

Have the confidence to require customers to do things your way, when you can prove that it is the right way.

Entrepreneur David Moritz is the founder and CEO of Society Awards. Society Awards was founded in 2007 and has continued to post remarkable growth throughout its history. Under his leadership, the company has been included on Inc. Magazine's prestigious 500|5000 list of the fastest growing companies in the country five times and has won dozens of awards for design and marketing. The company was started when Moritz identified the need for a luxury provider within the high-end and custom award market.

In just a few short years he made Society Awards into the premiere company worldwide in its category. The brand remains the only luxury awards brand and offers a level of quality, service and presentation unmatched in the industry. This is accomplished through strict quality control, proprietary production processes, concierge service and many "elements of delight" such as the brand's signature gold presentation boxes.

Mr. Moritz is a graduate of New York University, cum laude, with a B.A. in British & American Literature, and Cardozo Law School with a J.D.

Where did the idea for Society Awards come from?

I was in law school but I wanted to do something creative and create a business for myself, so I looked for a niche industry where I could make a big impact. I was getting a bit too creative in my law firm job. I figured that rather than spending all my time designing custom suits and elaborate Halloween costumes, I had better do something more productive. I had also created a bar in New York City with the name Society Bar at that time, and spent a great deal of time on the name, so it seemed perfect for this application as well. For a short time there was a Society Awards, and a Society Bar! Talk about a great way to entertain clients. Now, there is a bar in our office. I wanted to create a luxury brand for awards where one did not exist before, and that's what Society Awards is.

What does your typical day look like and how do you make it productive?

I have sort of created a work lifestyle that I fit my life into, for better or worse. I wake up at 6AM and work for a few hours while having coffee and first breakfast. Around 8AM I go to the gym for one hour, return and have second breakfast and more work. Then I get ready for the day and officially start, go to meetings, have phone calls or go to the office, and have my snack around 11AM and first lunch around 2PM. I'm usually at the office by then unless I'm in meetings all day, and then I'm available for in person meetings with my staff, and to do accounting and production in the office. I'm very efficient at my desk and happy to be in the office when I can get there. I have my first dinner around 5PM and then stay in the office until

6PM (unless there are dinner meetings or other obligations) and often until 10PM. I have my second dinner around 9:30/10PM, so how late I can stay in the office depends on if I prepared for that in advance, as I do my own meal prep for most of my meals. I have a great team to help keep me productive and focused on the things that it's best for me to do.

How do you bring ideas to life?

Fortunately/unfortunately I have a lot of experience with various businesses and commercializing products and services, so I can fully understand what it takes to bring different ideas to life. Within Society Awards, "ideas" that we bring to life can include our typical day to day work of custom awards, our own exclusive products, and various campaigns, collaborations and products that we create as gifts for our clients. For custom awards, it's an involved and well hammered out proprietary process that we follow and guide our clients through. To bring that to life we go through the concept and CAD creation phase, engineering, model and mold making and literally create sculpture. For our own products to have in our life of Ready-To-Award trophies we go through a long refinement to try to ensure that they will be desirable designs and to keep the line varied. For campaigns, these are like mini-big brand marketing initiatives – whether that's creating a custom made chocolate bar, sourcing a barrel of whiskey, creating a solar array in our production office, collaboration with brands and designers – we use our team to build a calendar in advance, divide it all up into bite sized steps, and just march forward inexorably.

What's one trend that excites you?

For our own industry of high-end awards, I like to see that our customers are responding well to our sophisticated designs based on modern design aesthetics executed beautifully and simply. It can be the most difficult kind of art to make something simple, and yet beautiful and desirable. I love that.

What is one habit of yours that makes you more productive as an entrepreneur?

Never rely on memory, use a digital system to keep track of everything and schedule reminders and follow ups for everything you do, along with diligent note-taking along the way. It's a small investment up front for a huge payoff down the line as you are involved in many projects.

What advice would you give your younger self?

In my opinion things have turned out well, and everything that I did in the past was learning that I'm using to my advantage now, including the failures. It's hard to say that you'd want to go back and change something that you learned from if everything turned out well enough in the end, because who knows if you wouldn't make an even bigger mistake otherwise. At the time, I was given the advice that I should focus in greater depth on fewer things. I knew it was right

at the time, but I had so much energy and wanted to explore so many things. How could it be otherwise? And yet, I'd probably be further along if I had focused on fewer things. But again, maybe I'd have learned less, experienced less, who knows.

Tell us something that's true that almost nobody agrees with you on.

Only five years ago, I would have said that sugar should be regulated substance as it's a chemical from an exotic new world plant, isolated into a pure crystalline form, that causes havoc on your body like other similar plant-derived chemicals that may come to mind. But now I think everyone does agree with me on that. So I'll go back to a statement that no one wants to hear – you can only sustain a free civilization in the long term with a commodity backed currency, and the best one through human history has been gold. No one wants to hear the argument and you get all these red herrings about the investment value of gold as opposed to simply using it to prevent government manipulation of people's savings and salaries. But it's obviously true, you can't go indefinitely on fiat currency. The other thing that's true is that many people prefer that their cell phones be primarily used for business purposes instead of personal/social/toy purposes and would appreciate a focus on email and typing – Blackberry should license their keypads to someone who can incorporate them into modern devices. This is also true.

As an entrepreneur, what is the one thing you do over and over and recommend everyone else do?

Meal prep? You stay healthy and it's more efficient in the long run. As an entrepreneur you have to work a lot, and well. Maybe not everyone does, actually. But if you are just starting out and want to ensure success, the one thing that you can do is position your business so that your personal efforts can affect (improve) the bottom line if necessary, and be prepared to put a lot of time into that. It will help get things running much faster.

What is one strategy that has helped you grow your business?

Having the confidence to require customers to do things your way, when you can prove that it is the right way.

What is one failure you had as an entrepreneur, and how did you overcome it?

One thing I did was to start a high-end American made vodka brand and company and I overcame it by walking away much, much too late. I should have cut losses much sooner there, but of course I learned a tremendous amount.

What is one business idea that you're willing to give away to our readers?

At Society Awards, we have the capability to create event invitations that are unlike anything else out there in the high-end event invitation space, and customize them. It could be a whole other business, but we don't have time to operate it. If someone was in the event planning industry and wanted to do that, we could make them if they wanted to sell them. I don't want to

deal with stressed out brides or grooms, though. I also wanted to create a products-based Y Combinator (where they are predominately focused on tech) but don't have time for that either. Would love to do that someday.

What is the best \$100 you recently spent? What and why?

Vollrath ceramic coated professional frying pans, they are just a pleasure to use and easy to clean, every bit as good as the best you can buy and yet not that expensive.

What is one piece of software or a web service that helps you be productive?
How do you use it?

We have highly customized Zoho to follow our work flow and it's great. It's like a DIY Salesforce, I think it's less expensive as well.

What is the one book that you recommend our community should read and why?

"End the Fed" by Ron Paul!

What is your favorite quote?

"We came, we saw, we kicked its ass." Bill Murray, Ghostbusters.

Key learnings:

- Meal prep. Abs are made in the kitchen, and don't have to waste time wondering what to eat or being hungry.
- Take much more diligent notes than you are taking now. Great notes are the key to successful projects.
- It's fun and fine to have a lot of irons in the fire, but know when to support the winners and walk away from the losers.

Connect:

www.societyawards.com

Society Awards on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/societyawards/>