



## ENTRY GUIDELINES

We are delighted to hear that you will enter this year's Beverage Digest Awards! All submission forms (attached to your purchase confirmation email) must be completed no later than:

**Friday, November 6, 2026.**

## ELIGIBILITY OVERVIEW

The Beverage Digest Awards focuses primarily on **single-serve, ready-to-drink, packaged, non-alcoholic beverages**, with the following exceptions:

**Single-serve Powders, Tablets, or Drops** These products are eligible for the following categories:

- Best Water Enhancer
- Best Marketing/Social Media Campaign
- Best Packaging/Label Design
- Best Technology Innovation

**Cannabis Beverages** THC- and CBD-infused beverages, including cannabis-based enhancers, drop-ins, and mixes, are eligible but compete exclusively in the Best Cannabis Drink category.

**Alcohol Products** Nearly all categories are for non-alcoholic beverages only. The one exception is Best RTD Cocktail, which is open exclusively to ready-to-drink cocktails (canned or bottled) that are spirit-, malt-, or wine-based, including:

- Hard seltzers
- Canned cocktails
- Hard teas and lemonades
- Hard kombuchas

*\*Pure-play spirits, wines, and beers (including non-alcoholic beers) are not eligible for any Beverage Digest Award category.*

**Non-Product Categories** Water Enhancers are eligible to enter the Best Marketing/Social Media Campaign, Best Packaging/Label Design, and Best Technology Innovation as long as they are single-serve. Cannabis and alcohol products are not eligible for these categories.

## THE AWARD CATEGORIES

There are 12 categories for this year's awards:

- Best New Brand [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best New Drink Concept [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best Brand Extension [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best Premium Drink [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best Functional Drink [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best Low/No Sugar Drink [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best Water Enhancer [Non-Alcohol Only] [Single Serve] [Powders, Tablets, Drops]
- Best Marketing/Social Media Campaign [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best Packaging/Label Design [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best Technology Innovation [Non-Alcohol Only]
- Best Cannabis Drink or Mix [Non-Alcohol Only] [Only Category for Cannabis]
- Best RTD Cocktail (Spirit, Malt or Wine based) [Alcohol Only] [Only Category for Alcohol]

Judging is based on the concept, packaging, design, and 200-word submission. No sampling is involved in the process.

An "entry" is one product entered into a single category. A product can be entered into multiple categories. Flavor variants of the same product (where flavor is the only differentiation) are not considered separate entries.

## ENTRY CRITERIA

All products entered must have been launched, created or rebranded no earlier than January 2024.

Pre-launch Products **are** eligible if they are in prototype/packaging stage by **October 2, 2026**.

For each category entry, you are required to submit the following:

- **200-word description** of why your product deserves to win
- **Two high-resolution product images** (JPEG and PNG files only)

*Note: For the category 'Best Marketing or Social Media Campaign' you are invited to send an additional 1-page document to include any video content or imagery relating to the entry.*

## JUDGING CRITERIA BY CATEGORY

The following guidance reflects what judges are looking for in your 200-word descriptions.

### **Best Low/No Sugar Drink / RTD Functional Drink / Cannabis Drink / RTD Cocktail:**

Judges are looking for a clear message about why your product is the most innovative/exciting product in this category and what makes it stand out. The judges would love to hear about flavor combinations, points of differentiation, added value, and market impact.

### **Best Water Enhancer**

Products eligible for this category include single-serve only powders, tablets, or drops. Judges are looking for a clear message about why your product is the most innovative and exciting in this category and what makes it stand out. The judges would love to hear about flavor combinations, points of differentiation, added value, and market impact.

### **Best Premium Drink**

As well as delivering on taste and refreshment, the judges are looking for premium drinks that feature top-quality ingredients and craftsmanship. In your entry, you may wish to consider how your product offers added value, differentiation and sophistication, as well as market impact and brand appeal relevant to the target audience.

### **Best New Drink Concept**

Judges are looking for new beverages that demonstrate innovative concept(s) and product differentiation. This includes drinks that have the potential to develop a new product category or extend consumer choice.

### **Best New Brand / Best Brand Extension**

The judging criteria for these two categories are identical. Judges are looking for newcomer brands or brand extensions that clearly communicate benefits from nutrition, health, functionality, or superior refreshment, and have delivered a unique proposition either through innovative ingredients or packaging, environmental sustainability, clean label, or ethical behavior.

### **Best Technology Innovation**

Judges are looking for innovative technologies in processing, manufacturing, packaging, distribution or vending. This includes innovations that save time or money in beverage manufacturing, change the way consumers access and consume beverages, improve packaging line efficiency and safety, improve tracking through smart technology, or improve environmental sustainability. The Best Technology Innovation category is not limited to single-serve beverages.

### **Best Packaging/Label Design**

Judges are looking for packaging designs and innovations that measurably improve consumer convenience, usability, and reduction of waste material, as well as offer added value for brand owners and create differentiation through excellence and original design/appearance. The packaging/label design needs to effectively communicate the ingredients and benefits of what's inside.

### **Best Marketing or Social Media Campaign**

Judges are seeking print, digital, or point-of-sale marketing campaigns, activations, and promotions that entertain, raise awareness, demonstrate originality, and promote or provide education around specific themes. You are welcome to send a one-page document of additional video content and imagery to help illustrate your marketing message.

For any questions or queries regarding the awards, please contact [awards@beverage-digest.com](mailto:awards@beverage-digest.com).

Thank you for entering and best of luck!

**- The Beverage Digest Team**