

RNS Reach

17 June 2021

**Ascential plc
("the Company")**

Cannes Lions announces 2021 award entry numbers

29,074 pieces of work are entered from across 90 countries

Early analysis of the work shows that brands continue to invest in creativity while entries from independent agencies and production companies increase

Digital continues to boom and transformational work is on the up

17 June 2021 - Ascential plc (LSE: ASCL.L), the specialist information, analytics and eCommerce optimisation company today announces that Cannes Lions has published its entry numbers ahead of next week's Cannes Lions Live running from 21-25 June. 29,074 pieces of work have been entered from 90 countries, with entries spanning two years after the awards were paused due to the global pandemic in 2020.

Simon Cook, Managing Director, LIONS, said that this was a moment for the industry *"to reflect but also look forward"*. He continued, *"Bringing together this mass of work from across the globe to present to our juries is always an exciting moment for us. The work gives us an initial snapshot of the industry, before our expert juries take on the task of awarding the work that will set the new creative benchmark. This is a highly anticipated moment and the work across two years tells a story about the changing shape of creativity throughout the global pandemic, and showcases the power of creativity as a vehicle for change."*

The work comes from a broader mix of entrants than previous years, and across all Lions. Numbers show that brands continue to invest in creativity, while entries from independent agencies are up by 14% and production companies by 19%.

The newly launched Creative Business Transformation Lions - celebrating creativity that drives business forward - has had a strong first year, indicating that creative companies are now being asked to solve real business problems, with creative thinkers increasingly applying their skills to the business as a whole. Similarly, the Titanium Lions - recognising work that breaks new ground with provocative, boundary-busting, envy-inspiring ideas - have seen large engagement this year with 15% more entries than 2019.

With the global pandemic causing a shift from real world experiences, digital has continued to boom, with other Lions seeing increased engagement including the Social & Influencer Lions up 14% and the Creative eCommerce Lions which have seen a 12% increase year on year.

Suggesting that companies have shifted to short term strategy in the face of unprecedented circumstances, work that relies on long term strategy and results appears to have been hit this year, with entries into the Creative Effectiveness Lions down 38% and the Creative Strategy Lions seeing a 20% drop.

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Susie Walker, VP of Awards, LIONS, said, “During Cannes Lions Live we plan to really dig into the work like never before. Our content includes daily Awards Shows from Cannes, where the winners will be announced for the first time; The Debriefs, a series of interviews with all 28 Jury Presidents in their home cities across the world to analyse the winning work; and a data studio that will track the winning entries live, providing regular daily insight and analysis on a scale that we haven’t delivered before. We’re excited to be returning the global creative benchmark through the Lions, and we’ll delve even further into the work and the winners when we publish the annual LIONS Creativity Report later in the year.”

Jury members from across the world are currently convening remotely to judge, discuss and award the Lions. Shortlists for the Innovation Lions, Titanium Lions and Glass: The Lion for Change have already been released; the remaining 25 shortlists will be released from 19 June onwards. The Lion winners are set to be revealed in a series of live streamed Awards Shows throughout Cannes Lions Live from 21-25 June.

Digital passes to Cannes Lions Live are available to purchase as a standalone and all LIONS members receive complimentary access as part of their membership.

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Notes to editors

About Ascential

Ascential delivers specialist information, analytics and eCommerce optimisation platforms to the world's leading consumer brands and their ecosystems.

Our world-class businesses improve performance and solve problems for our customers by delivering immediately actionable information combined with visionary longer-term thinking across Digital Commerce, Product Design and Marketing. We also serve customers across Retail & Financial Services.

With more than 2,000 employees across five continents, we combine local expertise with a global footprint for clients in over 120 countries.

Ascential is listed on the London Stock Exchange.

About LIONS

As The Home of Creativity, LIONS powers the marketing segment of Ascential and is a destination for those in the business of creativity. As the definitive benchmark of creative excellence and with unparalleled access to insight on how it works, LIONS provides those on the journey to creative excellence all they need, at whatever stage they are at and wherever they are. Our annual five-day Festival, Cannes Lions, is the meeting place for the global creative marketing community and a celebration of the world’s most excellent and effective work.

www.lionscreativity.com | www.canneslions.com | www.ascential.com