



**Best of NeoCon 2026 Awards Submissions Open March 1**  
*Signature Award Program Expands Lighting Categories*  
*Alongside Debut of Illuminate at NeoCon*

**(Chicago, IL – February 26, 2026)** The commercial design industry’s premier awards program, [Best of NeoCon](#), is open for product submissions on **March 1**. Since 1990, the competition has served as a cornerstone of design excellence, honoring holistic, leading-edge solutions that advance performance, sustainability, innovation, and user experience within the built environment. Adding to its robust roster of 46 categories across the workplace, healthcare, hospitality, and education sectors, this year’s competition will feature expanded lighting categories aligned with the debut of *Illuminate at NeoCon*—a show-within-a-show that’s dedicated to lighting innovation.

Eileen McMorrow, Director of the Best of NeoCon program, shares her enthusiasm for this year’s competition: “Rooted in design advancement, Best of NeoCon convenes a jury of industry leaders and visionary entrants who are actively defining the future of commercial landscapes. Each year, the breadth and depth of submissions continue to reflect an industry that’s evolving quickly, underscoring design’s essential role in spatial experience, wellness, efficiency, and artistic expression.”

### **Juror Evaluation**

Before NeoCon, all entries are reviewed in person at The Mart by a multidisciplinary jury composed of approximately 50 architects, designers, facility managers, and industry decision-makers. Jurors are selected for their expertise in specification, design leadership, and operational performance across commercial design sectors. The hands-on evaluation process directly encourages meaningful dialogue between jurors and manufacturers. Jurors for the 2026 program will be announced in April.

### **Awards Ceremony & Recognition**

The Best of NeoCon Awards Ceremony takes place on the morning of **Monday, June 8**, at The Mart in Chicago and officially kicks off NeoCon 2026, which runs June 8-10 (with a new Preview Day on June 7). Competing for Gold, Silver, and Best of Competition honors, alongside distinctions for Innovation, Sustainability, and Business Impact, 2026 winners will join an esteemed lineup of past honorees, including leaders like Andreu World, Davis Furniture, HALCON, Haworth, and Momentum.

### **Business Impact Awards**

Entrants may also opt into the prestigious Business Impact Awards, which recognize products with the potential to drive measurable business outcomes—enhancing workflows, reducing

costs, and/or optimizing space. Submissions are vetted by facility managers, end users, real estate planners, and specifiers, and the finalists are evaluated on-site by a panel of leading business journalists. Previous jurors have represented notable publications including *Fast Company*, *Bloomberg CityLab*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, *Forbes*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, among others.

### **The Return of People's Choice Awards**

For the second year, the People's Choice Awards will once again give the design community a voice. Following the June 8 awards ceremony, attendees will vote online or on-site via QR codes for their favorite Best of NeoCon honorees. Five People's Choice winners will be announced at the BIFMA breakfast and across NeoCon's social media channels on Wednesday, June 10.

### **Submission Rules, Deadlines, and Fees**

Best of NeoCon submissions are open exclusively to NeoCon 2026 exhibitors via the [online awards portal](#). Eligible products must have entered the U.S. market since June 2025, be on display at NeoCon 2026, and must not have been submitted to Best of NeoCon 2025. Entry submission deadlines and fees are as follows:

**March 1-31** (early):       **\$900** per entry  
**April 1-30** (standard):   **\$1,000** per entry  
**May 1-20** (late):         **\$1,100** per entry  
Business Impact Opt-In: **\$500** per entry

More information on categories, criteria, and the submission process is available at [neocon.com/awards/best-of-neocon](https://neocon.com/awards/best-of-neocon).

NeoCon is open to trade, C-Suite executives, and other industry-related professionals, and registration is free for all attendees. Register [here](#).

For more news and real-time information, follow NeoCon on: [Instagram](#) (@NeoCon\_Shows), [LinkedIn](#) (@NeoCon-Shows), and [Facebook](#) (@NeoConShows).

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### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### **Q: What sets the Best of NeoCon judging process apart?**

**A:** Unlike many programs that judge via digital photos, Best of NeoCon features rigorous, in-person evaluations at The Mart by a jury of approximately 50 A&D and facility management professionals. This hands-on process fosters meaningful and direct dialogue between manufacturers and jurors, allowing entrants to explain real-world applications and design intent to a jury of active specifiers.

**Q: How does the debut of *Illuminate at NeoCon* affect this year's awards?**

**A:** To mark the launch of *Illuminate at NeoCon*, lighting categories have been expanded to celebrate the sector's evolution and essential role in the built environment.

**Q: What is the difference between a standard entry and the Business Impact Awards?**

**A:** Standard entries honor design excellence and innovation. The Business Impact Awards (an optional \$500 opt-in) recognize products with the potential to drive measurable business outcomes and are vetted by a special jury of business journalists and facility managers.

**Q: What are the key deadlines and fees for award submissions?**

**A:** Submissions are open exclusively to NeoCon 2026 exhibitors for products released after June 2025. Exhibitors can submit their products through the online [awards portal](#) starting March 1, 2026.

- **Early Entry (\$900):** March 1-31
- **Standard Entry (\$1,000):** April 1-30
- **Late Entry (\$1,100):** May 1-20
- **Business Impact Opt-In (\$500):** March 1 - May 20

**About NeoCon:** NeoCon is the world's leading platform and most important event for the commercial interiors industry, held each year at The Mart in Chicago. Since launching in 1969, NeoCon has served as the annual gathering place for the commercial design world's manufacturers, dealers, architects, designers, end-users, design organizations, and media. The three-day event showcases game-changing products and services from more than 400 leading and emerging companies—providing unparalleled access to the latest and most innovative solutions. A robust educational program of keynote presentations and CEU sessions offers world-class expertise and insight into today's most relevant topics as well as the future of commercial design. [www.neocon.com](http://www.neocon.com)

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**About Best of NeoCon:** Best of NeoCon is the official awards program honoring outstanding new products from exhibiting companies across a wide range of verticals. Best of NeoCon features entrants in 46 product categories evaluated on-site by a diverse jury of leading architects, designers, specifiers, and facility managers with expertise spanning the commercial, healthcare, education, and hospitality sectors. Entries are considered for Gold, Silver, Innovation, and Sustainability awards, plus the singular honor of Best of Competition. Entrants may also opt in to be considered for the Business Impact Award, which recognizes exceptional solutions through a business-oriented lens. Finalists are reviewed on-site by a dedicated jury of business media professionals. [www.neocon.com/awards/best-of-neocon](http://www.neocon.com/awards/best-of-neocon)

**About The Mart:** The Mart is the largest privately held commercial building in the United States: It encompasses 4.2 million gross square feet, spans two city blocks, rises 25 stories, and is

visited by an average of 30,000 people each business day (or nearly 10 million people annually).

The Mart serves as the home to Chicago's most creative and technologically innovative companies, including Motorola Mobility, PayPal, Avant, and MATTER, as well as Fortune 500 companies Conagra Brands, Allstate, Medline Industries, Beam Suntory, IPG, and Grainger. It is also the largest and most important center for design in North America, with more than 250 premier design showrooms offering the latest resources for both residential and commercial markets.

**Media Kit:**

Access the official show press kit [here](#).

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