

Cannes Lions accused of copying NYF judging procedures

NEW YORK, US: The Cannes Lions advertising awards announced last week that they are changing their judging system after what Advertising Age described as "Last Year's Media-Judging Scandal" with "widespread accusations of cheating."



Now Cannes Lions is claimed to have copied the New York Festivals' four-year-old judging system whereby a large jury selects the shortlist and then a jury of 30 senior judges selects the trophy winners using a new scoring system.

"It's unfortunate an organisation as large and successful as the Cannes Lions cannot improve their judging system without copying our innovations and risking another scandal and lawsuit. We created the two-tier judging system four years ago and now have a patent pending on our revolutionary matrix scoring system to protect our intellectual property from being copied by others. Both of our systems are widely heralded by the international advertising community as being revolutionary and the best judging system in the industry." said Jim Smyth, CEO of the International Awards Group, LLC ("IAG"), which owns the [New York Festivals International Advertising Awards](#), for the World's Best Advertising® as well as five other international award competitions.

"As owners and organisers of award competitions it is our responsibility to create and maintain an honest and effective judging system. It is not the entrant's responsibility. Years ago, IAG designed a bullet-proof system to prevent cheating because jury members are locked-out from scoring work from their own agency and or network. This preventive measure clearly demonstrates to the international advertising community, that we are the global leaders when it comes to organising and running clean and successful award competitions, one they can truly trust."

"Furthermore, the 370+ members on the New York Festivals [Grand Jury](#) combined with the 30+ CCO members on the [Executive Jury](#) continues to be the largest advertising jury ever assembled and combined they cast more than 330,000 votes each year in selecting the winners, an unprecedented number of votes in the annals of advertising award competitions. Our market share has grown significantly because of our innovations, which is causing shifts and reactions in the awards industry. That's what we do, innovate. And when called upon, litigate to protect our valuable assets," said Smyth.

This is not the first dispute between IAG and Cannes Lions. Smyth said that IAG has been engaged in an on-going dispute in Asia with Haymarket and Cannes Lions related to claims of trademark infringement regarding IAG's [AME Awards, for Advertising & Marketing Effectiveness](#) competition, which was launched throughout the world in 1994. Haymarket now joined by Cannes, claim their Asian Marketing Effectiveness Awards, also known as AME Awards in Asia, was launched in a few Asian countries around 2002 and they have been trying to bar IAG's use of the acronym AME in Asia. However, Haymarket and Cannes have since changed the name of their competition to Festival of Asian Marketing Effectiveness and are no longer using the acronym AME.