copper leaf

AV Industry Awards — 2022

REPORT

Industry awards

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We are happy to accept additional information and clarifications from any of the awards organisers to help improve the information given.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Industry awards are important to many of us. Companies go to great efforts preparing entries, attending the events and promoting any success they might have. It is important that entrants and attendees have confidence in the awards they choose to be involved with.

Our research into industry awards shows that in general they are a great way to promote your business. Most offer good exposure for both winners and shortlisted entrants. However, the majority have shortcomings in how much information they give about their awards, how they are judged and for some there is a clear pattern of repeat winners.

We researched how each award is organised and judged, although some chose not to provide details. If organisers won't give information to the industry, this raises questions about both the transparency and competency of their judging process. If organisers aren't willing to be open about their awards, why should the industry invest in them?

A lot has changed since our 2019 report. We've expanded our research to include more awards.

Most awards did not have processes in place to prevent the organiser from skewing the result if they chose to do so. Judging is generally a patchwork affair, often with a of lack of scrutiny of the judging process, using judges who aren't qualified, asking judges to review too many entries, or with unclear processes for how scores are calculated.

> ***"If organisers aren't open about their awards why should the industry invest in them?"***

Our research into technology awards now has up to eight years of past winners data. Some awards have the same winners year after year. Our research clearly shows that awards with the widest variety of winners have more rigorous judging processes and were also the most transparent about how they operate their awards.

There is an almost complete lack of diversity in the judging panels. The vast majority of judges are white men. Some awards have reasonable female representation, although none of the awards have any genuine ethnic diversity on their panels.

Finally, green issues are barely considered. Fewer than a quarter have green awards, and only one award used judges with any real knowledge or experience of environmental issues.

WHO WE ARE

Copper Leaf is a creative content, marketing and PR agency with a technical edge serving the Audio, AV, Broadcast and Entertainment Technology industries. We offer a unique combination of in-depth knowledge of audio and audio-visual systems, supporting marketing teams with the creation of graphics, video, case studies, web sites, PR and more.

Our talented team of digital design and production specialists, writers and technical consultants is at your disposal to help you be the best that you can be.

THE SCORES

Our 2019 assessment of awards has remained largely the same for 2022.

The chart below does not tell the whole story. If you would like a more detailed analysis please contact us.

For some, a minor change would raise their score: ABTT should publish the information about their process that they so willingly gave us and the AV Awards should have independent aggregation of the final vote and capture it on the day.

Only ABTT, NAMM and PLASA have procedures in place to make it physically impossible for the organiser to unfairly influence the result.

In terms of overall quality of judging process: for product awards, ABTT and PLASA are the best. For project, company and people awards, the AV Awards win.

NOTES FOR THE CHART (SHOWN ON THE NEXT PAGE)

Note 1:
To be fair to AV Awards, they do not achieve A because the first round of judging is done online, so all entries are not openly discussed. however with 700 entries this may be impractical.*

Note 2:
For commercial reasons AV News did not answer a couple of our questions, but otherwise were extremely helpful and detailed in their responses.

AWARDS	IS THE AWARDS PROCESS CLEARLY & OPENLY EXPLAINED?	HOW RIGOROUS IS THE JUDGING?	ARE THERE PROCEDURES TO AVOID BIAS AND CORRUPTION?	WILLINGNESS TO ANSWER ENQUIRIES	MEDIA EXPOSURE IN SHORTLIST PERIOD	MEDIA EXPOSURE FOR WINNERS
ABTT		*	*	*	N/A	
AV	*	SEE NOTE 1		*	*	
AVARD						
AV NEWS				SEE NOTE 2	*	
CI PROGRAMS (4)				*	N/A	*
FUTURE BEST OF SHOW (4)					N/A	
IBAM BAM	*					
INAVATION						
INAVATE APAC						
MONDO (EUROPE EMEA AND USA)						*
NAMM TEC			*			
PARNELLI	*					*
PLASA	*	*	*	*	N/A	
RAVE READERS' CHOICE						
RAVE BEST OF INFOCOMM					N/A	
SMART BUILDING	*				N/A	*
SPORTS TV						
TPMEA	*			*		

RED = POOR	ORANGE = ACCEPTABLE	GREEN = GOOD	GREEN* = EXCELLENT
			*

UNDERSTANDING INDUSTRY AWARDS

We are lucky to work in an industry with such a vibrant press. Where some industries only have one or two publications, our database has over 300 publications and blogs related to the audio, audio-visual and broadcast technology industries. A few of these organisations hold awards.

Industry awards do a number of things including; highlighting achievement and innovation, giving opportunities to network with colleagues, raising money for charity and raising the profile or providing a much needed revenue stream for the organisers.

WHY WE DID THIS

We often get questions from clients about what awards they should enter, but until our report in 2019, our advice was largely anecdotal. There has been some fairly vocal criticism surrounding some awards and, dare we say, mud-slinging between some competitor events. We wanted to apply our data in order to give a balanced view.

Some of our team have been involved in judging industry awards for nearly twenty years and have shaped how some awards are judged. We also prepare materials for client award entries.

THE THREE BIG QUESTIONS

1. Is the time, effort and cost to enter worth it against the potential exposure you might receive?
2. Is the judging process credible, making it an award that actually means something?
3. Could there be bias or subterfuge?

WHAT WE DID

Our investigation covered various elements:

1. Researching each award and how they are managed and judged
2. Analysing how transparent the process is and whether there is an opportunity for bias
3. Reviewing what shortlisted and winning companies receive in terms of exposure
4. Analysing technology / product award winners over several years

Our research was primarily gathered online from publicly available information, but we also conducted telephone interviews with some publications. In addition to this, we sent out online forms asking detailed questions to all awards organisers.

TYPES OF AWARD

There are four general types of award. Not all awards cover all types:

Product awards
also known as
technology awards

These are aimed at manufacturers, highlighting new innovations.

Project awards

These cover completed projects in different categories explaining how technology was applied in challenging or innovative ways.

People, company and team awards

These are often categorised, highlighting high standards, quality of service, rising stars or particular individual achievements.

Green Award

These are given to companies, products or projects that demonstrate environmental credentials.

SPECIAL AWARDS

These are lifetime achievements or some type of editor's choice. Given that these are completely discretionary we have not covered them in this report.

HOW ARE AWARDS JUDGED?

The method of judging, competency and transparency of the process reflect the integrity of an award.

All of the awards we researched use one or more of these methods below.

1. Judged by a face-to-face panel that discusses each entry
2. Judges privately score each entry
3. Internet voting open to anyone
4. Judge or judges visit exhibition stands and then score the entries. This visit may be in secret or with a panel product presentation

WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW

1. How are judges chosen?
2. Are the judges qualified?
3. Has an effort been made to represent diversity across the judging panel?
4. Are the categories judged in a way where there is genuine scrutiny?
5. How are conflicts of interest dealt with?
6. How many entries are judges expected to review?
7. Is there bias towards those who pay to enter, advertisers or specific companies?
8. Is enough information submitted to make a fair judgement?
9. Are there genuine safeguards in place to ensure fairness?
10. Are any awards demonstrating green initiatives?

WHAT IS YOUR CHANCE OF WINNING?

Based on the approximate number of entries and the number of awards, we calculated the chance of winning for each as follows:

AWARDS	WINNING LIKELIHOOD (%)
ABTT AWARDS	26.00%
AV AWARDS	7.70%
AV NEWS AWARDS	Don't Know
BAM AWARDS	6.60%
CI BEST AWARDS	21.00%
EPI AWARDS	8.75%
IABM BAM AWARDS	6.60%
INAVATION AWARDS	8.30%
CI INTERGRATION AWARDS	37.70%
MONDO AMERICAS AWARDS	10.00%
MONDO APAC AWARDS	6.67%
MONDO EMEA AWARDS	6.67%
NAMM TEC AWARDS	3.10%
PARNELLI AWARDS	N/A
PLASA AWARDS	16.00%
RAVE READERS' CHOICE AWARDS	N/A
TNT AWARDS	14.00%
TPMEA AWARDS	2.80%

PAY TO WIN?

Whilst some are free, most awards charge an entry fee to cover the costs of admin, judging expenses, staging costs, and trophies. Some use any excess to make charitable donations and for others, fees are used as a revenue stream.

> ***Awards that are free still have to be paid for somehow.***

Those who do not charge for awards still have costs to cover. Theoretically, any payments to that organiser could be used to influence the outcome, it does not have to be a payment directly associated with an award. To prevent this, safeguards need to be in place.

A payment to enter may prevent some from submitting an excessive amount of entries but this can also serve as a barrier to small companies. One organiser confirmed that they allow some free entries on a case-by-case basis, where the entrant could not be reasonably expected to pay to enter.

Knowing the number of entries against the number of awards enables us to calculate the chance of winning and helps answer the question as to whether any awards are 'pay to win'. If the chance to win against the number of entries is low, then the fee cannot have any influence on the outcome. For example, if there are twenty entries for a category then you only have a 5% chance of winning. Given that everyone pays the same entry fee, it's difficult to see how this might have an influence on the verdict.

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION?

It is impossible to accurately assess bribery and corruption, or what may or may not occur behind the scenes. In the UK, such activity would not fall under the Bribery Act, but it may be illegal in other countries.

For a number of awards, the names of the judges are kept hidden to ensure they are not hassled by the entrants. This approach also prevents bribery of judges.

In reality, the likelihood of influencing judges whose names are public, is slim. In many cases, the judges do not assess all of the entries so they may not be judging your award anyway. We also think it unlikely that an entrant would approach a judge whom they didn't know to offer a bribe as there is a risk that that the judge may report it.

We strongly doubt that bribery takes place or has any effect on the result of any awards we researched. Our concerns about fairness of awards lie with the organisers.

For many awards we do not know what happens with the voting results once they have been passed on to the organiser. Despite having a seemingly enforced judging method in place, it is still theoretically possible for the results to be collected and then ignored or altered.

Judges' scores and internet votes could be 'lost' or manipulated. This is why truly independent measures should be implemented. Some awards use someone from a different department within their organisation but this isn't enough. Third party individuals - not connected to the awards organiser in any way - should be employed to handle the votes to avoid bias and corruption of results. They should make a copy for safe-keeping and then issue the scores to the organiser. A local legal or accounting firm would charge a modest fee for this.

INCOME AND INCLUSIVITY

We have mentioned that we are blessed with a vibrant industry press. They need revenue to survive. In our opinion, it is perfectly reasonable that entry fees, sponsorship and / or ticket sales generate a profit. Our only concern is if that income has an influence on who wins.

The stakes are high for prestigious awards; the cost of entry beyond the actual fee can be punitive as companies vie to produce ever more sophisticated and polished entries, often with a costly video attached, in an effort to impress the judges. As a result, smaller companies who do not have the wherewithal to produce such sophisticated entries may be penalised.

Furthermore, the ticket price for some awards ceremonies is extremely high, especially when coupled with travel, accommodation etc. As a result, small companies, freelancers or newcomers usually do not come to these events unless they are invited.

All of these potential barriers to entry have to be balanced against the fact that the awards may be an important source of income for the organiser helping sustain their overall industry activity.

HOW BEST TO JUDGE

The issue of how to judge industry awards prompts several questions.

For some awards, we don't know who the judges are, their skills, or how a winner is chosen. If the process isn't explained then how do we know if entries are being handled competently, fairly or honestly?

If judges don't meet or speak with each other, a number of concerns arise. It's not possible for every judge to know about every aspect of our industry and its technology, but for some awards, they may still score, even from a position of ignorance. For example, a specialist in Corporate Boardroom AV is unlikely to have the direct experience to understand the complexity or benefit of innovations in live entertainment technology, in which case their evaluation of the entry would not be fair or representative. Whilst it is unrealistic to expect all awards to enlist a full panel of specialists for every category, discrepancies in experience can be mitigated by group discussion between the judges. On the basis that all the judges have a grounded knowledge of the industry in general, explanations from fellow adjudicators with relevant expertise would enable them to more accurately evaluate an entry.

If judges work in isolation, we don't know how long they spend and whether sufficient scrutiny is given. And is sufficient scrutiny even possible if judges don't speak with the entrants or see the entry themselves? In some cases judges are given too many entries to evaluate.

Provisions are needed in case one judge scores everything with consistently high or low marks or if others have large variations in their scoring. Simply adding scores up may not give the same result as seeing which contender got the most first choices. For a couple of awards, the highest and lowest scores are removed but this isn't feasible if there aren't many judges.

	ENTRY A	ENTRY B	ENTRY C	ENTRY D
JUDGE 1	80	85	95	100
JUDGE 2	10	90	30	40
JUDGE 3	15	10	5	20
JUDGE 4	30	20	10	40
TOTAL	135	205	140	200

In the above (admittedly facetious) example, entry B wins, even though it was most people's third choice, entry D loses despite being most people's first choice and didn't come lower than second.

If we don't know who the judges are, or if internet voting is used, then it is not possible to resolve any conflicts of interest, nor is it clear how confidentiality is dealt with. Details of some projects cannot be publicly shared, but permission may be given to a small group of judges.

For all the reasons above, we believe that judges have to talk to each other.

If judges do discuss entries, there may be a concern that one or two may dominate the meeting to influence the result - just watch '12 Angry Men'! In this instance the role of a chairman, who does not vote, is important.

Some awards are based on internet voting where anyone can get involved. In this case, no-one has any idea who is voting, what their skills are, how long they look at any materials or whether they were asked to vote by their employer or someone they have a business relationship with. We have publicly demonstrated setting up fake email accounts and being able to vote for this type of award. We have also seen a number of manufacturers running social media and email campaigns asking people to vote for them.

Our view is that you cannot consider public internet voting as competent or fair scrutiny. The most optimistic interpretation of any award won this way would be to call it 'favourite', and not 'the best'.

SUSTAINABILTY

An important focus in our research was sustainability and the increased efforts made by organisations within the AV industry to be green. We asked if they award those who deserve recognition for forward thinking and finding solutions to improve an already challenging industry. We found that only five industry awards have a green award: AV News, AVard, CI Integration, InAVate, PLASA and Sports TV. Whilst still very poor, it is an improvement from our 2019 report where PLASA was the only organisation to award sustainability. AV Magazine removed their green award in 2022, which is extremely disappointing and sends out entirely the wrong signal to the industry.

> ***Only five industry awards have a green award.***

Additionally, we asked whether their trophies are sustainable; typically glass or metal. Not plastic! To our delight, all of the awards we researched openly stated what material their trophies were made of and that they were sustainably sourced. It would be quite hypocritical to have a green award on offer and then hand them a plastic trophy.

WHY DID IT WIN?

We found that many industry awards do not explain why the entrant won. This is a significant omission. At the ceremony, some will read a few lines explaining the reason as the winners go up on stage. Few augment this with any subsequent editorial on the merits of the win.

No award has any formal process for feedback if people are upset about not winning. Some are willing to take calls on an informal basis to explain why.

Our experience is that awards organisers have a poor attitude towards complaints. We've heard organisers laugh off complaints. Organisers need to be sensitive to the time and expense entrants put into awards otherwise it can impact them negatively. One entrant in 2021 complained and received a very rude reply and no promised follow up. Not only will that entrant never enter again, they also didn't book their usual table, resulting in a significant loss of revenue for that organisation.

A better explanation as to why particular entrants won, would go a long way towards helping people understand why they lost.

WHAT EXPOSURE YOU GET

We have tried to assess how beneficial each award is. To do this we picked random shortlisted and winning entries for each award and then looked at the publication (print and digital) and reviewed how much editorial was published and how much effort the organiser put into social media for each winner or shortlisted entrant.

Do not rely on others to communicate your success.

Our calculations cannot be considered anything other than estimates and coverage could be extremely variable. Our advice for those shortlisted and award winners is not to rely on others to communicate your success.

ASSESSMENT OF PAST TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

We put a specific focus on technology wins because manufacturers are the biggest source of income for industry publications.

For technology categories, we wanted to see if there was any pattern of winners. We reviewed up to eight years of winners across several awards. Sometimes there have been gaps due to the COVID pandemic.

It is not possible to investigate the relationship between winners and volume of advertising in the related magazine. Whilst it is perfectly possible that marketing spend could be used to 'buy' some awards, this may not be via something as easily measurable as advertising space. Companies work with publishers on e-shots, event and award sponsorship, round tables and targeted online promotions. It is impossible to know where and how customers are placing marketing spend with awards organisers.

Free to enter awards do not have more integrity.

Where technology awards are concerned, our data suggests that free entry does not guarantee an even playing field for smaller companies or newcomers looking for acknowledgment in awards. In fact, when comparing the diversity of winners, free entry could be interpreted as assisting larger organisations who submit applications with fewer reservations. Of course, entry fees are just one aspect of the awards process but their influence does not appear to be significant. Our research demonstrates that free-to-enter is not necessarily an indicator of award integrity.

REPEAT WINNERS?

An often heard comment is that the same companies win every year, so we set out to see whether that is true. Using eight years of data we added up the total number of technology/product awards given by each organiser. We then calculated how many different companies have won. This gave us a percentage of 'unique' winners. The higher the percentage the more diverse the set of winners. Awards with unique winner percentages of less than 50% means that more than half are repeat winners.

UNIQUE TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

AWARDS	UNIQUE WINNERS
ABTT AWARDS	92%
AV NEWS	71%
AV AWARDS	82%
AVARD	84%
CI BEST	45%
INAVATION AWARDS	49%
PARNELLI AWARDS	79%
PLASA AWARDS	76%
RAVE READERS' CHOICE AWARDS	41%

AV INDUSTRY JUDGED BY WHITE MEN

The vast majority of judges are white men across all awards. Notably, ABTT makes huge efforts towards 50:50 parity between male and female judges, and PLASA in 2019 was 35-40% female representation. Unfortunately, the CI Awards represent no gender diversity across their panel of judges. But, they realise this is a step backwards from inclusivity in comparison to other awards, so they have assured us that they acknowledge this must be looked into for the next awards, and needs to change to become more representative of the AV industry as a whole.

We asked about ethnic diversity of judges but from those who responded none were able to give any reasonable response. Many of the awards said their selection of judges is becoming more centred around diversity as a whole, which begins with including people from a range of backgrounds to honour their values of inclusivity and equality within the AV industry. However the evidence simply isn't there to back up any of these intentions.

SUMMARY

There are some standout awards, but most have room for improvement.

There are too many cases where insufficient care is put into the judging process. We are not accusing anyone of dishonesty. We have accepted every statement that organisers have given as fact. However, most awards processes do not ensure entries are being judged properly by competent people.

Many awards are given without anyone physically seeing the product or meeting the people. For product awards, ideally judges would interact with the product, but this is rare. For company and team awards, ideally the entrants should be interviewed, either in person or by video conference, but this also is rare.

Companies put huge amounts of time and sometimes spend a great deal of money preparing entries. But for them to feel confident about doing so, they need to be sure that the awards process is competent and honest. To achieve that, some – if not most – awards need to be more transparent or to improve their processes, or both.

Shortlisted entrants give up valuable time from work and spend considerable amounts on travel and accommodation just to attend awards ceremonies. With this in mind, the integrity of awards should not be taken lightly. Entrants should ask questions if there are parts of the process which are unclear to them.

Given the effort some organisers expect entrants to put into entering, we were disappointed that only three awards agreed to participate in our research; the majority did not respond to our emails asking them to spare just a few moments of their time to get involved in our research. InAVate specifically refused to participate, and rAVe emailed over what limited information they felt necessary for us to know.

> ***"Companies spend huge amounts of time and sometimes a great deal of money preparing entries."***

Since our 2019 report, more organisations are giving out sustainability awards. But, like PLASA in 2019 the awards we spoke to explained that they are not freely handed out every year; only when it is truly deserved. This gives the awards more value. However, the organisations we connected with acknowledge that this value is limited unless they bring in environmental specialists to judge these separately. In line with green initiative, more awards have made the move from plastic trophies, to sustainable, glass or metal trophies / plaques.

There is no perfect solution, and our advice is if you want to avoid controversy, don't hold an awards competition! However, we mustn't forget the overall benefits that the staging of these awards brings to our industry.

CREDITS:

This report was created by Roland Hemming, Kiera Leeming and Madeleine Burton. Thanks to the whole Copper Leaf Media team for their assistance and support.

ABOUT EACH AWARD

ABTT ANNUAL THEATRE AWARDS

Description

The ABTT Annual Theatre Show Awards in London originally started in 1976 and were only hosted alongside the ABTT Theatre Show from 1984. This has progressed from the initial "product of the year" in 1979's Awards to now nominate products in a variety of categories. These include: "engineering", "sound", "lighting", "widget" and now extend to "stand of the year". ABTT also award 'Technician of the Year' at the awards presentation. This runs separately to the Theatre Awards and nominations are received throughout the year.

Product awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

There is no entry fee for the ABTT Annual Theatre Show awards. In terms of direct entry, product awards are open to any company or individual whose products are substantially new to the market during the last twelve months, and are available now for purchase, immediate delivery and use.

Entrants can submit details in advance to promote their entry the best they can and advantage themselves. Whilst applicants are encouraged to submit their entries prior to the show, new entries will be accepted on the day of the event and adjudicated equally. Judges may also enter exhibitors who did not enter themselves but appear to have a particularly innovative product at the show. The entries must meet the five core values when taking into consideration EDI - one being to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

The judging panel consists of an experienced jury of around fifteen working practitioners and industry peers. In the most recent awards, there was a 40% female to 60% male judging panel. The judges are announced on the day. Their decision is based on the exhibition experience and any information provided by the entry form. ABTT is not involved in any part of the judging process and there is an independent judging chair to manage the panel.

What you get

Winning entries will receive reasons for their success during the awards, as well as a commentary published afterwards with the judges' notes as to why they won. Winners receive: a certificate; a sustainable, engraved trophy; social media and editorial coverage; a press release; website acknowledgement; and photos published online.

Copper Leaf Assessment

ABTT makes a significant effort to ensure their awards are carried out as ethically as possible. Judges for each category discuss the entries alongside any discovered at the show that were not entered by the manufacturer. These awards are among the few to publish the reasoning behind their choice of winner.

They implement diversity as one of their core values and strive to apply this to all areas of their work. As a result, they are close to equal representation of men and women on their judging panel.

They also source judges with diverse professional experience to include both newcomers and veterans of the industry.

ABTT were extremely forthcoming and gave detailed responses in our call.

ABTT TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Call Q	N/A	N/A	AED Group	EM Acoustics	City Theatrical	Clearcom	Digico
Clearcom			Mantracourt	Flints	Doughty Engineering	GLP	Duke
Robe			Robe	MDG	Shure	Hatoscreens	ETC
XM Automations			Sennheiser	Martin	Whitelight	Hoffend & Sons	Triple E

AV AWARDS

Product awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

Description

These are held in London each November. Early bird entry fee currently stands at £160. These awards are described as the biggest and most prestigious evening in the AV calendar; the awards bring the industry together across all channels and disciplines within the market.

There are several types of award categories: people, company or team and product or technology and a total of twenty-seven awards on offer. There were 350 entries last year. Entry material requirements for each award include written material and testimonials. There is also an eligibility time-frame and product or technology awards must be available before the awards. Products to be launched following the awards will not be considered.

AV Awards have a two-stage judging process: for the first stage, judges follow a list of criteria to help them shortlist a number of entries online. In stage two, the judges meet and entries are ranked according to more detailed criteria to decide the winners. The judges do not judge all of the entries; they work in teams handling a few awards each, depending on their expertise in that area. For example, broadcast specialists will only judge broadcast-related products. Within each team of judges there is a non-voting moderator to ensure debate is handled fairly. Whilst the judges discuss the entries, they score each entrant privately and are given a couple of days after the judging day to submit their final scores. We asked if once all of the scores were collected, if it is theoretically possible to ignore all of that and alter the results. We were assured that this does not happen.

There are approximately 30 judges. The judges are chosen based on their knowledge and expertise in relevant industry sectors. The judges' names are made public and published on their website prior to the awards. This reassures entrants that their submission will be judged fairly, thoroughly and respectively as they can see the calibre of judging. We asked if they consider diversity as part of their selection of judges, to which they said yes. Wherever possible, they seek judges who are representative of the industry as a whole, which is equally balanced between male and female. Previously, they reached a ratio of 60:40 male to female judges.

What they get

A reason given for each winning entry. Comments are broadcast when the winners are announced, and the events write-up afterwards includes details on why the winning entries were chosen. Shortlisted entries will receive social media coverage across various platforms. As well as this publicity, winners are promoted in AV's editorial space and receive a sustainable, metal trophy. AV's next awards are likely to be held in November 2023.

Copper Leaf Assessment

AV magazine has taken great care to make their awards process transparent and fair. They publish extensive information about the awards and their process on a dedicated website including an FAQ section.

The fact that judges physically meet ensures rigorous assessment of the entries. The use of groups of judging panels with non-voting moderators is good. However, they fail slightly because of the lack of consensus voting or not having a third party aggregate the final votes. We also think the final decision should be made on the day, to avoid accusations of collaboration.

AV did not give a green award this year. This is especially difficult to understand given that they ask for a considerable amount of environmental information as part of every award entry. They wasted entrants time compiling environmental information which was then ignored. No reason was given for this omission and it is surprising for them to take a backward step as the world moves towards an increasingly sustainable environment.

Overall, AV magazine was extremely forthcoming and open when approached about our report; taking the time to call as well as filling in a detailed form regarding their awards.

AV AWARDS TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
7th Sense	Disguise	Brompton (2)	AVI-SPL	Barco	Absen	Apex	Aptovision
Apex Audio	Igloo	Genelec	AV Stumpfi	Christie (2)	Benq	Casio	Barco
Biamp	Inogenni	L'Acoustics	Brightsign	Equipson (2)	Brightsign	Clevertouch	Brightsign
Lightware (2)	Klang	NovaStar	Brompton	Leyard	Clevertouch	d&b	Christie
Now Signage	KUDO	Owl Labs	Clevertouch	Logitech	Epson	Digital Projection	Clearcom
Panasonic	L'Acoustics	Philips	Digital Projection	Hypervysn	Kramer	Kramer	Crestron
Sony	Nsign.tv	Shure	Holoplot	Peerless AV	LG	Logitech	Mersive
Xyte	Polymotion	Skymagic	Huddly	Previz	Pandoras Box	PRG XL Video	Newtek
	TUDesc	Stem Audio	Hypervysn	RORYCO	Prisim	Matrox	Peerless AV
			Media Screen	Shure	Shure	SiliconCore	SMART
			Mersive	Sony	Wyrestorm	VITEC	
			NEC				

AVard AWARDS

Description

The AVard awards are relatively new having only started in 2020. They hold their awards to acknowledge and honour the forward-thinking products and solutions they feel deserve a platform.

Product awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

Green Award

They accept submissions through direct entry. Entrants must fill in an online form including the following: product image, important detail images, logo, and specific resolution requirements. Failure to meet these requirements gives the judges and organisation the right to exclude your entry in the voting. Written material is also available to the judges - a description of the submission. The description is mainly needed for the presentation of the product at the AVard awards ceremony: a brief description of the product, areas of application and target markets, as well as the USP for the selected category. There is a word limit of 500 characters minimum and 1,500 maximum in your written submission.

There is no cost to enter. In the event of a listing as a top five finalist, the entrant agrees to purchase at least two tickets for the awards ceremony. This ensures that representatives of the entry will be present to accept the trophy. These initial tickets are discounted, with additional tickets at the standard price. Tickets include: gala dinner, drinks and entertainment.

The top five finalists in the product category will be announced via their different platforms around a month prior to the awards ceremony, after the readers have voted. The top 3 finalists will then be presented at the AVard awards ceremony before the winner is announced.

What you get

The winner will receive their sustainable, glass trophy on the night of the awards.

Copper Leaf Assessment

The whole process for AVards is completely opaque. We don't know who the judges are or how the entries are evaluated.

Our research has been focused exclusively on publicly available information we could find about the AVard Awards. We received no acknowledgement of our emails hoping to arrange a phone call, or asking them to fill in a form about their awards.

2022	2021	2020
Blaze Audio	Bosch	Barco
Fohnn	Extron (2)	Bose
Interactive Scape	INFiLED	Claypack & Peerless
Pan Accoustics	Prowise	Datapath
VuWall	Shure	Extron
VST		Jabra
		Shure

AV NEWS AWARDS

Product awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

Green Award

Description

The AV News Awards take place at ISE Barcelona. There are 15 awards across technology, organisation, and people. Entry material requirements include a 100-word background, five bullet points, and testimonials (internally and/or externally retrieved). Entrants are also able to submit video material, internet links and additional documents to be presented to the judges. The technology and organisation category requires a £120 entry fee which covers admin costs, the winner's trophy, and means that any profit made allows AV News to continue to grow into a bigger event in the industry.

The six judges' names are kept private - with judges even signing NDA's - to avoid any influence from entrants. Despite remaining confidential, AV News say they are 'industry legends' and industry experts - at Director and CEO level. In previous awards the judges' names were mistakenly publicised so we are confident of their calibre. The judges judge all of the entries in the project category (e.g. education, corporate), following a consensus method to remain fair; whereas the people awards are internally judged by the magazine.

Although this cannot be confirmed, it was declared that the most recent judging panel consisted of a 2:4 female to male ratio, which changes from year to year. We asked if AV News considered diversity as a party of their selection of judges and they assured us that yes, "we pride ourselves on diversity".

The judging method adopts a two-stage process, whereby entrants are shortlisted after reaching a consensus of ten potential winners. They then vote anonymously for the finalists. The organisers prefer to avoid discussions that could influence or sway voting. We asked if once all of the votes were collected whether it is theoretically possible to ignore the votes and alter the results. They said the scores are handled by AV News but the person is not part of the editorial or sales team. There is one instance where credibility of the judging could be questioned. In the case of a tie-break succeeding the anonymous vote, the editor of AV News makes the final decision. AV News confirmed that there is a reason given for any winning entry, which is explained in editorial and online along with parts of their entry material.

AV News offer a sustainability award which Samsung recently received in the 2022 awards. However, this award is not given out every year, unless it is truly deserved. None of the judges are environmental specialists. This has been noted and we are assured that it will be looked into and hopefully corrected for future awards.

AV News expect hold their next awards at ISE 2023 and include breakfast on the first day to promote networking and encourage business relationships and potential partnerships.

What you get

During the shortlist stage, entrants will receive editorial and online coverage, use of email signature and social media coverage across different platforms. The winners receive the same but are awarded with the winner's logo, mailshot, trophy and a winner's email signature. The trophy is now 100% glass, which is a sustainable improvement from previous years.

Copper Leaf Assessment

AV News were extremely forthcoming and hope to make some changes for future awards. They declined to answer a couple of questions citing confidentiality. One of these was that they refused to give details on the number of entries. Our only concern here is that if they receive a lot of entries then using only six judges might give them too much work to do.

In the future they want the sustainability award to be more meaningful by involving environmental specialists in the final decision and they are also looking to broaden the judging material to include face-to-face presentations, where judges get the opportunity to learn about the entrants personally and their entry in more depth.

AV NEWS AWARDS TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Clevertouch	Barco	Montage	Logitech	Clevertouch	Logitech
Crestron	PressIT	Clevertouch	Samsung	Kramer	Microsoft
MaxHub	Benq	Vitec	Clevertouch	LG	
Fusion	Saturn	Samsung	Samsung	Sharp	
Samsung	Ctouch				

CI AWARDS PROGRAMS: BEST AWARDS, INTEGRATION AWARDS

EPI AWARDS AND TNT AWARDS

Description

Commercial Integrator runs four different awards programs across the year.

Green Award

Product awards

Project awards

BEST Awards:

These are held at InfoComm. This event pays recognition to deserving AV products. There is an early-bird entry fee of $445, followed by the standard fee of $545 per product. Applicants submitting entries in additional categories for the same product are charged a further $325 for each. There are between 40 and 50 awards each year with approximately 180 entries. There are currently no green awards. To be eligible to for entry, the product must have either shipped in the 12-months prior to the deadline or is set to be launched in the 6-month period following. Products and services are judged on innovation, functionality, competitive advantages and benefits to the installer. With around 20 judges, there are no women and there is no range of ethnicity displayed across the panel. It was firmly assured - without prompting - that it is recognised this is not progressive for the industry and needs to change. This will be looked at for the next awards.

Integration Awards:

These take place at InfoComm. These awards honour commercial AV installations. Applicants pay $397 for the first project entered, then $247 for each additional entry. There is a $50 discount for an early-bird entry submitted within a given time-frame.There are 17 awards (16 project + one sustainability award), receiving between 40-50 entries. These awards are judged on the criteria of problem-solving ability. Again, there are approximately 20 judges; with no efforts to represent diversity in the industry. We were told this will change.

Judging for the above awards is handled in an interesting way. Integrators judge the product awards and manufacturers judge the project awards.

EPI Awards:

This event is at the Business and Leadership Conference, in Florida each February. Here, awards celebrate excellence in product innovation and target commercial technology in America. The first product entry fee stands at $349 and $249 for any subsequent entries. For non-NSCA members, the first entry is $549; with subsequent entries being $449 each. In 2019, it was recorded that these fees covered operational costs and marketing, as well as a small share left for revenue. There are 7 awards, which received 80 entries back in 2019. To be eligible, products must be available for sale and shipment before April. Entries will be judged on: scalability, versatility, deployment cost, ease of use, ROI, ADA compliance, and energy efficiency of the products. Currently, there are no green awards. With 7-8 judges in 2019, there was no diversity. At the time, they stated that diversity is not based on gender. The focus was on diversity of knowledge, experience and company size.

TNT Awards:
These are held in February at ISE. These awards target commercial and residential technology in Europe. Early-bird entry costs $445, with a second option entry fee of $545 per product. Submitting the same product multiple times gives you a further fee of $325 for each additional category entered.There are 26 awards, with approximately 180 entries. There is no sustainability award. Again, with around 20 judges there is no diversity across the panel; but this is being looked into.

All of these awards are judged online by a panel of industry leaders alongside the editors of Commercial Integrator. The judges do not judge all of the entries, only those related to their area of expertise. Entries are judged using a points system. The total score for each entry is taken as an average from all the judges, disregarding their highest and lowest scores to avoid statistical bias. The winners are decided by the highest average score and are announced at their respective event.

A reason why an applicant won is briefly addressed in the awards ceremony, explaining how they met the list of criteria. This is elaborated upon in editorial, stating why they deserved to win. Unfortunately, entrants who did not win will most likely not be able to receive a reasoning as to why they were unsuccessful - as is often requested - because the judges' do not necessarily use the notes section while judging.

What you get

BEST Awards:
All entries are highlighted on the Commercial Integrator website's awards page, under the related category with a link to your website, product image and promotional description. All entries will receive social media coverage across all of Commercial Integrator's various platforms. Additional benefits for winners include: having your products printed in editorial, Award Winner's Logo, trophy, publicity on their website, as well as featuring in a webcast announcing the winners.

Integration Awards:
Incentives to applicants include the possibility of website publicity, and an extensive marketing campaign. Winning entries will receive coverage in the July issue of Commercial Integrator magazine, with more than 25,000 subscribers. Successful projects are given more media exposure on Commercial Integrator's website and for a longer period of time. They will receive recognition during the awards show, and the Winner's Logo represents your achievement on your personal company's website and in your email signature line for one year following the awards

EPI Awards:
All award entries feature on Commercial Integrator's website, and are featured in an issue of NSCA's newsletter as well as their e-newsletter. Winners receive a trophy, social media coverage, editorial features, a Winner's Logo and participate in an interview style video published by NSCA.

TNT Awards:
TNT entrants will receive: online promotion on Commercial Integrator, editorial listing, social media exposure, permitted use of the Winner's Logo (with a stated value of $1,500), and an engraved plaque.

Copper Leaf Assessment

General

These awards require some of the highest entry fees in our research. In 2019, the organisers explained that the majority of this goes towards administration and staging. These entry fees are also used towards the cost of the trophies. Although a steep fee, you get some of the best coverage, so in publicity terms it can be good value. This is accessible to larger, more established organisations but it does disadvantage small, newer companies who will most likely not be able to afford this. For the Best and Integration awards, whilst it is a nice idea that integrators and manufacturers judge each others work, there is a potential conflict of interest for the Integration awards where a manufacturer may favour a project that uses its products.

All the awards are largely handled by a project manager, independent of the editorial team, which reduces but does not eliminate potential influence of editorial interests.

CI was very forthcoming with the information they offered in regards to: BEST Awards, TNT Awards and Integration Awards.

We have not been able to discuss the EPI Awards, so our research relies heavily on what is accessible online as well as drawing upon our 2019 report.

Best Awards

We are concerned that the Best awards allow for products that may be released in the future, particularly due to the supply chain crisis. If the product is not released within six months do they withdraw the award?

Another observation is that a lot of similar manufacturers win most years. Whilst many of these are some of the leading AV manufacturers, 55% of all winners have won more than once. In particular Creston has won 13% of all awards over the past eight years.

BEST TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
2N	Almo	Aurora Multimedia	AtlasIED	Acoustical Surfaces	Aptovision	Assa Abloy	AMX (3)
Aurora Multimedia	Assa Abloy	AVer Information	Aurora Multimedia	Audinate	Assa Abloy	Atlona	Assa Abloy
Axis Communications	AudioControl	AVI-SPL	Axis Communications	Barco	Audinate	Audio Technica	Audio Science
ClearOne	AVer Information	Axis Communications	Belden (2)	Chief	Barco (2)	Aurora Multimedia	Aurora Multimedia
Crestron (2)	Axis Communications	Bluesound	BenQ	CloviTek, Inc	Biamp	Barco (3)	Barco (2)
D-Tools	Biamp	Canon	Biamp	Crestron	Chief	BenQ (2)	Biamp
Da-lite	BrightSign	Cleerline	Bogen Communications	D-Tools	Cleerline	Bolin	Cambridge Sound Managment
Dayton Audio	Chief	Crestron (4)	Bosch	Dataton	Creston (6)	Bosch	Chief
Eaton (2)	Cleerline	D- Tools	Brightline	Digital Projection	D- Tools	Brightsign	Crestron (6)
Epson	Crestron	ELO	BrightSign	Draper (2)	Draper	Cambridge Sound Management	D-Tools
Exerts Almo	D-Tools	Epson (2)	Comprehensive Connectivity	Electro-Voice	DVI Gear	Cleerline	Digital Projectiion
HuddleCamHD	Da-Lite	JBL	Crestron	Extron	EnGenius	Cloud	Draper
Just Add Power	Epson	Kramer (2)	D-Tools	JBL	Epson	Control4	Epson
LG	ICRON	Lowell	Da-Lite	Kramer	Extron (2)	Crestron (5)	Extron (2)
Matrox	Kramer (3)	Mimo Moniters	Dataton	Lencore	Leyard (2)	D-Tools	Global Cache
Maxhub	LG (2)	Navori Labs	Digital Projection	LG	LG	DVI Gear	Honeywell (2)
Meyer Sound	Lyn Tec	NEC	Extron	Listen Technologies	Lyn Tec	EnGenius	IC Real Tech
Microflex Pro	Moniter Audio	NovaStar	Just Add Power	Matrox	Middle Atlantic	Extron	JBL
Middle Atlantic	Navori Labs	Planar	Middle Atlantic Products (2)	Mersive Technologies	Nextivity	Gefen	Mersize

Nextivity	Nextivity	Premier Mounts	Nextivity	Middle Atlantic Products	Peerless AV	JBL (2)	Meyer Sound
NovaStar	NovaStar	RealMotion	Premier Mounts	MXL	QSC	Kilpsch	Middle Atlantic (2)
Renkus	Planar	Renkus Heinz	Pro Video Instruments(2)	Nextivity	Razberi	Kramer	Oblong Industries
Rp Visual Solutions	Samsung	Salamander Designs	Samsung	Nortek	Shure	LG	Package
Salamander Designs	Sharp	Samsung	Shure (2)	NovaStar	Steward Filmscreen	Luma Stream	Panamax
Samsung (3)	Shure	Shure	SiliconCore Technology Inc	Nureva	SureCall	Mackie	Panasonic
Sharp (2)	Singlewire Software	Singlewire Software	Userful	Open Mesh (2)	Vaddio (2)	Middle Atlantic	Planar
Shure	Venstar	SoundBlox	Vaddio	Peerless-AV	Vivtek	Nextivity	RGB Spectrum
Somfy Systems	WolfVision	SurgeX		QSC	Yamaha	Panamax	Shure
Sony		Vitec		RTS		Peerless AV (2)	Somfy Systems
		Wilson Electronics		Samsung		Planar	SureCall (2)
		WolfVision		Somfy Systems		Platinum Tools	Symmetric
				SurgeX		Samsung	Tekvox
				Vaddio		Screen Innovations	Vaddio (2)
				ViewSonic (2)		Shure	Williams Sound
				Yamaha		Somfy Systems	X20 Media
						Sunbrite	
						Tempest	
						Tripp Lite	
						Wahsega Labs	
						Wyrestorm	
						Yale	
						ZeeVee	
						Yale	

31% of all awards have been won by 11 companies, including 13% of all awards by Crestron.

FUTURE BEST OF SHOW AWARDS: INSTALL, AV TECHNOLOGY, PSN AND TVBE

Product awards

Project awards

Description

These awards run throughout the year at various shows. In this research, we have chosen to focus on ISE and IBC. All four awards offer an early-bird entry fee of £365 until an allocated deadline has been reached. After that deadline the price increases to the standard cost of £410. These fees are primarily used to cover admin costs and create revenue.

In 2019, these awards varied in how many you could enter, being anywhere between 5 and 21. All applicants must submit an entry statement and photos of their product. Exhibitors at IBC/ ISE judge on: quality, relevance, design, business/operational benefits, innovation, technical excellence, cost-effectiveness and game-changing ability. There are no environmental criteria and there is no green award.

Entries are judged by a team of Future publishing staff and other independent journalists who visit applicants' exhibition stands at the respective trade shows to evaluate the product in person. The judges' identities remain undisclosed, even when visiting the stands. The judges are given a set of criteria and use a points system to rank each entry. The winners are decided from both the statement and exhibition experience and are published online following the event. Judges do not discuss entries with one another but report back to a chairman.

There is no reason given as to why a product won.

What you get

Nominees and winners benefit from: dedicated editorial coverage, digital and social media exposure, a winner's logo for all successful entries, and an official nominee logo to use in marketing. Additionally, winners are awarded with a written certificate in a frame at the time of the show, as well as a brief mention on the magazine website.

Copper Leaf Assessment

As with some other awards, we question the technical and experienced knowledge of the AV industry when using journalists as judges. With respect to journalists, they lack the technical experience of industry practitioners. The lack of consensus and discussion between them does not help either. We feel that the judging is a missed opportunity. Given that a judge visits the stand, they could request a presentation and ask questions, rather than attend incognito - if they even attend at all...

The judging process is fairly opaque, so it is not clear how much you can really value these awards. As reported in 2019, not all entries win, but the win ratio appears to be towards the higher end of our research.

IABM BaM AWARDS (BROADCAST AND MEDIA AWARDS)

Description

The BaM Awards are two separate awards events that take place at NAB show in Las Vegas and IBC in Amsterdam. They hold these awards as a way of "recognising innovation and creative benefits". Using direct entry, submissions for BaM Awards are open to every company (whether an IABM member or not) that has launched a new product or service within 12 months of the submission date.

Each year, judges review more than 100 entries across 10 awards. Entry material requirements on the application form include: product name/submission title, launch date, brief summary (75 words), product/service function (60 words), detailed summary (300 words), why the chosen product deserves to win (300 words), state whether the product is embargoed or not, and if the work is their own or shared (give credit where credit is due).

IABM Platinum and Gold Members are eligible for 2 complimentary entries. Silver, Silver100 and Startup Members are eligible for 1 complimentary entry. For any additional entries, IABM Members will pay £195/$300 (plus VAT where applicable) per entry. Whereas, non-IABM Member entry is charged at £295/$450 (plus VAT where applicable) per entry.

The judging process is explained openly online, with an FAQ link regarding commonly and presumedly asked questions about the awards. Judging is based on the perceived industry impact within the chosen category, in terms of end user benefit, value for money, innovation, implementation, performance or new opportunities created. Your application must highlight and clarify to the judges how your product, project or service meets these criteria. There is rarely enough time for the judges to research applications beyond what they receive from you. This time limitation could work against the genuine nature of the awards, as it may imply that the judges do not have enough time to rigorously and thoroughly judge all of the award entries.

Judging is carried out by a panel of 40 independent, specialist judges who represent all aspects of the broadcast and media industries. The judges' names are not made public. The individuals only work on their chosen categories. Following a two-stage judging process, the shortlisted entries will be announced two weeks prior to the show with the winners for each award announced at the event.

What you get

Entries on the final shortlist are filmed at the shows for a thirty-second video profile which is shown at the awards presentation. Winners have their video profile and an interview published on the IABM website. The IABM twitter account provides updates on shortlisted entries and winners. The winners are awarded with a trophy and then published on the website following the event. They receive a reason as to why they won, with the judges' comments then published in editorial.

Copper Leaf Assessment

The BaM awards stand up quite well for quality of judging with a lot explained online. Unfortunately, this year BaM did not participate in a call with us or fill in our form asking detailed questions about their awards.

IABM don't state who their judges are, but they told us in 2019 that they strive to enlist an independent, non-affiliated panel of experts consisting of a diverse group of specialists from several different countries. Some parts of the process prove less clear than others, particularly in the early stages where submissions are handled internally before external judges are involved. However, the final choices remain an independent decision from the IABM.

InAVate APAC Awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

Description

The AV Integrations Awards Programme for Asia Pacific is held in November. This event celebrates innovative technology, well-executed projects, and the people involved. As last shown on their website in 2021, they had 7 project awards, plus 3 people recognition awards.

Entry material requirements for project awards include submitting a form; you can create your own or use the template they offer on their website. Eligible projects must have been completed within a given time-frame. In the entry document, you are expected to include: an overall summary, client brief and requirements, entry statement and objectives, consideration of the environment, and external testimonial. Video links are also encouraged.

The Consultant of the Year Award can be nominated as part of a project entry. Where possible, worthy winners should demonstrate the ability to present original proposals, develop innovative solutions, successfully co-ordinate different stakeholders and contractors within a project, and deliver projects on time.

Distributor of the Year and AV Icon individual merit awards should be submitted separately to project awards. Distributor of the year will be marked against the following criteria and failure to address these points will result in your entry being marked down. You should demonstrate why you feel qualified for the Distributor of the Year Award, what your business has achieved in the past 12-months, and your company's biggest achievement over the past year. Documents answering these required questions must not exceed 2,000 words. In regards to the AV Icon Award, you will be asked to upload a statement explaining why the individual in question is a worthy winner.

What you get

Winners will receive video coverage, which will then be published on their website.

Copper Leaf Assessment

The requirements for the judging material and the specific criteria are quite strict, but we are unsure of how rigorous the judging process actually is. The judging expertise and experience of the panel is unknown, as they do not disclose their identities. This leads us to question the credibility of these awards. And, considering they use a points system to judge, questions arise as to who handles these scores and what happens to the results after they are collected. It would be reassuring to know if an impartial, third party - independent of InAVate APAC - handled the votes.

InAVate declined to participate in our research.

InAVation AWARDS

Description

The InAVation Awards are held in the evening during ISE, Barcelona. These awards celebrate innovative, unique technology, well-executed projects, distributors and consultants of successful projects. There are three main categories which each follow different judging processes.

Product awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

Green Award

Within these categories, there are 25 awards; including a sustainability award. In 2019, InAVation collected a total of around 300 entries. Entries must have been created within one year of the entry date. Their submission must reflect a solution-focussed approach and demonstrate innovation.

For technology awards, a panel of judges use a scoring system to put together a shortlist of entries based on the statements submitted by applicants. Winners are decided from this shortlist using public voting, which is limited to one per individual and weighted by job function from end users (worth 10 points) through to distributors (worth 5 points).

In line with our 2019 report, we think that the project and people awards are judged by internal and external panels. The winners for all categories are announced at the InAVation Awards dinner. We think that a VoiceOver on the night briefly explains the judges' choices for each winner.

What you get

Winners receive a sustainable trophy and are filmed on the night of the awards. This video is later published online on the InAVate website, which is updated throughout the event as winners are announced. Shortlisted entries are published on the InAVation website. Some of the winners will also be featured as case studies in InAVate magazine. Additionally, if an applicant is unsuccessful, they can get feedback four weeks after the shortlist has been announced to query their entry.

Copper Leaf Assessment

Having previously and very vocally criticised the use of entry fees, InAVate now do charge a modest fee for entering some categories. We just wish we knew more about how these awards were judged. The process is amongst the most opaque.

Statistics show that year on year a significant proportion of awards are won by the same companies; Christie, Crestron and Extron have won 25% of all technology awards over the past eight years, with the latter winning every single year.

Whilst these are all major companies, other awards do not have the same consistency of win for these entrants.

InAVate declined to participate in our research stating that they didn't feel they needed to justify their awards. We disagree. If they expect people to spend time and effort preparing entries and to pay to attend their event, it is reasonable to expect them to demonstrate that their awards are judged competently and fairly.

InAVate AWARDS TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Avocor	Arthur Holm	Active Audio	Absen	Arthur Holm	AMX by Harman	Absen	Biamp Systems
Crestron	Barco	AV Stumpfl	AV Stumpfl	Biamp Systems	Barco	Albiral	Chief
Datapath	Christie	Crestron	Christie	Clevertouch	Chirstie	AMX by Harman	Christie
Extron	Crestron	Digital Projection	Clevertouch	Crestron	Crestron	AV Stumpfl	Crestron (2)
Future Software	Extron	Epson	Datapath	Datapath	Digital Projection	Bosch	Extron (2)
HYPERVSN	Genelc	Extron	d&b audiotechnik	Epson	Extron	Christie	Green Hippo
INFiLED	Gude Sytems	Riedel	Digital Projection	Extron (2)	JBL	d&b audiotechnik	Kramer
QSC	Samsung	Peerless-AV	Extron (2)	Kramer	Kramer	Extron	SiliconCore
Renkus Heinz	Shure	Triple Play	Kramer	LG	Matrox	Kramer	Stardraw Design
Shure			Peerless-AV	Panasonic	Meyer Sound	Panasonic	Tannoy
			Powersoft	Panasonic	Powersoft		
			Vaddio	Riedel			
				Shure			
				TOA			

Christie, Crestron and Extron have won 25% of all InAVation technology awards

MONDO AWARDS

Project awards

Description

Held as two separate awards events: one at Frankfurt Pro Light and Sound for projects in EMEA & APAC regions; and the other at InfoComm USA for projects in the Americas. For each show, there are eight categories for different types of installation projects. Applicants pay a £100 entry fee for their first project and discounts are available for subsequent entries.

Anyone is able to submit a project for judging - which is carried out online - by providing a written statement and optional video. Shortlisted entries are sent to judges across the globe, who independently evaluate all projects using a points system before submitting these scores to be combined.

The judges and their areas of expertise, as well as judging criteria, are all listed on Mondo's website and the organisers are open to enquiries about the process. Within the entry submission, all applicants must include the other parties involved in their project, to ensure everyone's achievements receive fair recognition.

The award is given to the highest scoring entry in each category and announced at the respective awards show.

As well as an award for each type of installation, an overall winner is also announced.

No information is given as to why an entry won.

In 2023 Mondo plan to give a green award for the first time.

What you get

Winners receive a sustainable, glass trophy.

Mondo distributes an awards brochure with their magazine following the show. The publication features all shortlisted entries and category winners, spanning around seventy pages with detailed coverage of all the projects. Winners also have the option to publish adverts.

In the run-up to the event, Mondo's twitter account may also post a short profile about some of the entries they receive. After the closing date, shortlisted entries are announced in another tweet.

Copper Leaf Assessment

In 2019, Mondo confirmed that they were working towards more transparency and better processes. Since our last report, we have not seen much change in the way they run their awards. We have based our findings wholly on publicly available information. We received no response to our queries of a phone call or subsequent online form created to ask detailed questions about their awards.

NAMM TEC AWARDS

Description

These take place at the awards night in January, hosted by the NAMM Foundation. The awards are free to enter. Anyone can submit a product or project in one of 3 categories: technical achievement, creative achievement, or studio design project. The NAMM board compiles a list of all entries along with their own selections, from which they create the first shortlist. This shortlist is sent to a judging panel of 200 judges all over the world, selected by the NAMM board. The panel selects the final nominees who are announced in July. Shortlisted entries must provide a description and photos for a 'Digital Voter's Guide' and online voting opens in November. Only members of the NAMM Foundation, subscribers to some industry magazines or members of specific trade associations may vote. Eligible voters receive an individual email code to access the ballot. Voting aggregation is handled by an independent company and winners are announced at the awards show.

Product awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

What you get

Winners get a trophy; we cannot confirm whether these are sustainable to not. They are photographed during the awards show for extensive social media coverage by NAMM on the night. Winners are listed in 19 different industry magazines.

Copper Leaf Assessment

An independent company manages the voting process to prevent interference from the hosts, although the NAMM board decides the first shortlist. The voting process can be considered a step up from public online voting, as only those involved in the industry are invited to vote and individual access codes limit voting activity. However, there is no guarantee that all voters take appropriate time to consider all 120 entries, and the limitations of public online voting - albeit reduced in this process - are still present.

We have based our findings wholly on publicly available information. We received no response to our requests for a phone call or to fill out our online survey asking for more detail about their awards.

PARNELLI AWARDS

Product awards

People, company and team awards

Description

The Parnelli Awards are held in Anaheim, California around June. These awards use online public nomination to decide the potential winners. In the recent 2022 awards, there were 22 awards and considering they total over 40,000 combined subscribers to their magazines, this is an indication of how many nominations and entries they are capable of receiving annually.

The Parnelli Awards openly explain their judging process online. They claim that the nominations are tallied and reviewed for authenticity and accuracy by the panel. Following a two-stage judging process, up to six nominees for each category are then finalised and announced on their site, through an email blast and in Projection, Lights and Staging News and Front of House magazines. Then, individual subscribers (not just readers) are allowed to vote on their web site's secure voting page. They have imposed a one vote per subscriber rule, in which each vote must use the subscriber number printed on their copy of the magazine's mailing address label.

The judging panel consists of a Board of Advisors. Today the Board includes 19 of the industry's top professionals. Currently, this judging panel consists of only a 3:19 female to male ratio.

What you get

Winners will receive a personalised plaque on the night of the awards. We are unsure as to whether or not these are sustainable. Successful applicants will also be archived in 'past winners' on the awards website. Following the awards, the most recent winners will receive a brief justification as to why they won on the Parnelli website. This is great coverage and publicity, considering they have a reach upwards of 40,000 subscribers.

Copper Leaf Assessment

Currently, the Parnelli Awards are lacking in their initiative to represent diversity across the judging panel; only meeting a 3:19 female to male ratio.

They have attempted to put a safeguard in place to ensure fair and accurate online voting; by limiting votes to one per subscriber. However, this is undermined by the handlers of results being the awards Board of Advisors. Being directly involved with the awards may lead to questions about their intention and potential of altering the results. This cannot be confirmed, but is theoretically possible. If there was a third party involved, these awards would hold a lot more value. There has been a pattern across recent years - shown in our table of past winners - which showed product winners who continuously win.

The media coverage you receive from winning is a great incentive, when considering their large following of approximately 40,000 subscribers. If you win, this is an extremely influential platform to advertise your entry.

PLASA AWARDS

Description

The PLASA Innovation Awards are held in September at the PLASA Show in Olympia, London. The PLASA Show is a trade event open to anyone who works, or has an interest, in the entertainment technology industry. The PLASA Awards are widely respected throughout the entertainment technology industry; the awards recognise and rewards next-generation products and the people behind them. The awards are run in association with LSi magazine, which provides extensive exposure for all vetted entrants and winners of the awards. Products can be entered directly by the manufacturer or - with the manufacturer's permission - by an officially appointed representative exhibitor.

Product awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

Green Award

Nominated products must have been launched after the previous award show (within the last 12 months). Nominees must complete the online entry form in detail, with an image and technical specification. This information is available to the judges and is your choice to promote the innovative aspects of the product. To be advantaged, the product should align with at least one or more requirements in the entry criteria: improves technical practice, demonstrates a new style of thinking; introduces new technology, materials or technique, includes patents or unique intellectual property, and offers a new commercial advantage and improves safety. The form will include a brief product overview (100 words maximum), full product overview (unlimited word count), date of launch, date of emerge (if applicable), and ini some cases a URL link to technical specification.

PLASA charges an entry fee; to cover all administration costs, judging expenses and the cost of exhibiting the product in the Innovation Gallery at the PLASA Show. The entry fee for each nomination is £500 + VAT for exhibition, £750 + VAT for non exhibiting PLASA members, and £950 + VAT for non exhibiting non members. They say the fees are set at high rates given the level of publicity generated by the awards.

In 2022, the judging team was comprised of twelve independent technical specialists from a wide array of backgrounds.

The judges can award up to eight Innovation Awards, and one sustainability Award for products that show impressive credentials. There are no categories, just eight awards for innovation. However, the judges may choose to upgrade any number of these to 'gold' for particularly innovative products. Some years no gold awards are given, sometimes one, perhaps two. The PLASA Awards for Innovation are independently and impartially judged by a team of trusted industry experts. All successful nominees make a 5-minute presentation to a panel of judges who will visit their stand during the Sunday of the Show . The judging method is openly explained online. The judges visit the gallery and review the products, they are then given a judging pack with written entry information. They then discuss which products they would like to shortlist. Once this is mutually agreed by consensus, they divide into two groups and visit each stand. In some years, they have even brought a video crew with them. A company representative then gives a product presentation to the judges and answers any questions;

this video is later posted by LSi. The panel of judges then meet again, and if there are any further questions, the judges from one group may visit some of the other group's stands. The final decision is reached through consensus. At no time are PLASA or LSi aware of the judging process until it is complete. The PLASA Lifetime Achievement Award is based on nominated shortlists and internet voting.

PLASA have offered a green award for many years and it has rarely been awarded. To be eligible for a sustainability award you must have achieved: significant reduction in power use for its product type/application, effective use of renewable energy resources and a significant reduction of environmental impact of product life cycle. Note that this has not been given out every year - only when it has been truly deserved.

What you get

All nominated products are showcased in the Innovation Gallery at the PLASA Show, as well as all year round on the virtual Innovation Gallery. Pre-show exposure means the nominees benefit from inclusion in the PLASA Show Preview Issue of L&Si Magazine and online Innovation Gallery. Plus, the award entrees are promoted across the PLASA social media channels. At the show, nominated products will be exhibited on the Innovation Gallery - a key visitor attraction at the PLASA Show - power is provided to demonstrate the capability of the product (limitations apply). Winners will also receive a trophy on the evening of the event. In line with their rigid judging on the sustainability awards, their trophy is made from glass. Finally, post-show coverage includes the winners appearing on the LSi website and in the October issues of LSi and LSA magazines. Plus, all winners will remain on the show website all year round and in the virtual Innovation Gallery. The judges will co-write comments for the speech by the managing director of PLASA who announces the awards, these includes a few lines about each winner and details of some 'highly commended'.

Copper Leaf Assessment

PLASA itself and LSi, their magazine, have no involvement in the awards process other than for some administration in advance and the physical staging of the Innovation Gallery. The awards are handled by an independent chairman and team of judges.

There is no opportunity for influence from PLASA or the magazine. Some have raised questions as to how you can judge such a variety of sound, lighting, rigging, video and staging products without spotting them into categories. The criterion is simply 'innovation'. However other awards have also moved to more nebulous categories. Rather than 'loudspeaker' or 'projector', a category might be 'technology for conferencing'.

PLASA have not responded this year to participate in our research.

Based on internet voting, the lifetime achievement is not transparent at all. This is a shame as in comparison the Innovation awards are amongst the best.

PLASA AWARDS WINNERS

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Ayrton	Astera		Artistic License	Artistic License	City Theatrical	Artistic License	Avid
Minuit Une	Chauvet		Elation Lighting	Astera	Clay Paky	Clay Paky	d&b audiotechnik
Nicolaudie	Copper Candle		ETC	Avolites	Doughty	d&b audiotechnik	Eaton
PMI Gear	EM Acoustics		Nexo	Bose	Drop	D3 Technologies	Elation Lighting
Robe	Glensound Divine		Robe	ETC	Eaton	Hall Stage	ETC
Sauca	LANG		Shure	HOLOPLOT	Elation Lighting	Klang	Milos
Shure			SSE	PRG	Shure	LSC Lighting	Rc4 Wireless
XM Automation			Theatrixx	Robert Juliat	Stage Smarts	Ten 46	Robert Juliat
				TMB	Elation Lighting		

rAVe INFOCOMM (ISE IN OTHER YEARS)

Product awards

People, company and team awards

Description

Held Las Vegas (InfoComm), these awards have no entry fee, insisting that they avoid pay-for-play at all costs. rAVe sends reporters to every single booth on the show floor and shoots videos of every product shown. Exhibitors do not submit individual entries. They then assess their findings and winners are announced a few weeks later. In 2019, these awards changed from around 70 in previous years to between 100 and 120 being given at the two respective shows.

Unfortunately, the 2022 ISE Awards were not held as expected. They told us that they did not have enough staff to cover the event, which meant they felt that integrity and values embodied by the awards would be undermined if they went through with the awards. Not every booth would have been attended nor would they have received balanced coverage across all products. It would not have been fair, as they would have only been judging the entry based on the limited number of booths they were able to go to.

What you get

There are online announcements and a dedicated web page lists the winners.

Copper Leaf Assessment

rAVe visits each and every stand, but we do not know who these reporters are or their qualifications to judge thoroughly and effectively in the AV industry. Nor do we know what criteria is used to decide on a winner.

Given that the judging process is completely opaque, it is not clear how much you can really value these awards. We have based our findings primarily on publicly available information. Other than a brief statement they gave us no information about their awards.

rAVe READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Description

Product awards

Unlike the typical AV Awards, these are exclusively nominated by the readers. They receive between 80,000 and 90,000 nominations each year. After the initial nomination process, a shortlist is compiled and then announced, whereby readers vote again. rAVe take pride In the value of these awards, saying no one internally involved at rAVe has any influence. It is totally reader selected and trusted. Categories include those form manufacturers, websites, social media presence and products. It appears that nominations can be given for any product regardless of age, so sometimes a company will win for the same product in more than one year.

What you get

Winners receive a unique trophy; looking at photos is appears to be sustainably made. There are also online announcements and a dedicated web page lists the winners.

Copper Leaf Assessment

There is little information about how these awards are run, and in many ways you don't need much. It's very simple; one round of nominations and two rounds of voting.

However, there are no criteria upon which to judge, other than expecting thousands of voters to do their own research and assessment. We do not know how many entries are shortlisted, but assuming that there are at east two shortlisted per category, voters would have to review at least 60 entries. Few would assess that volume in thorough detail.

These awards have the narrowest set of winners. Over the past eight years, 60% of all awards have been won by eight companies and Barco alone have won 15% of all awards.

> ***60% of all rAVE readers choice awards have been won by eight companies.***

We cannot attach much value to these awards. Voting is done online by the public with no scrutiny over how they judge. Some companies run online campaigns to ask people to vote for them. There are no details over how the votes are handled by the organiser.

rAVE READER'S CHOICE AWARDS TECHNOLOGY WINNERS

2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Barco	Barco	Barco (3)	Barco	Barco (2)	Barco (3)	Barco (2)	Barco
BrightSign	BrightSign	BrightSign	BrightSign	BrightSign	Crestron	Biamp	Christie
Crestron	Crestron	Crestron	Christie	Crestron	Extron	Chief	Crestron
Epson	Epson	Epson (2)	Crestron	Epson	JBL	Christie	Digital Projection
Extron (2)	Extron	LG	Epson	Leyard	LG (2)	Crown	Extron
Logitech (2)	Jabra	Logitech	QSC	LG	Samsung	Epson	JBL
LG	NEC	Microsoft	LG	Logitech	Sennheiser	Extron	Listen Technologies
Microsoft	Planar	Samsung	Logitech	NEC	Visix	JBL	NEC
Planar DirectLight	Sharp	Shure	NEC	Shure		Listen Technologies	Panasonic
Poly Studio	Shure		Samsung			Martin by Harman	Peerless-AV
Vaddio	Yamaha		Shure			Shure	Sennheiser

SMART BUILDING AWARDS

Description

The Smart Building Awards owned by Essential Install Magazine are held in the Village Hotel, Farnborough in September. These aim to deliver the most representative, inclusive and up to date awards initiative in the AV/install world. These awards are completely free to enter. There are three categories: product, project and company. At the moment, they do not offer awards in the sustainability category. Entrants are not restricted to submitting for just one category, they can enter as many of the 25 awards as they wish.

Product awards

Project awards

People, company and team awards

Each award will be judged fairly by an expert panel based on the criteria set out for each category. The judges will individually score each entry. There is a qualifying period which will define which entries will be valid. This period was last set between January 2021 and June 2022. This means that any product launched, or project completed, before or after these dates will not be eligible to enter.

Each category has a 500-word limit, while a further 250 words is available to explain why you think you deserve to win the award. There are different criteria for each awards category, and while it is not mandatory to meet every criteria point, there will be a certain number of boxes you will have to check before your entry is eligible.

Product entries are judged based on three criteria. The judge will give a weighted score based on the overall quality of the product. Additional materials required include supplying up to three images of the product. They also require an image of the company's logo. Similarly, project entries are judged based on three criteria. The judge will give a weighted score based on the overall design and execution of the project; judging off the words provided. Additional scores will be given out for both customer satisfaction and innovation. In order to judge projects on design, entrants are asked to supply up to eight images, as well as an image of the company's logo. All entrants in all categories may also supply up to one page of supporting evidence; such as testimonials, press coverage, case studies and / or spec sheets.

What you get

Each winning entry will receive coverage across print; Essential Install magazine, digital platforms, newsletter and website, as well as dedicated smart building awards newsletter e-shots, underlining the excellence achieved their chosen field. The winners will receive their sustainable, glass trophy at the awards dinner.

Copper Leaf Assessment

Except for addressing the judging method in detail in regards to the criteria judges are assessing and the system of point scoring deciding the winner, we have no information about who handles the votes and the process of choosing the winner once scores have been collected. We do not know how involved the magazine is in the awards process, and whether involvement could bring about questions of bias.

We are trusting that the judges really are an expert panel with extensive knowledge and experience within the AV industry, but we do not know who the judges are, we do not know their qualifications, and the value they bring to these awards. If they are all experts in the awards they are judging, then these awards would be of respected value. But, if these judges are voting from a position of ignorance because they are assessing entrants unrelated to their specialty then how valuable would these awards really be?

We have based our findings wholly on publicly available information. We received no response to our requests for a phone call or to fill out our online survey asking for more detail about their awards.

SPORTS TV AWARDS

Project awards

People, company and team awards

Description

The Sports TV Awards take place in the DeLeMar Theatre, Amsterdam. These awards acknowledge companies, teams and individuals who have excelled in sports broadcasting and production that year. It is free to enter. Entrants submit using direct entry; all entries must have a direct European connection either through the company being put forward, the event being covered, the service being offered, or the initiative being undertaken. There are six awards within the people, company and project categories. Entry material requirements include an executive summary of your entry in no more than 200 words, written supporting documents and URLs for supporting video where required. There are restrictions against submitting video material. Sports TV do not issue an entry fee.

These awards include recognition in sustainability to those who can demonstrate an impactful contribution to the transition to a net-zero carbon and zero waste society. They actively honour diversity within the sports production and media industry, encouraging the inclusion of women. In the One Planet and Women's Diversity categories, the initiatives put forward in the entry must have been in action in that same period,

These broadcast and production awards are judged by a panel of industry experts; made up of SVG editorial and independent industry figures under the guidance of SVG Europe themselves. They gather 24 judges, whose names will be made public on their website in the lead up to the event. Although the judges' names are made public, which would make them more traceable, there has been an attempt to put safeguarding methods in place to protect the authenticity of the results. They state clearly on their website that any malpractice and inappropriate contact may lead to disqualification from the current and future awards.

The judges use the written documents provided in the application as the main source of material to judge by. The sporting event, tournament, league, race or match being entered for an award must have occurred within the 12-month period prior to the awards, and been televised publicly by a broadcaster or online service.

What they get

After the initial process, a shortlist of entries in each category will be announced. Each shortlist will be contacted personally. Sports TV aim to make a public announcement before the end of July to publicise the shortlists before the awards take place. During the shortlist period, SVG will offer publicity exposure support but it may be expected in return that the shortlists push SVG Europe's publicity - primarily through social media coverage across various platforms - in the run-up to the event. The judges' comments and reasons regarding the winning entries are published editorially.

Copper Leaf Assessment

Sports TV have encouraged gender diversity and green initiative by running the One Planet and Women's Diversity awards. These awards strive for inclusion and equality, as well as bettering the planet in an already challenging industry of broadcast and production.

Although the judging panel includes independent industry experts, it is infiltrated by SVG editorial figures and is under the guidance of SVG Europe themselves. Therefore, judging could be somewhat influenced by editorial interests.

A justification for the judges' decision is published editorially. The shortlist process and detailed comments released afterwards leads us to believe the entries are genuinely and thoroughly judged to award the most deserving winner, despite the possibility of editorial and entrant influence.

TPMEA

Description

The TPMEA Awards were held most recently in May 2022. They present people awards for deserving AV professionals in Middle East and Asia.

People, company and team awards

They have adopted a two-phase approach where people can be nominated, or individuals can nominate themselves. The editorial team then shortlist about 5 entries per each category. There are 22 awards up for grabs. In their recent awards, they received 900 nominations from more than 4000 votes. All except three of the awards are judged through public voting; 3 awards are judged by selected and respected individuals (judging panel). Editorial collates their own material in regards to what they use to judge the entries by.

There is no cost to enter the TPMEA Awards. The three awards that are judged conventionally consist of a judging panel comprised of previous year winners. There are approximately 20 judges for these. All of the judges do judge all of the entries, and the judges' names are made public prior to the event. Considering that the judging panel is full of previous year winners, it is inferred that they would be more than qualified to judge; making informed and knowledgeable decisions.

During the shortlisting process, the judges do not confer with one another. The top 5 finalist list is decided by the ones with the most nominations. They make the names of the finalists public a month prior to the event, and then they leave it to the public to vote for the winner. Once all of the scores have been collected, the magazine handles the votes, so there is that doubt that it could be theoretically possible for them to ignore all of the data, and alter their results. There is no reason published or given as to why the winners were chosen other than "the most amount of votes is why it won".

What you get

Shortlisted nominations are published on the website, receiving editorial and social media coverage. There is not too much media coverage for shortlists or winners. As well as the above, the winners also receive a sustainable trophy.

Copper Leaf Assessment

The judging could be considered somewhat rigorous, taking into account the experience and knowledge of the judging panel and the time they have to judge all of the awards thoroughly. However, the judging is done independently - without conferring with one another - and then individual scores are handed over to the magazine. We believe it would be beneficial for the judges to meet and discuss their thoughts on the entries to give a more meaningful, deserved award.

They plan to hold their next awards event in the first quarter of 2023.

TPMEA were extremely forthcoming and gave detailed responses in our call.