


Awards season is here. Meet the company that makes some of the world's most iconic statuettes and trophies.

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Society Awards produces hundreds of awards, from the Emmy to the MTV Moon Person to the Campbell's Chunky Soup Spokesman Award.

Imagine being born, developing a dream, working hard to achieve that dream, moving up the ranks of a competitive field, and finally winning its biggest award, only to realize that the statue you have to display for the rest of your life is utterly hideous.

This is what David Moritz works to prevent.



Moritz, a former entertainment lawyer, founded Society Awards in 2007. The company produces commendations for some 100 awards ceremonies across the globe, from the golden statuette of the Emmy to the marble-pedestaled Golden Globe to the bronze football and wooden base of the Campbell's Chunky Soup Spokesman Award. Moritz designs some of these statues himself; for others, he and his team work to rehabilitate iconic designs.

We asked him how a good award is made and whether he's ever won one himself.

"A bulky sculpture that takes two hands to hold is going to be hard to accept on a stage"

How does someone wind up in this business?

When I made a break from law, I wanted to go into something that I could own and create, ideally something fancy. I have a friend who is in the promotional products business, and he noticed that trophy shops – the companies that claimed to make the famous awards – were really not impressive or luxurious at all. They were, like, dirty factories. I looked into it, and there was a niche. Luxury awards brands did not exist before us.

What makes something an award and not just a random object or a sculpture?

A fine-art sculpture doesn't have to be beautiful – it can be interesting. It expresses the artist's ideas, and for the most part, the artist will only make one. Awards, on the other hand, are limited editions with multiple copies. The design has to connect with an audience and represent a brand. In other words, it has to be beautiful.

What does that actually look like in practice?

A good award is tall and rather slender, so you can hold it with one hand and put it over your

head. A bulky sculpture that takes two hands to hold is going to be hard to accept on a stage. If the award is for an awards program, it should have a nice silhouette, in case the design is ever incorporated into the logo of the program. When we design awards for sports, we sometimes make them very trophy-like, but otherwise, we like our awards to work as sculptures, or as home decor, or just as beautiful objects.

Say more about what that design process is like.

It starts by asking the client: What kind of thing are you looking for? What size? How many? When do you need them? After that, it's kind of like commissioning an artist.

Other awards companies will just start designing and then have the client look at sketches. That might seem fun in the beginning, but if I send you a sketch, how are you really going to imagine the award? Are you a fine artist or a sculptor or something?

We make fully finished, photorealistic, 3D CAD [computer-aided design] renderings, like Pixar. Our clients get to make refinements after that, but we don't ask them to art-direct.

The MTV Moon Person Award (left) and other awards produced by Society Awards.

A lot of successful awards become iconic. When you get a contract to make something like the Emmy, are you allowed to tweak the design?

In those cases, we'll look at the original designer's intentions and consider how previous production methods might have fallen short of that vision. We can't change the look in very obvious ways, but we can make it out of better materials, or make it higher-quality. The new version will be more crisp, more clean, more clear, more polished, shinier, and better-surfaced.

Sometimes awards do need a redesign. For instance, the Billboard Music Award was originally a sculpture made of compact discs. That had to change [to reflect changing technology]. Or the MTV Moon Person Award, which used to be called the Moonman. They didn't want a full redesign, but they needed an update.

GLAAD Media Award.

Awards are typically measured in prestige. How much do they usually cost to make in dollars?

Simple is beautiful, and simple is cheaper. For under \$100 per unit, you can do something elegant, like a simple crystal shape.

When you move up to, like, a nice 12-inch-tall golden figure of something, you're probably looking at \$10,000 to \$15,000 in one-time setup costs, and then \$250 to \$350 per unit. That will get you something totally nice, respectable, very good.

On the other hand, you might have \$50,000 or \$100,000 to produce one or two editions of an award, maybe for a major golf tournament. We've worked with [jeweler] David Yurman to

produce awards with diamonds and silver and meteorites in them. We've worked with [contemporary artist] Jeff Koons to produce awards that would be priceless if you were to assign a value. Awards can really run the gamut.

What's your personal favorite award?

I really like the GLAAD media award that we designed. It's got this retro, midcentury-modern feeling to it. It represents wings, which is unique and uplifting. It's just iconic, and I really like that.

Are there any awards for designing awards? If so, have you won them?

Our marketing materials have won marketing awards. Our website and logo have both won awards. Overall, we've won tons of awards, but we haven't won awards for the actual awards.