



## All About IAAPA Awards

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### **Our Purpose:**

The IAAPA Awards Program honors excellence, innovation, and leadership across the global attractions industry. Through a prestigious, transparent and respected recognition platform, we celebrate those who raise the standard of guest experiences operational excellence, booth exhibition, and creative achievement.

### **Why?**

By recognizing innovators and showcasing best practices, IAAPA Awards foster a culture of continuous improvement and pride throughout our global community. They encourage members to learn from one another, creating a powerful cycle of shared knowledge and inspiration.

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# IAAPA®

# AWARDS

## Awards Events

### IAAPA LEGENDS

A celebratory gala that honors the most influential figures in the global attractions industry. LEGENDS celebrates past and present IAAPA Hall of Fame inductees, while investing in the future of the industry by benefiting the IAAPA Foundation through silent and live auctions.



### IAAPA Honors

A multi-day industry awards celebration that highlights innovation, excellence, and leadership across the attractions world. Featuring award winner panels, insights from award-winning projects, keynote sessions, networking opportunities, and exclusive industry experiences, this event highlights the ideas, projects, and people shaping the future of attractions.



Want to learn more? Visit: [www.IAAPA.org/Awards](http://www.IAAPA.org/Awards) or reach out to [DCook@IAAPA.org](mailto:DCook@IAAPA.org)



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# Awards Categories

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## **Individual Achievement**

IAAPA's Individual Achievement Awards honor outstanding professionals whose leadership, dedication, and innovation inspire and elevate the attractions industry. This program includes regional awards such as the Inspiration, Service, and Young Professional awards, highlighting both seasoned leaders and up-and-coming talent who drive industry growth, mentorship, and service, as well as the IAAPA Hall of Fame.

Awarded at: IAAPA Honors and IAAPA LEGENDS (Hall of Fame)

## **Brass Ring Excellence**

IAAPA's Brass Ring Excellence Awards recognize outstanding achievements across operations and attractions throughout the global attractions industry. The awards celebrate creativity, innovation, and operational excellence, from immersive dining experiences and marketing campaigns to sustainability initiatives and live entertainment productions.

Awarded at: IAAPA Honors

## **Brass Ring Exhibitor**

IAAPA's Brass Ring Exhibitor Awards recognize the best exhibitor booths and products showcased at IAAPA Expos around the world. Reflecting IAAPA's long-standing tradition of highlighting excellence on the trade show floor, these awards spotlight standout new products, and impactful exhibit designs that engage visitors and elevate the expo experience.

Awarded at: IAAPA Expos

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# Individual Achievement Awards

## Hall of Fame Award

The highest honor bestowed by IAAPA, celebrating individuals whose exceptional contributions have shaped the global attractions industry. Established in 1990, this recognition honors pioneers, visionaries, and leaders whose achievements have had a lasting impact on the industry.

## Service Awards

Honoring individuals whose dedication and volunteer efforts have profoundly enriched IAAPA, their communities, and the broader attractions industry. Recipients are recognized for their leadership, mentorship, and commitment to advancing IAAPA's core values.

## Inspiration Awards

Honoring leaders whose passion, vision, and achievements have significantly influenced and elevated their region's attractions community. This award highlights those whose contributions inspire growth, creativity, and excellence within the industry.

## Young Professional Awards

Recognizing rising stars early in their careers who demonstrate leadership, integrity, teamwork, and a strong commitment to professional growth. It honors emerging professionals who exemplify the promise and future of the attractions industry.





## Brass Ring Excellence Awards

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### Description:

The Brass Ring Excellence awards honor operational excellence across a multitude of categories and subcategories. From creative marketing campaigns and delicious food & beverage items to groundbreaking entertainment, forward thinking sustainability and safety initiatives, and innovative merchandising, they are the highest honor that facilities, attractions, and companies can receive from IAAPA. All 29 categories are listed below. For full descriptions and criteria please visit [www.IAAPA.org/excellence](http://www.IAAPA.org/excellence)

### Food & Beverage

- Best New Menu Item (Year-Round and Limited Operation)
- Best New F&B Special Event or Festival
- Best New F&B Build or Renovation

### Human Resources

- Best Talent Acquisition Program
- Best Training Program
- Best Health and Wellness Program
- Best Reward, Recognition, and Retention Program

### Marketing

- Most Creative Outdoor Marketing Campaign
- Most Creative Traditional Marketing Campaign
- Most Creative Social Media Marketing Campaign
- Most Creative Integrated Marketing Campaign

### Sustainability

- Best Sustainability Initiative

### Games & Merchandise

- Best Custom Merchandise or Game Prize
- Best Custom Merchandise Collection
- Best Individual Merchandise Display
- Best Collective Merchandise Display

### Live Entertainment

- Most Creative New Theatrical Production (Limited and Extended Run)
- Most Creative New Haunt Production
- Most Creative New Holiday Production
- Most Creative New Atmosphere Production
- Most Creative New Spectacle

### Constituency Awards

- FEC of the Year
- Immersive Experience of the Year
- Museum or Science Center of the Year
- Natural or Adventure Attraction of the Year
- Zoo or Aquarium of the Year

# Brass Ring Exhibitor Awards

## Description:

The Brass Ring Exhibitor Awards recognize creative booth design and overall exhibitor excellence at IAAPA expos in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Orlando. Award categories are organized by booth size. The Best New Product Awards recognize the most innovative technologies, rides, supplies, arcade games, and other products introduced during the current awards calendar year. These awards are presented only at the IAAPA Expo in Orlando and also include recognition for new product concepts that have not yet been fully produced.

### The Image Award

Considered the "best of the best," the prestigious Image Award is presented to the single most outstanding booth at IAAPA Expo. All applications for Best Exhibit at IAAPA Expo are considered for this top honor.

### The Impact Award

Similar to the Image Award, the Impact Award is given to one best new product that debuted within the awards year, a game-changer that truly WOWs the guest. All Best New Product applications, with the exception of the Best New Concept categories are considered for the Impact Award.

### Best New Product Categories

Major Ride/Attraction  
Family Ride/Attraction  
Water Park  
Ride/Attraction  
Patron Participation  
Ride/Attraction  
Applied Technologies  
Games and Devices  
Exhibits, Thematic  
Displays, and Supplies  
Best New Product  
Concept



# Submission Process

All IAAPA Awards programs follow a similar application process, using our online application system:

1. Applications posted on our application platform and are available to apply to. Applicants can use their IAAPA username and password to log in or create a new username and password for the system. View open applications at [www.IAAPA.org/apply](http://www.IAAPA.org/apply)
2. Applicant reviews criteria and gathers applications to submit by the posted deadline
3. Applicant fills out the application on OpenWater, finalizes information, and submits. Note that you may save and return to your application by clicking “Save” at the bottom of the page. You can access your application by
4. Judges review online and meet either on zoom or in person to select winners.
5. IAAPA will announce winners of excellence and individual achievement awards in early February, Hall of Fame in early September, and exhibitor awards at each respective expo.

## 2026 Application Timelines

**Award Type**

**Open Dates**

IAAPA Hall of Fame Awards .....	Mar. 2 - June 22
Expo Asia Exhibitor Awards .....	Mar. 2 - May 29
All Excellence Awards .....	June 1 - Oct. 16
Individual Achievement Awards .....	June 1 - Oct. 16
Best New Product .....	June 1 - Aug. 14
Expo Europe Exhibitor Awards .....	June 1 - Sept. 11
Expo Orlando Exhibitor Awards .....	June 1 - Nov. 6

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# Judging Process

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## **Hall of Fame, Regional Individual Achievement, and Brass Ring Excellence**

1. All applications are submitted by the due date, and are checked to ensure the submitting company is an IAAPA member in good standing.
2. Judging task forces are made up of seven (7) subject-matter-experts within the industry, and are meant to represent the diverse member base at IAAPA, with individuals from across regions and constituencies.
3. Judging task forces pre-judge online, and our judging system averages each submission's scores.
4. Judges receive the average scores for their categories during a zoom call, where they make a discussion based decision on the winner and two finalists for each category.
5. Judges are required to recuse themselves from judging any submissions that may have a conflict of interest in both portions of the judging process.

## **Brass Ring Exhibitor**

1. Submissions for Exhibitor Awards are submitted and judged in-person at the expo by a panel of judges on-site.
2. Best New Product also has a pre-judging session similar to what is listed above, where finalists are decided, but winners are selected at IAAPA Expo Orlando.

Want to learn more? Visit: [www.IAAPA.org/Awards](http://www.IAAPA.org/Awards) or reach out to [DCook@IAAPA.org](mailto:DCook@IAAPA.org)

# Global Awards Committee

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## Purpose:

The IAAPA Global Awards committee is responsible for the oversight and governance for IAAPA's awards program. IAAPA's awards exist to highlight, celebrate, and share achievements, excellence, and innovation within IAAPA's membership, the industry, and the communities we serve. The committee provides input on IAAPA's awards program including the following:

- In consultation with the IAAPA Team, determines what awards will be presented including deciding which awards should be maintained, eliminated, and added to the program.
- The criteria for all awards (with input from the awards judging task forces)
- The applications processes and guidelines
- Providing feedback to the IAAPA Team on ways to increase participation in the awards program
- Overseeing judging and selecting IAAPA members with relevant expertise to serve on adjudication task forces
- Outlining the goals of the winner celebration and recognition programs so the IAAPA Team can execute programs that achieve those goals
- Assisting the IAAPA Team in finding innovative ways to share the lessons learned and key takeaways from the award winners to inspire IAAPA members and celebrate the industry
- Working with other relevant committees to gather feedback on and refine the awards programs.