

AAA Best Purpose Advertising Conference Paper Award Competition

Submission Deadline: October 1, 2025

The American Academy of Advertising (AAA) has initiated the Best Purpose Advertising Conference Paper Award Competition to promote strategic communication that positively impacts purpose goals.

What is Purpose?

Purpose-driven organizations are social enterprises for which social impact is their primary business objective. Although generating sales and offering services remain essential, practitioners in this field aim to use their platforms to improve people's lives. Purpose is different from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), as CSR entails efforts on behalf of an organization *in addition* to its main business, whereas purpose is embedded in the core functionality of the organization. Businesses may operate at different levels of purpose: Some are created as purpose organizations, while others may wish to pivot from traditional business models to purpose models. Each type of purpose-oriented businesses encounters unique communication challenges.

Purpose Advertising Research

Purpose advertising employs strategies and campaigns that highlight a company's dedication to social, ethical, or environmental causes, rather than merely promoting their products or services (e.g., brand activism). Purpose requires advertising and strategic communication practitioners to think beyond the traditional outcomes of sales, message exposure, and public opinion. The objective of this strategic communication is to align the brand with values that resonate with consumers, thereby fostering deeper connections and loyalty, and making a positive contribution to society.

Purpose advertising research focuses on understanding and evaluating the effectiveness of advertising campaigns that aim to align with a brand's broader social, environmental, or ethical goals. This approach goes beyond traditional measurements and encompasses considerations such as how well the advertising resonates with consumers' values and contributes to the brand's mission.

Nominations take the form of an AAA conference paper focused on purpose advertising including, but not limited to topics such as evaluations of the broader societal impact of purpose advertising (i.e., attitudinal, and behavioral changes, increased awareness of social issues), consumer perception of the brand's purpose, consumer responses to purpose advertising and effects (i.e., brand loyalty, brand authenticity, brand image, brand reputation), as well as effects on long-term brand equity and reputation. See for example Milfeld, T., & Haley, E. (2024). Purpose Advertising and the Credibility Gap: How Consumers Respond to Established Versus Emergent Brand Activist Messaging. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 64(1), 59-79.

Criteria

The awarded paper should effectively address advertising issues related to *purpose* that advances advertising scholarship, education, or professional practice.

The rating criteria for Best Purpose Conference Paper Award are as follows:

- Fit with the Mission and Vision of the American Academy of Advertising while advancing purpose-focused advertising research and education
- Methodological rigor (all research paradigms are welcome, including theoretical think pieces)
- Readability (clearly recognizes, explains, and analyzes the nuances of relevant purpose advertising issues)
- Contribution to the Advertising Field (theoretically grounded, with meaningful practical implications)
- Overall Rating

Nomination and Evaluation Process

- Authors may self-nominate for this award at the time they submit their paper to the annual AAA conference by checking the designated box in the Confmaster submission platform. **Electronic submissions (<https://aaa.confmaster.net>) will be accepted beginning September 1, 2025, and must be received no later than 11:59 PM EDT, October 1, 2025.**
- Conference papers can be nominated **for one award only**, either Best Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Conference Paper Award or Best Purpose Conference Paper Award. If your submitted paper fits both topics, select the award that is the best fit.
- The AAA's Vice President may nominate additional papers following the paper review process as s/he/they will have access to all papers submitted to the conference and the comments of the conference paper reviewers who may also nominate papers for consideration.
- The AAA's Vice President will collect all nominated papers that were accepted and provide them to AAA's Research Committee for review by December 15th of each calendar year.
- The Research Committee will review the submitted papers and notify the AAA's Executive Committee of their selection by January 15 of each year.

While this award is to be an annual award, it may not be awarded every year. The award will be presented along with other paper awards at the AAA annual conference.

For more information, please contact AAA Vice President, Professor Joonghwa Lee (joonghwa.lee@und.edu).

For more information about the 2026 AAA Conference, Austin, visit AAA's website at www.aaa.org.