

David Moritz

The Man Behind The Statue

by Alyssa Carroll

When crying stars thank parents, producers and fans in their acceptance speech, they often overlook an important name they should be thanking for their shining award. Known for creating the vast majority of the shinning statuette stars hold at their elite award events is David Moritz, the CEO of Society Awards.

Society Awards is the premier company responsible for the design and manufacturing of high-end custom awards and recognition products. Based in New York, Society Award's clients range from televised entertainment programs to charitable organizations, to Fortune 500 corporations to film festivals all over the country. Moritz is known for creating the Golden Globe's statuette and numerous other creations for clients like Rolls-Royce, Billboard Music, Dancing with the Stars and the Sundance Film Festival.

"It is a fairly obscure field that many people don't consider when they watch the various award shows," said Moritz. "I got into it because one of my close friends was doing something similar and he alerted me to the industry."

In fact, his career originally began in an industry that was in fact very different than the work he does now; law. "I always wanted to go to law school, and I was convinced for a long time that I wanted to be a lawyer," Moritz said. "Once I got to law school I decided that I found a lot of the material boring but I really gravitated towards entertainment law because it was more creative and active."

But, after working as an assistant to an

entertainment law partner during his time at Cardozo School of Law, Moritz soon realized that his true calling was business. "I looked at CEOs and thought about how much they accomplish and how much they get done." From law to business, the Society Awards company, established in 2007, now grows by about 50 percent every year and actually grew by 70 percent this year according to Moritz.

"I looked at other successful companies in this industry, and I saw that many of them did not have the customer service element that is crucial in business," he said. "I figured if we got some high profile accounts our industry would really grow and focusing on the high end alone we started to get most of the high profile business and started to really grow."

Among the high profile accounts was also MTV's iconic moonman. "We redesigned the statue from the original 80s design," he explained. "It's much more beautiful now and much shinier, detailed and much more correct. Before, the space suit had pipes that didn't lead anywhere and didn't make sense and just a lot of details missing. I believe it's much more striking now."

Not one to be content with a singular successful venture, Moritz also created the Mode Design Group—a full service design firm specializing in brand strategy and brand innovation, package de-

sign and production services.

Similar to his entry into the awards industry, Moritz realized that the packaging design industry was also a highly profitable sector. "Packaging also had kind of a surprisingly similar inefficient company structure where there were these very established companies that would do this very important work in a very inefficient way without really providing excellent customer service to very important clients," he said. "We built a design studio that has been extremely successful."

This is perhaps an understatement, as Mode has created packaging designs for some of the top companies in the world, including Pepsi, Sierra Mist, Mountain Dew, Ocean Spray, Lipton, Playboy, Marc Jacobs, Patron, and Colgate.

With a successful design and a successful production company under his belt, many entrepreneurs would have sat back and enjoyed their mini empire. But this is not the case for the over-driven Moritz.

Realizing the profitable marriage between his already successful companies, Moritz realized that he could create a high end product of his own, and Vision Vodka was born.

"One of the designers I already worked with had a background in spirits, and I knew that we could do unbeliev-



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Brad Rowe holding a GLAAD award designed by David Moritz, Trevor Wright, and David Moritz

able things with design and branding," he said. "I met with long time friend and night club owner Michael Sinensky, who also said he wanted to have a vodka. It's difficult to launch a spirit, but for us everything has just gone right and we have been fortunate that our distiller created the smoothest possible taste. I really believe it's the smoothest vodka in the world and we're very fortunate."

The vodka is named for Moritz's persistent "vision" for the company and is designed to evoke ideas of clarity and purity. "We wanted a name that was easy to say and remember over something foreign that may be difficult to pronounce," he explained. A true testament to Moritz's savvy, Vision Vodka hit the market only 10 months after it

had been originally dreamed up. Moritz is now working on a half dozen other spirit projects for his Ambition Beverages label. "I'm a big fan of spirits. I still enjoy all kinds of alcohol, and it all tastes good to me. I love getting to experiment with all of them."

This isn't Moritz's first experience in the alcohol industry, as he was a partial owner of a bar in college, and was known for holding the best parties in his youth. "I like to go out to clubs here and all over the world," he said. "When I was in college, Mike and I would rent out spaces and throw our own parties almost every month and bring tons of people out."

Even between the endless work and meetings, Moritz is still not one to

kick back on the couch. "Running all of these companies definitely has given me a work hard play hard kind of lifestyle," he explains. He spends his down time traveling, and is still close with a tight knit group of friends from his time spent at NYU.

But, even his hobbies have work elements and during his vacation to France, he spent time researching champagne grapes for his alcohol company and even his clothing he designs himself.

"I'm really into fashion," Moritz said. I design my own clothes and I usually have a tailor change the lines and cuts. I choose fabrics, jackets, pants, shoes and everything. I would definitely be interested in opening a fashion company in the future." **M**