YouTube solutions used and why they were used exactly is crucial to defend the YouTube strategy, and its appropriateness in relation to the category it was submitted for. While it may be simple to default to a generic set of YouTube solutions used, mapping out why a specific solution achieves a specific objective within the category sets a clear stage for deliberation. Does the key role / function of each selected tool make sense given the nature of that tool and its unique value proposition? Also consider YouTube specific activation relative to other channels / media / creative formats used in this campaign. Does it make sense why this approach was taken / why YouTube was specifically leveraged? Explain the effect that YouTube had on the campaign's success, relative to the campaign's goals and objectives. Did the role of YouTube have the intended impact i.e., through reaching new/ specific audiences, creating engagement, amplifying the campaign?

6. Results

What were your results against the specific goals and KPIs set? How did YouTube capabilities help achieve your campaign objectives? Include any relevant benchmarks to illustrate your achievements. Judges will be assessing your entry based on campaign results against Media, Brand and Business KPIs you've stated in the Campaign Objectives section.

Always tie results to the previous metrics set in either media, brand and/or business metrics cited in the previous questions. There must be clear indications of why specific results are impressive (category, industry or own past performance). There should also be a clear tie-back to the category submitted for, and why a specific result shows success for that specific category. Explain the outcomes/end results relative to the campaign's goals and objectives, as well as specific goals and KPIs targeted. Judges will be looking for relevant benchmarks and evaluating the breadth of your campaign's impact.

Please remember to include specific metric(s) in the Impact Metrics fields in the submission form. minimum 2 key metrics are mandatory to be included, according to your campaign objectives. Put N/A if any of the metrics field is not relevant to your campaign.

3) Inspiration from prior submissions

To help, please see some sample entries, inspired by previous years' winning campaigns across the region. Brand names and details have been masked or altered from original submissions.

1. Why the selected category/ies?

Why do you think your campaign is a good fit for the category/ies you have selected? How does this campaign best exemplify the category/ies?

How do you reclaim leadership in gut health when the category you built is being overtaken by trend-led challengers and misinformation? For [country] yogurt brand [brand A], the goal wasn't just to run another health message—it was to spark a cultural reset and reassert yogurt as the "O.G." daily gut health solution at the exact moment the conversation exploded.

Given that people in [country] increasingly turn to YouTube for entertainment and long-form viewing, using YouTube as the platform of choice was a no-brainer. The campaign turned a complex health topic into an entertaining, drama-filled soap opera, proving that education doesn't have to feel like a lecture to be effective.

This campaign is a strong fit for Multiformat Storytelling because the story was purposefully built across formats: a long-form hero film to pull audiences into the narrative, supported by multiple short-form bumper executions—each spotlighting a different product variant and gut health myth—to reinforce the message with precision and scale.

2. Background and Business Context

What is the story you want to tell the judges about your campaign? Some important elements to cover are: What role does your brand play in the category? What is the competitive environment and market conditions like? What specific business or market problem triggered this campaign, and why did it require intervention at that point in time? Who was your primary target for this campaign? What important information on your audience behaviour and culture should we be aware of

A FAST-GROWING GUT HEALTH GOLD RUSH

Gut health had gone mainstream in [country]. Fueled by F.O.M.O., influencer narratives, and a surge in online conversations, the category expanded rapidly beyond traditional dairy into supplements and trend-led formats—many only loosely connected to real digestive science. While the overall market grew, challenger brands surged at double-digit rates, outpacing legacy players with bold innovation claims and socially amplified messaging. The competitive environment intensified, and moving even small share percentages became increasingly difficult.

MEET [BRAND A]

As a long-standing category leader, [brand A] had built its reputation on a simple truth: daily yogurt supports gut health. Yet growth slowed to x% while competitors accelerated. The issue was not awareness—but authority. As misinformation spread and new formats captured attention, the brand risked losing ownership of the very category it pioneered. The timing demanded intervention: with gut health peaking in mainstream conversation, failing to act would allow competitors to permanently redefine the space.

THE BIGGEST BARRIER: MISINFORMATION

The primary target was mass consumers aged 18–54, increasingly exposed to health content online but influenced by trend cycles and viral claims. Myths such as “gut balance is genetic” or overreliance on supplements diverted attention from everyday yogurt consumption. In a culture that deeply engages with dramatic storytelling and consumes long-form entertainment on YouTube, rational education alone would not cut through. To reclaim relevance, the brand needed to compete culturally—transforming truth into entertainment powerful enough to restore trust and leadership.

3. Campaign Objectives

What metrics were set to determine the success of your campaign? Include concrete objectives that are quantifiable and as specific as possible. Include Media, Brand, and Business KPIs to showcase your campaign’s full influence. Judges will be interested in any relevant background (e.g. targets, previous performance, KPIs etc.) around the goal set. Note that your response to this question will be considered when judges are assessing overall effectiveness with an eye to how business-critical the objectives were and how well they were achieved.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

Supercharge growth in the gut health boom

Objective: Accelerate post-campaign portfolio sales growth beyond baseline

Baseline: x% YoY (Q1)

KPI: Post-campaign portfolio sales growth

BRAND OBJECTIVE

Reclaim ownership of gut health through stronger recall and consideration

Objective: Lift Ad Recall and Consideration above baseline

Baseline: ~x% Ad Recall (avg. from previous campaigns)

KPI: Brand Lift on Ad Recall and Consideration

MEDIA / COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE

Deliver mass reach and message retention through YouTube

Objective: Drive high reach + views while sustaining strong VTR and cost efficiency

KPI: xM video views on hero thematic film + xM impressions across 5 bumper versions

4. Creative Strategy and Execution

What was the creative strategy, idea, and final execution? Include, if applicable, any customer or market research, organizational reality or imperative, human truth or audience insights (wants, needs, attitudes, behaviors), or any other context that led to the idea and final execution.

WHEN TRENDS STEAL THE TRUTH

In building this campaign, we uncovered a major tension: in the new gut health boom, people are adopting solutions driven by trends—not truth. Myths spread faster than facts, and new formats made it easy for misinformation to feel credible.

This revealed an opportunity: instead of arguing with misinformation using typical health communication, [brand A] needed to expose the lies in a way people would actually watch and remember.

CREATIVE IDEA

It's time to face it head-on and "FIGHT FOR [NATIONALITY]'S GUT."

EXECUTIONAL IDEA

Turn gut health misinformation into a cultural genre people already love.

IDEA ACTIVATION

We transformed the campaign into a soap opera-style drama: a high-stakes "heist" where the villains—"Thieves of Gut Health"—represented trendy fads and fake claims robbing people of real gut care. Characters reflected common myths and behaviors, until a heroic figure ("The [brand A] Lady") stepped in to expose the truth and restore yogurt as the O.G. gut health essential.

5. YouTube Strategy and Execution

What was the YouTube strategy you used to bring your campaign to life? Include the YouTube capabilities you had chosen and why they made most sense given your target and core idea. If you are able to share your budget or scope, that would help the judges understand your approach. Judges will look at a unique-to-YouTube strategy and innovative media thinking, planning and execution to justify YouTube's suitability to meet the objectives set.

We launched the campaign with a long-form hero thematic film ("Thematic Version – 5 mins") to deliver the full drama and establish the "Fight For [Nationality]'s Gut" narrative. This was deployed via YouTube formats designed to maximize views and measure impact through Brand Lift Studies (Ad Recall and Consideration), conducted across multiple waves during the campaign to track progress over time.

To extend the story and drive precision, we built five bumper ads—each tied to a different product variant and gut health myth—then targeted them based on audience interests and behaviors. These bumpers were rotated strategically across time slots to avoid fatigue, especially important due to overlapping audiences between product variants.

In short: the hero film created cultural pull, while short-form bumpers delivered frequency, reinforcement, and efficient reach—proving multiformat storytelling can be both entertaining and performance-driven

6. Results

What were your results against the specific goals and KPIs set? How did YouTube capabilities help achieve your campaign objectives? Include any relevant benchmarks to illustrate your achievements. Judges will be assessing your entry based on campaign results against Media, Brand and Business KPIs you've stated in the Campaign Objectives section.

COMMUNICATION / MEDIA RESULTS

Objective: Deliver effective reach and message retention

Results:

- *Thematic film views: x (exceeding KPI)*
- *Thematic film VTR: x% | CPV: x | CPM: x*
- *Bumper Ads delivered x impressions across 5 versions*
- *Avg. bumper VTR x%+ with strong cost efficiency (Avg. CPM x)*

BRAND RESULTS

Objective: Lift Ad Recall and Consideration above baseline

Results:

- *Ad Recall increased progressively across Brand Lift waves*
- *+x% Ad Recall (Wave 1)*
- *+x% Ad Recall (Wave 2)*
- *Consideration stabilized (flat) while recall strengthened meaningfully*

BUSINESS RESULTS

Objective: Accelerate sales growth beyond baseline

Results:

- Portfolio sales growth reached x% (+x vs baseline)
- Reignited category leadership and restored yogurt as the daily gut health essential

4) How will judges be evaluating submissions?

They will look at the effectiveness of the creative from a business impact angle – ultimately YouTube Works is an award program that demonstrates how advertising on YouTube can drive business results.

- Are the objectives clearly laid out?
- Do the business results align with the objectives?
- Are there metrics included that demonstrate campaign success?
- Did YouTube play a key role in the campaign's success and/or delivering the business results, and was this clearly demonstrated in the entry? Business results include:
 - Clear metrics / KPIs as part of campaign outcomes
 - Significant lift in metric(s)
 - Demonstrate a behavioral change
- Was the campaign highly original, engaging and innovative across both media strategy and orchestration, as well as in creativity, enough to pave the way for the future of content?

5) What judging criteria will be used?

Judges will be using the following judge rubric when evaluating entries:

Overall Marketing Strategy	How clear, insightful and actionable was the overall campaign strategy, in relation to the broader business needs to be solved? How well does the overall strategy address consumer insights, industry realities and business opportunities?
Creative Strategy & Execution	How well did the creative execution bring to life the creative idea? Is your strategic intent and ideas well expressed in the Creative? Was the creative format well reflected/matched in the media characteristics of YouTube?
YouTube Strategy & Execution	How strategically have you used YouTube as a medium to effectively achieve your brand goals? How suitable and meaningful were the YouTube capabilities that were leveraged?
Results	How has the campaign's performance had a significant impact on overall results? Did using YouTube, and using it effectively, deliver on the KPIs set for the campaign, the brand and the business? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media Impact: View-through rate, Views, Reach, etc.• Brand Impact: Brand Association, Brand Lift, etc.• Business Impact: Conversions, Sales, ROI, etc.