



# **TEA 30th THEA AWARDS NOMINATION TIP SHEET**

# OBJECTIVE OF THE TEA THEA AWARDS

To find excellence and celebrate it. The TEA Thea Awards Program was created to call attention to excellence in the creation and production of compelling places and experiences as well as to promote public discussion, awareness and respect for the arts and sciences that create and produce compelling places and experiences



# WHO CAN PROPOSE OR SUBMIT?

Anyone can submit any project!

- You can submit your own project! Please do!
- You can submit someone else's project.
- You do not have to be a member of the TEA in order to submit a project.
- The project creative and technical team does not need to include TEA members.
- The owner of the submitted project does not have to be a member of the TEA.



# HOW TO PROPOSE OR SUBMIT

- ✓ Complete the Submission Form [current judging cycle open until July 7, 2023]
- ✓ Start your Thea Submission Form: [2023 30th Annual Thea Awards Submission Form](#)

Themed Entertainment Association  
30th Annual TEA Thea Awards

Submission for Award Consideration

ELIGIBILITY:

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:

July 7, 2023 by 5:00PM PST

FURTHER INFORMATION:

[TheaAwards@TEAConnect.org](mailto:TheaAwards@TEAConnect.org) or  
call +1-818-843-8497

IMPORTANT: Please submit a separate  
award submission for each proposed  
project.

Start

press Enter ↵



# WHAT IF THIS ACHIEVEMENT IS OUTSIDE THE USA?

The Thea Awards are a symbol of international excellence. The Thea Awards Judging Committee is especially interested in soliciting and encouraging achievements located outside the USA. We try to make allowances for the distance, time and language barriers in order to give all submissions fair consideration.

- You do not have to be a member of the TEA in order to be eligible.
- Submissions outside the U.S. are encouraged
- Involving vendors or creative contributors who are outside the U.S. is encouraged
- Have interviewed participants and guests speak in their own language but provide English translations.
- On the video, voice translation is the best. Subtitles are almost as effective.



# CATEGORIES

You might fit into a traditional category such as those below.

We are always looking for something new on the horizon that we haven't seen before. So if you don't fit into one of these, choose "Other" and invent a category that accurately fits your project. Your category selection is just a suggestion. The Awards Judging Committee reserves the right to determine the appropriate category for proposed achievements.

**A** - Theme Park/Water Park

**B** - Attraction

**C** - Connected Immersion

**D** - Museum/Visitor/Heritage/Exhibit Science Centers/Exhibitions

**E** - Live Events/Show Spectacular

**F** - Aquarium/Zoo/Marine Park

**G** - Themed Retail/Hotel/Restaurant

**H** - Corporate Brand Experiences

**I** - Spectaculars, including but not limited to Lake Shows, Fountain Shows, Stunt Shows, Sound & Light Shows, Parades, etc.

**J** - Casinos

**K** - Family Entertainment Center

**L** - Interactive Theater/Interactive Experience

**M** - Themed Restaurant

**N** - Immersive/Themed Consumer Experiences

**O** - World's Fairs, World's Fair Pavilions

**P** - One-time events such as experiential marketing events, opening or closing ceremonies, etc.

**Q** - Other



# HOW IS THE JUDGING DONE?

Whenever possible, members of the Thea Awards Judging Committee will try to personally visit the achievement under consideration, during their regular business travel. Personal visits are not always possible, but this is not a barrier. Every year Thea Awards are given to several projects that were not personally visited by the judges. That's why the materials you submit are so important.



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# HOW CAN WRITING IMPROVE MY CHANCES?

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# WRITING MISTAKES TO AVOID

Sometimes the Thea Awards Judging Committee cannot give an award because very important information is missing. Be sure to explain:

- If you are submitting an “action theater” or “4-D Theater” concept, be sure to describe or show any in-theater effects. Otherwise the committee will have to assume it is only a movie and that there are no theatrical effects in the audience.
- If this is a re-purposing of an attraction building and/or ride system, please be sure to explain what elements of the original attraction remained but were re-purposed as well as what is new.
- Read the Submission Candidate form carefully. Each year the Committee receives forms from people who did not read the instructions. For example, the Buzz Price Thea Award Recognizing a Lifetime of Distinguished Achievements is for a person. Do not nominate a technology, an attraction or a theme park in this category.



# HOW CAN THE RIGHT VIDEO IMPROVE MY CHANCES?

A video is highly recommended. It is important that the TEA Thea Awards Judging Committee gets a strong sense of the typical guest experience in order to understand why a nomination represents an outstanding achievement. Committee members always prefer to visit a nominated project, but in cases where they cannot, a short video that highlights the entire key show elements in sequence is an effective way to communicate the visitor experience.



# HOW TO DO A GOOD VIDEO

The most helpful videos tend to have these characteristics:

- They are short: Three minutes is a good length. If a video extends beyond the three minute mark it tends to be less effective.
- Effective videos often (but not always) start with a brief overall description, providing a context for the achievement, where is it located, what were the objectives, etc.
- They clearly show what a typical visitor experience would be like from the guests' point-of-view. For example: Show the building exterior with guests arriving. Show the attraction entrance with people going in. Provide a view of each space inside, with people entering, leaving, etc. boarding a ride, moving on it, exiting, etc. Show what the audience sees, hears and experiences in each space. Tell the story. You can summarize what happens or verbally narrate effects that don't play on the video.
- It is okay to abridge as long as you communicate the basic experience.
- Summarize what the experience was about.
- Showing happy, enthusiastic guests is a big plus.
- Some Electronic Press Kits, or air-checks from local TV news coverage, can be helpful, but only if they show the things listed above.



# HOW TO DO A BAD VIDEO

The less helpful videos typically make these mistakes:

- "All sizzle and no steak." Lots of fast cuts of project highlights that fail to show a clear view of the guest experience.
- Videos limited to shots of the show on stage, which provide no views of the guests in the presentation space. This kind of video is often received for media-based attractions – showing only the film. This is fine if only the film is being considered, but if the entire attraction is submitted, it is more effective to show the overall guest experience.
- Television commercials tend to be visual teasers and don't truly convey the guest experience. This is particularly challenging when they sometimes use images that are not part of the actual attraction or achievement.
- Behind-the-scenes or "making of" footage is not helpful unless it explains some unique aspect of the guest experience.
- Don't show empty spaces. Preferable are shots showing what visitors do in those spaces.
- Do not show one-time events such as a grand opening, unless the nominated achievement is a Grand Opening. Instead, communicate the everyday guest experience.
- Limit guest testimonials: "Our family loved the show, it was the greatest thing we ever saw," etc. These can be effective if used in very short bursts. The risk is, of course, every candidate project has videos of guests saying pretty much the same things. As a result, the judges sometimes tune out if the bursts go on longer than 5-10 seconds.



# WHAT KINDS OF STILL PHOTOS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Illustrate the achievement from the point-of-view of the guest. It does not have to be lavishly prepared.

## **Show:**

- The outside of the attraction
- The entrance with people coming in
- Each area with people moving through, experiencing the attraction
- What do the visitors see and experience? How do they experience it?
- If your submission is a re-hab of a pre-existing project, show before and after photos of the space so the judges can see what is new and what was there before.

## **Not helpful:**

- A portfolio of "catalog" pictures of artifacts or scenic elements. Instead, show how the objects were displayed or scenery was installed, and how guests experienced them.
- A portfolio with too many behind-the-scenes shots of the exhibit or attraction fabrication or creative process. Remember to mainly show the guest experience.



# HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR EXCELLENCE ON A LIMITED BUDGET?

The Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement on a Limited Budget can be a sub category in any other category. It is reserved for projects created for budgets **totaling** less than US\$10 million.

- To be considered in this category, projects are required to submit a cost summary confirming **ACTUAL FINAL COSTS**, as further described below. Failure to attach such a budget breakdown will disqualify the submission from consideration in the Limited Budget category.
- Projects that do not qualify for or that do not wish to be considered in the Limited Budget category are not required to submit a cost summary.

## Costs to be included in the cost summary and within the US\$10 million limit:

- Concept and Story Development
- Design (show, architectural and all other design)
- Engineering (all types)
- Interior/exterior construction and finishes other than the base building
- Fabrication (sets, props, figures, casework, facades, etc.)
- Systems (lights, computers, dimmers, special effects, A/V, animatronics, etc.)
- Ride Systems
- Media Production
- Installation
- Programming
- Rehearsal
- Creative Leadership and Direction
- Production Management
- Reimbursables (such as printing, travel, etc.)

## Costs excluded from the US \$ limit:

- Base building
- Land acquisition costs
- Financing
- Marketing
- Pre-Opening Expenses (uniforms, shop/food inventories, cleaning supplies, etc.)

When submitting traveling exhibits, the itemized costs should include all costs up to and including delivery, installation, completion and opening of the exhibit in its first venue. The cost summary should not include the operating expenses or the costs of moving the exhibit to its second location.

In addition, to be considered in any of the Limited Budget categories, each project must answer the following, which will be on the submission form:

The owner/client who owns this project is:

- For profit
- Not for profit
- Government
- Not sure or Other. Explanation \_\_\_\_\_

In cases where the achievement is a rehab or remodel of a pre-existing attraction, it is especially important to explain what existed before (and therefore not included in the budget) and what is new (and therefore part of the US\$10 million).



# JUDGING THE OUTSTANDING TECHNICAL INNOVATION CATEGORY

The technologies reviewed by the sub-committee receive a score in each of four categories, with the final score being the total of the scores in each category.

- Benefit to Industry – How available is the technology to others in the industry, rather than a technology that is closely held by a single group for a specific purpose.
- Benefit to Guests – How much does the technology improve and/or heighten the guest experience?
- Evolution vs Revolution – Is the technology truly revolutionary, or is it the next step in a progression of existing technologies?
- Design & Presentation – Is the product or technology professionally designed and produced?

Within each of the above categories, each technology is scored from 1-5, with 5 points being the best score.



# THE THEA CATALYST AWARD - NEW IN 2021

The Thea Catalyst Award is given to an individual who has recently made an important impact benefiting our industry. Criteria include:

- Broadly Beneficial – This award is reserved for an individual who has achieved a real and positive impact that inspires and/or empowers those who create compelling places and experiences. This impact can be associated with a specific achievement.





**THANK YOU!**