

January 2019

## EVERYTHING YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT PRODUCING AWARDS



It's award season, everybody! Get ready to see your favorite celebrities up on stage, giving speeches and brandishing awards that we normal people would be lucky to even touch, let alone win. These fancy awards — think the Emmy, Oscar, Golden Globe and even MTV's Moon Person — are one of the biggest money makers for any promotional products company, thanks to the small batches and extremely high price points.

But if you ever want to win that business, you need to be well-informed. Vox recently interviewed David Moritz, owner of trophy manufacturer Society Awards (the company that produces almost all the major awards), about what it takes to produce those iconic statuettes. Based on that interview, [here are some important things you might not know about trophy production](#).

- **They're really expensive to make.** A simple crystal shape may only run about \$100 per award, but for the higher end ones — such as the Emmy and the Oscar — production can cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000 in set-up fees and up to \$350 per statue. And the more custom the awards are, the more expensive. Moritz has produced priceless awards costing upwards of \$100,000, including some with diamonds and meteorite pieces.

## QUICK NEWSLETTER SURVEY



## INFOGRAPHICS THAT CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS



Every month, Idea Custom Solutions publishes original infographics that we design to inform and educate industry professionals. Here are a couple of our most popular. Be sure to check out the [Insights section of our website](#), under Resources, for more of these tools.



- **A lot of early design is involved.** Lower-end awards and trophies are often created based on sketches, but the high-end ones have lengthy design processes. They start with client interviews. What is their vision? What are the awards for? What message are they supposed to send? At Society Awards, Moritz says they then get deep into the design process, using computer programs to make ultra-realistic, three-dimensional renderings of each award. They are designed so thoroughly early on that you feel like you can reach into the computer screen and pull them out.
- **There are guidelines to make awards versus sculpture.** When artists make sculpture, they're making it for themselves and there is only one version of something that expresses their artistic vision. But awards are different. There's more than one (albeit still only a few) and they need to convey specific messages, represent brands and connect with the groups of people who could potentially win in meaningful ways. So, while awards need to be beautiful like pieces of art, they need to serve greater purposes and be functional.

Moritz says that awards need to be tall and slender so they can be held with one hand and have nice silhouettes in case the designs will be added to logos. Depending on the type of events, the trophies should match. For example, when Society Awards creates sports awards, they're designed to resemble trophies. The Moon Person Award looks aptly like a person in a spacesuit. Moritz's favorite, the GLAAD Award for the (formerly named) Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, appears to be an uplifting pair of wings.

If your clients need trophies or awards of their own, let [Idea Custom Solutions](#) know and we'll take care of the vector artwork, sales proposals or other graphic designs you need to complete the orders.

## CINNABON JOINS THE BRANDED SWAG REVOLUTION

Everyone, [please welcome Cinnabon to the ranks of the branded swag experts](#). The cinnamon roll company has just joined other restaurants, such as Taco Bell, McDonald's, Arby's, and Kellogg's, in promoting their brand with deliciously clever clothing and products.

[Bustle](#) calls the new collection at Cinnabon a "90s kid paradise," full of soothing colors and wordplay, hitting at a demographic that essentially grew up with the brand. The first Cinnabon opened in 1985 and any 90s kid worth their ~~salt~~ sugar has had an incredibly unhealthy amount of those delicious rolls. The online store itself has been open since 2008, but this year had been a banner year for "cinnaswag".

The first stop on the Cinnabon ingenuity train was the delivery platform. As of a few weeks ago, you can "giftabon" [cinnamon rolls to anyone anywhere in the U.S., overnight with free delivery](#). And because that just wasn't enough, we've now got 12 fun new pieces of merchandize to choose from that we can wear while waiting for our rolls to arrive.

[What's cooking in the merch store?](#) Some sweet shirts with clever sayings like "Baked with Love" on a onesie, "Bon in the Oven" on a

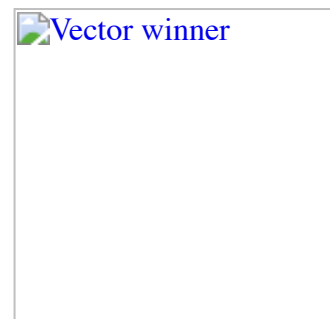
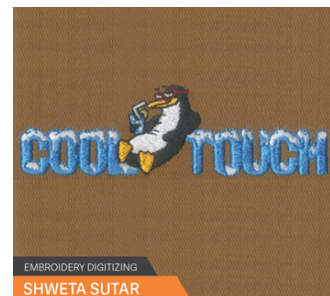


Under Insights, we also archive [past issues of this newsletter](#).

Feel free to contact us to request we cover any subjects that would help your business: [marketing@ideacustom.com](mailto:marketing@ideacustom.com).

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TEAM

Every month, we celebrate the designers whose work scores the highest impressions on Instagram. This time, **Shweta Sutar** won for embroidery digitizing and **Dadaso Jadhav** won for vector artwork. Keep up the great work, team!



## NOTABLE QUOTES

maternity shirt, “I like big buns and I cannot lie” on a sweatshirt and, our favorite, “Working on My Six Pack” on a tank with an image of six Cinnabons on a tray. There are also a couple vintage tees with Cinnabon logos and a sweatshirt explaining that “My head says gym, but my heart says Cinnabon.” We agree, sweatshirt. We agree.

Aside from the tops, you can snap up some cinnamon roll patterned sweatpants, a quirky themed apron and a mug with directions for the day: “First I drink the coffee, then I’m on a roll.”

Have any clients in the food industry? Start cooking up some clever campaigns for them with branded promotional products. **We’ll handle all the vector artwork and embroidery digitizing to decorate the items** (but you get to take all the credit!).

## BILLBOARDS FOR BUSINESS

If you’ve never seen a Lamar billboard before, you’re missing out. The company — which is, conveniently, a billboard company — produces clever and silly ads that stand out in the sea of standard company ad blasts along the road. One of our favorites is the billboard for Dr. Mittens Lamar, whose specialty is “healing boo-boos with nom-noms.” Another fun one: the “investigation agency” billboard showing a llama in a suit, whose name is L. Lamar.

Clever and unique billboards make companies stand out among the noise. But is it appropriate for your company (or for your clients)?

Let’s go over some of the basics.

- **Cost.** No surprise here, **billboards are expensive**. Think in terms of weeks. In a smaller city like Milwaukee, for example, it costs about \$1,000 per week to have a billboard. In larger cities, such as Boston, you’re looking at a bit more than \$5,000 per week.
- **Audience.** Literally speaking, **your billboard will be reaching a captive audience**. People have to keep their eyes on the road and scan for potential dangers, so billboards are right in the line of sight and essentially inescapable. This means you can be confident people will be looking at your ad.
- **Customization.** Billboard technology has come a long way from the days of printed paper pasted onto large backgrounds in sections. Now, most signage is created as **single images printed on vinyl that can be hung more quickly**. But you can also opt for 3D billboards (think the cows on the Chick-fil-A signs), have one with special effects such as smoke coming out of a chimney or sparkling Christmas lights, or even create a moving image for digital billboards.
- **Return on Investment.** It’s a bit difficult to tell exactly how many of your customers are coming from seeing your billboard. But two studies have been done that assess the effectiveness. It turns out that many people jot information down from billboards and more than 50 percent take action as a result (e.g., going to a specific event or restaurant, changing the radio station, etc.). But for traditional businesses, viewers only tended to convert into sales when the billboards were accompanied by some other advertising method, including direct mail or email marketing.



**“Success is no accident.** It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and, most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.”  
— Pele



**“Rule No. 1: Never lose money; rule No. 2: Don’t forget rule No. 1.”**  
— Warren Buffett



**“There is only one boss. The customer.** And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.”  
— Sam Walton



**“If you can push through that feeling of being scared,** that feeling of taking a risk, really amazing things can happen.”  
— Marissa Mayer

The bottom line: If you can afford a billboard for your business (or your clients can), go for it. But if you need some other type of essential business product (like a new embroidery machine or something along those lines), you may be better served putting that billboard money elsewhere.

If you decide to go all out on that giant advertisement, **Idea Custom Solutions is ready to help you with the vector artwork you'll need** to ensure designs are clear when blown up so large that they can be seen by target audiences on the road.

## IT'S TAX TIME FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

Yes, it is here: the ever-exciting tax season. 2018 brought with it a number of changes to tax laws, including alterations that affect how small and mid-sized businesses, like most promotional products companies, should be filing. **Idea Custom Solutions** doesn't want you to be left in the dark when you work on your business taxes, so we've compiled some tips and helpful suggestions to get your business through tax time without incident.

One of the biggest changes — and the most publicized — is a new 20 percent qualified business income deduction. This applies to sole proprietors, S-corporations and other pass-through entities. But it comes with limitations: if you want to take the tax break for your business, **you must have taxable income less than \$157,500 if single or \$315,000 if married.**

A less business-friendly change applies to meal and entertainment deductions. Before, 50 percent of meals and entertainment costs were deductible, but not anymore! You can't deduct entertainment costs at all and meals only get the 50-percent deduction if they're small and you have receipts.

Some options exist, though, that may make up for that missing tax break. First, **have your accountant look at your forecasted income.** Thanks to the new tax law, you might owe less on your last quarterly payment than you think. You can also purchase a piece of capital equipment (think computers, furniture and machinery). If you buy it and start to use it before 2018 ends, you can deduct up to \$1 million.

Should you be looking to pass on your business to one of your children, now would be a good time. The estate tax exclusion is at an all-time high of \$11.9 million for individuals or \$22.36 million for married couples. That means, in most cases, you can pass your business on to your children tax-free. It'll slide back down to \$5 million in 2026, that is unless Congress decides to change it first.

Also, take advantage of one perk that wasn't changed with the new tax laws: retroactive tax refunds. **Approximately 93 percent of business owners pay too much in taxes annually.** If you've paid for the last three years, you can have a review done that shows potential missed tax savings.

Regardless of how well you think you know the changes, it's important to work with a qualified tax professional before filing. They'll know the ins and outs and be able to see you through any confusing regulations.



"The most dangerous poison is the feeling of achievement. The antidote is to every evening **think what can be done better tomorrow.**"

— Ingvar Kamprad



"My definition of 'innovative' is **providing value to the customer.**"

— Mary Barra



"**Success is where preparation and opportunity meet.**"

— Bobby Unser



"**Money is like gasoline during a road trip.** You don't want to run out of gas on your trip, but you're not doing a tour of gas stations."

— Tim O'Reilly

We are not tax professionals at Idea Custom Solutions, but as the leading provider of graphic services ranging from embroidery digitizing to vector artwork and image editing, we are dedicated to your business. That's why our tagline is: Your success. That's the whole Idea!"



"It's not about ideas. It's about **making ideas happen.**"

— Scott Belsky



What were the worst [#design](#) crimes in 2018? [@FastCompany](#) reports: <https://goo.gl/wnHeXr>

Tweet That!

Check out the [#design](#) put into the best [#magazine](#) covers of 2018. [#GraphicDesign](#) <https://goo.gl/xmYJw7>

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The [#PromoProducts](#) industry is facing worsening [#QualityControl](#). What can we do? <https://goo.gl/2pNW4w>

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[#Bieber](#) releases \$5 slippers from [@thehousedrew](#) company — and they sell out instantly. [#branding](#) <https://goo.gl/gxz167>

Tweet That!

Learn how contemporary artists mix up traditional floral [#embroidery](#). [#EmbroideryDigitizing](#) <https://goo.gl/zTzYYW>

Tweet That!

Thinking about changing your [#logo](#)? Make sure you're doing it right. [#branding](#) <https://goo.gl/uqTDEa>

Tweet That!

[#Crowdfunding](#) equity for your [#SmallBusiness](#)? Make sure your [#logo](#) is up to the job. <https://goo.gl/X465P1>

Tweet That!

[#Cannabis](#) product packaging is getting ever more sophisticated. [#branding](#) [#design](#) <https://goo.gl/o8FVYe>

Tweet That!

Schools in China are monitoring the comings and goings of students with chipped [#uniforms](#). <https://goo.gl/aumtDG>

Tweet That!

Okay, but really ... what's the deal with earned edition [#uniforms](#)? [#basketball](#) [#TheMoreYouKnow](#) <https://goo.gl/ZEJ99s>

Tweet That!

Forget those typical cheerleading [#uniforms](#) — the [@Colts](#) [#cheerleaders](#) changed it up. <https://goo.gl/wrNmYa>

Tweet That!

Remembering the [#Christmas](#) editions of [@NBA](#) [#uniforms](#). What was your favorite? <https://bit.ly/2QWdnoj>

Tweet That!



"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; **working together is success.**"

— Henry Ford

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



### Rupali Kotkar

Senior Production Associate,  
Embroidery Digitizing

Since she joined the company six years ago, Rupali is most proud that she faces exciting challenges every day, which she explains, "caused me to change my life for the better". She would tell potential employees of Idea Custom Solutions, "Be loyal to your work to achieve your goals".

As a production associate on the Embroidery Digitizing Team, her daily objective is to complete the assigned work within the required turn times, with the best output. "I love the work and my passion to



## Embroidery Digitizing



Vector Artwork

meet deadlines without compromising the quality". She also appreciates the company work culture and the creativity involved in the process of embroidery digitizing.

When not at the office, she like to spend time with friends and says, "I enjoy being with my lovely family." Otherwise, Rupali travels and researches new places to visit. Her dream is to someday go on a tour of the United States and Dubai.

Ultimately, Rupali would like to known as a good person first and a fabulous embroidery designer.



If you have any designs created by our team that you would like to share in this newsletter, send them to us at [marketing@ideacustom.com](mailto:marketing@ideacustom.com)



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