

RNS REACH

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Ascential plc

Cannes Lions announces record-breaking award entry numbers

- *Changes chime with industry as continued growth confirmed* -

Ascential plc (the "Group" / LSE: ASC.L), the international, business-to-business media company with a focused portfolio of market-leading events and information services products, is pleased to announce record-breaking award entry numbers at Cannes Lions.

At close of entries, Cannes Lions can confirm that a record 43,101 (+7% year-on-year) award submissions have been received for 2016.

Overall there's been growth in 18 out of the 24 Lions, with standout expansion of the Product Design Lions (+92%) and notable increases in awards associated with the Festival's three specialist streams: Lions Entertainment, Lions Innovation and Lions Health.

The Entertainment Lions (formerly Branded Content and Entertainment) grew by 32% to 1,843, while the new Entertainment Lions for Music attracted 637 entries in their debut year.

The two awards linked to Lions Innovation have also grown. Launched last year, entries into the Creative Data Lions have risen by 16% and there was a leap of 69% in the Innovation Lions, echoing the continuing explosion of data and tech-led creativity. "We're seeing evidence that the role of start-ups in the branded communications ecosystem is key, with new businesses and their products not only buoying entries to these two Lions, but driving deep into others as well," said Lions Festivals Chairman, Terry Savage.

The Pharma Lions and the Health & Wellness Lions have again grown significantly (+35% and +42% respectively) with a total number of 2,607 entries, a dramatic growth which Louise Benson, Festival Director of Lions Health, attributes to the ethos and impact of the event. "By celebrating life-changing creativity, we're challenging the norms of a highly regulated industry and accelerating change. Such strong entry numbers are a powerful sign of growing creative confidence."

Other trends included strong support for craft. The inaugural Digital Craft Lions received 1,150 entries, Film Craft is up by 5% and the craft categories within other Lions have also surged this year.

"We are constantly evaluating every Lion, consulting with the industry to form a view on how they should be structured to reflect the creative landscape and remain relevant. It's important that the Lions remain a barometer for the industry, as well as an enduring creative benchmark," said Philip Thomas, CEO of Lions Festivals. "These numbers are also a reminder that there are ebbs and flows, and that it's always best to take a long-term view. The Outdoor Lions are just one example of that – a drop last year of 11% prompted commentary about a decline in the sector, but this year we've seen a determined bounce-back, with entries rising by 7%."

The full count is as follows:

	2015	2016
Creative Data Lions	619	715
Creative Effectiveness Lions	160	109
Cyber Lions	3,738	2,886
Design Lions	2,409	2,857
Digital Craft Lions	-	1,150
Direct Lions	2,813	3,097
Entertainment Lions	1,394	1,843

Entertainment Lions for Music	-	637
Film Lions	3,070	2,801
Film Craft Lions	2,205	2,315
Glass: The Lion for Change	166	155
Health and Wellness Lions	1,430	2,024
Innovation Lions	226	381
Integrated Lions	-	279
Media Lions	3,179	2,986
Mobile Lions	1,246	1,259
Outdoor Lions	5,037	5,365
Pharma Lions	432	583
PR Lions	1,969	2,224
Print & Publishing Lions	4,470	3,775
Product Design Lions	280	538
Promo & Activation Lions	3,196	3,458
Radio Lions	1,720	1,410
Titanium Lions	374	254
TOTAL	40,133	43,101

387 judges across all juries began their assessment of the work on Tuesday 14 June. The first results will be revealed on Day 1 of the 63rd International Festival of Creativity, Saturday 18 June at the Lions Health Awards Ceremony. For more information, visit www.canneslions.com.

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About Ascential plc

Ascential plc is a leading international media company that informs and connects business professionals in 150 countries through market-leading Exhibitions & Festivals and Information Services.

Ascential powers the prestigious Cannes Lions festival for the branded communications industry, the world's premier payments and financial services congress Money20/20, Spring Fair/Autumn Fair, the global fashion trend forecasting service WGSN and environmental risk data business Groundsure. 23 of Ascential's 32 product lines are market-leading and occupy number one positions.

Ascential exists to provide customers with world class content and connections empowering their businesses to be the best informed and best connected. Our products enable focus, growth and value.

Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity

The International Festival of Creativity, also known as Cannes Lions, is the world's leading celebration of creativity in communications and encompasses Lions Health, Lions Innovation and Lions Entertainment. Founded in 1954, the Festival takes place every June in Cannes, France. As the most prestigious international annual advertising and communications awards, over 40,000 entries from all over the world are showcased and judged at the Festival. Winning companies receive the highly coveted Lion trophy, a global benchmark of creative excellence, for Creative Data, Creative Effectiveness, Cyber, Design, Digital Craft, Direct, Film, Film Craft, Glass: The Lion for Change, Health & Wellness, Innovation, Entertainment, Media, Mobile, Music, Outdoor, Pharma, PR, Print & Publishing, Product Design, Promo & Activation, Radio,

Titanium and Integrated Lions. The Festival is also the only truly global meeting place for advertisers, advertising and communication professionals. More than 15,000 attendees from 95 countries attend a week-long programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks by worldwide thought leaders. As the networking and learning opportunity of the year, Cannes Lions is the must-attend event for anyone involved in brand communications.

Lions Festivals

Lions Festivals is the organiser of Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, Lions Health, Lions Innovation, Lions Entertainment and eurobest, as well as co-organisers, with its joint venture partners, of Dubai Lynx International Festival of Creativity, Spikes Asia Festival of Creativity, and the Asian Marketing Effectiveness & Strategy Awards. Lions Festivals is powered by Ascential.