

BECOME AN AWARD WINNING COMPANY



MATT
SHOUP

The Million Dollar Secret
Every Entrepreneur
Needs to Know

OFFICIAL WORKBOOK

Become An Award-Winning Company

MATT SHOUP, 2011[©]

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Become An Award-Winning Company OFFICIAL WORKBOOK

Introduction

Thank you for downloading the official **Become an Award-Winning Company Workbook**. This workbook was designed to coincide with the chapters from the book and give you a workable template to answer some important questions about your business and career as an entrepreneur. Please take the time to answer all of them thoroughly and thoughtfully. By the time you are finished with both the book and this workbook you will be well on your way to being an award-winning company.

This workbook will be extremely helpful, but not as helpful if you do not read the book. Some of the workbook sections may also not make as much sense, or bring as much value without the book. If you haven't already, go buy the book! I promise that it will be the best money you ever spent on your business.

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The Elevator Pitch

You Only have 30 to 60 Seconds.

Your Elevator Pitch is crucial for grabbing attention within the first 30 to 60 seconds of meeting someone. What is your 30 to 60-second-commercial that gets heads turning and people interested in you and your company? Knowing this and having this written down will come into play later as you Become an Award-Winning Company.

Create your own company pitch.

What is your 30 to 60 second attention-grabber?

How are you turning heads?

How are you addressing a problem for your listener and offering a solution?

Write your pitch and practice it with friends and employees. The exercise of doing this is the first step in becoming comfortable with talking about your company. You will be amazed at how it prepares you to talk naturally and easily with others.

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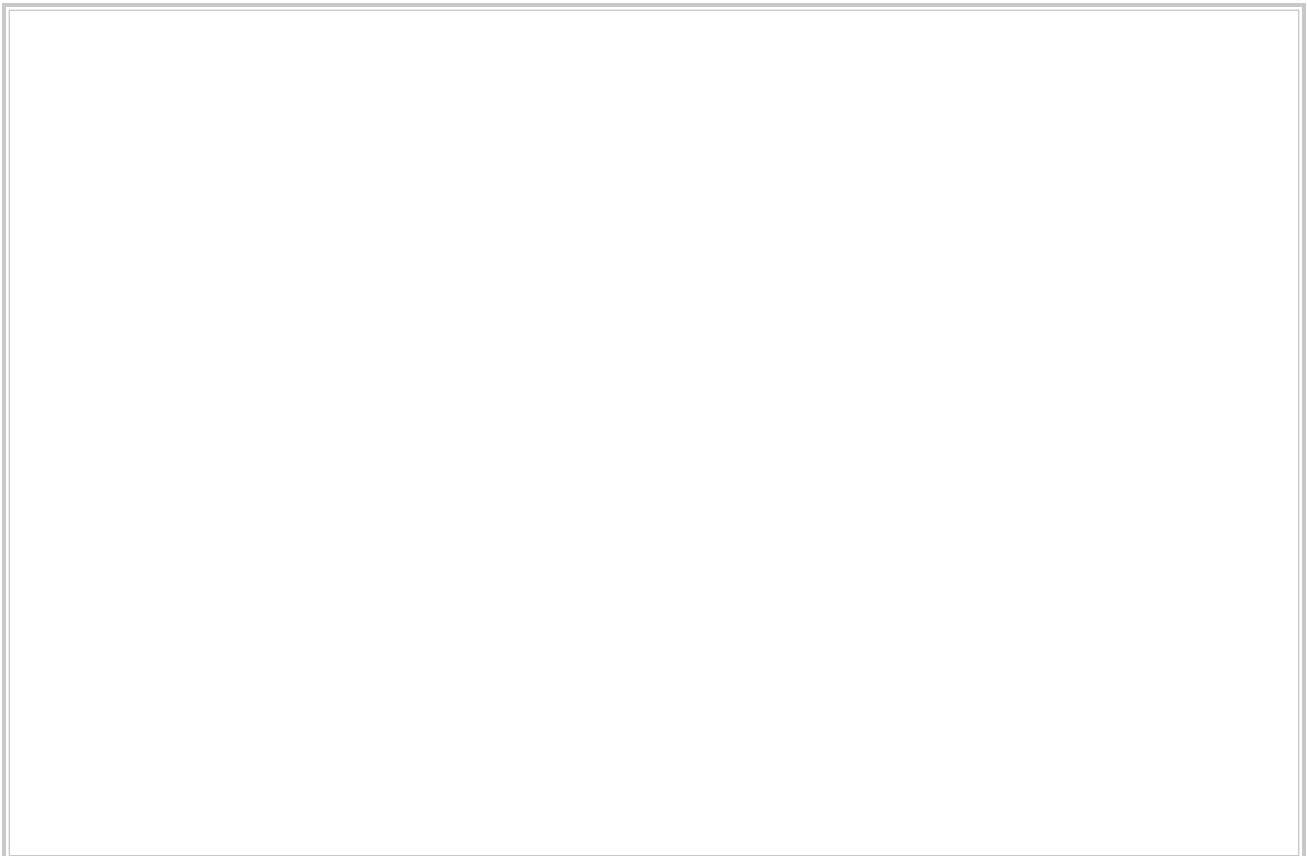
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What's Your Story?

You must have it and know it before you can share it.

In the beginning of the book, I share my story as an entrepreneur. Remember that everyone loves a great story. Becoming a master story teller will help you to win business, connections, and awards. (We will work more on how to specifically address the awards application later in this book, but let's start on your story here.) A story is not just something you write once and put to rest. The art of telling it must be practiced, perfected, and detailed. Take some time to answer the following questions. Your story will help you to determine why you are in business. Once you have a clear “why,” an amazing story to tell, and a vision for your company—watch out, here you come!

What is your story? Write out your entrepreneurial story. Include the ups, downs, good, bad and ugly.



What's Your Story?

You must have it and know it before you can share it.

What are the moments, experiences, and people who shaped the journey?

What is the importance of telling your story in your business?

Why do your customers need to hear your story?

How about your team, vendors, friends, family, investors, etc.?

What's Your Story?

You must have it and know it before you can share it.

What traits did you receive from your parents, peers, or role models?

How have those people and their ways affected your business today?

How do you feel these traits will help you to become an award-winning company?

What were some of your childhood goals?

How did goal-setting shape your entrepreneurial ventures today?

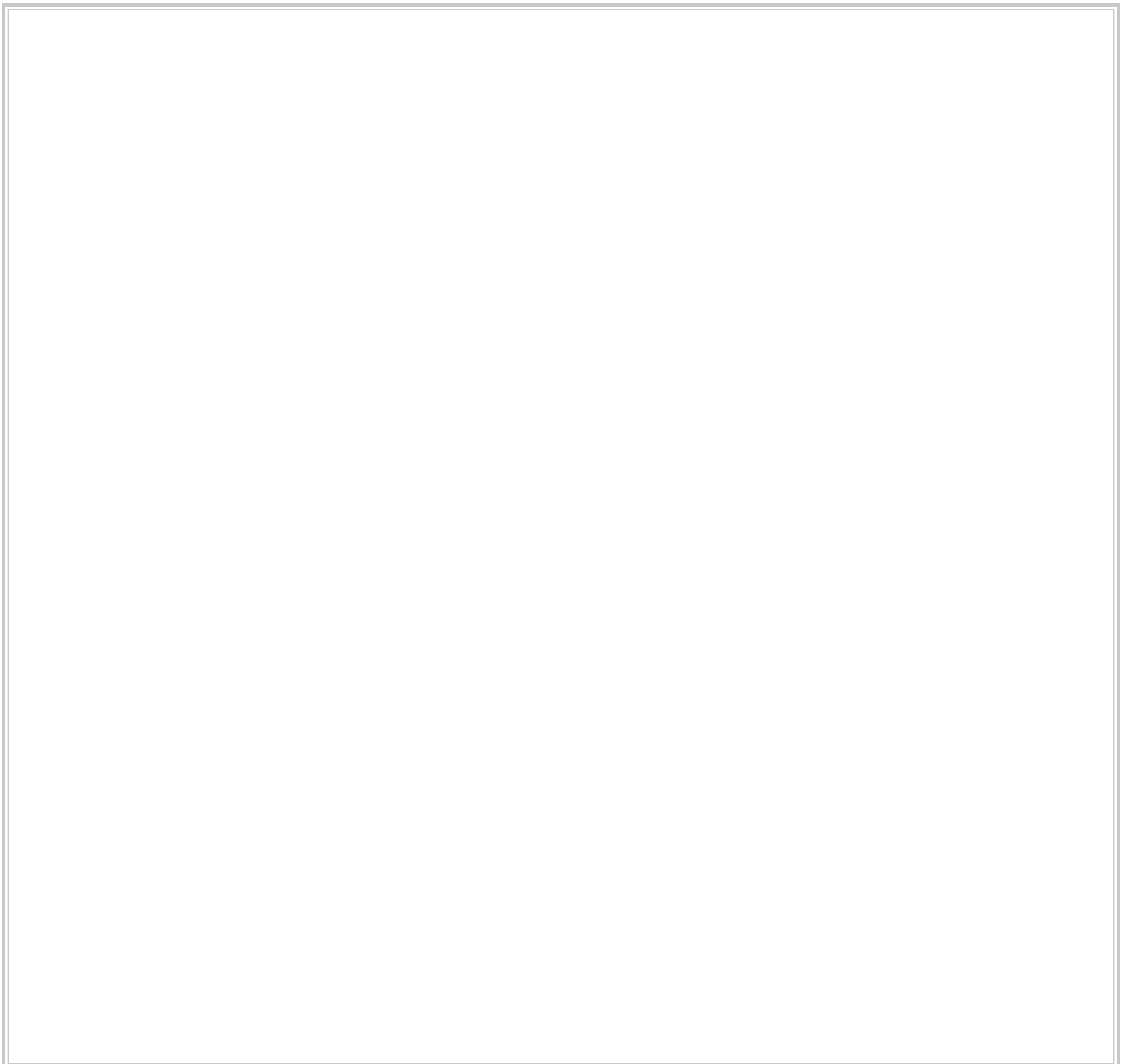
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What is Your Vision?

Is it clearly described?

Take some time to write down the vision for your company. Don't worry about specific goals yet. Just describe your company as you see it in the future. Feel free to use my company's "Painted Picture" found on www.mandepainting.com as a model.



What is Your Vision? Is it clearly described?

Having a vision for your company is crucial for becoming an award-winning company. Once you have your company vision down, write more specifically about the awards portion of this vision.

How does being an award-winning company fit into the vision of your company from the last page?

What awards do you want to be winning?

How will customers, vendors, and team members react to these awards?

How will your business leverage these awards for more revenue and profits?

What does winning these awards do for your culture, morale, and public image?

Once you have a clear vision for your company and an understanding of how winning awards will play into it, you are ready for the next workbook section.

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Entrepreneur Interviews

I hope that you were encouraged and inspired by reading the stories of some of the country's most respected business men and women. I know that I relate to some of their stories in a big way! Take some time to answer the following questions about these interviews.

What were some of the major and recurring themes, benefits, and topics discussed by the entrepreneurs in these interviews?

Did the size of business, revenue level, and number of employees play a role into the effectiveness of the benefits, themes, and topics?

Which interview and entrepreneur do you and your business most closely relate to? Why?

Entrepreneur Interviews

After reading these interviews, what advice continues to resonate with you?

How will you apply this advice to your business to become an award-winning company?

Do you agree with all the points made in the interviews?

If you would like to forward any messages, comments, or thanks to any of the interview participants, write to ceointerviews@becomeanawardwinningcompany.com and the information will be forwarded to them.

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Your Challenges

Know them and overcome them.

Before you can become an award-winning company, you must understand the obstacles and challenges you face. Knowing the issues, and knowing how to deal with and solve them, will give you a great edge over the vast majority of companies. This section is not meant to make you feel badly about your company, but to help you know where you need to improve. By doing this exercise, you will gain focus to create your legendary story to share with others. (Plus, this section will also make you tons of money!)

What are the biggest challenges your business is facing right now? Be specific.

Do you have a clear vision, mission, and plan for your company?

Do you have goals?

Have you accomplished the last 5 major goals set for yourself and your company?

How is the economy affecting you? Are your revenues up, down or static?

What is the state of your profits, sales ratios and closing ratios? (Remember that sales ratios are the number of jobs you win divided by the number of jobs you bid.)

How do those figures compare with the industry average?

Have these ratios been increasing? Decreasing?

Are you seeing any shifts or changes in your industry?

How are your relationships with vendors and strategic partners?

What is your competition doing?

What challenges do your competitors pose?

Are you struggling to find your target clientele, the best vendors, and the right employees?

Your Challenges. Know Them and Overcome Them.

Take a few minutes to list your biggest roadblocks. List these challenges on the left side of the page under the heading “Challenges.” Knowing your adversary is crucial to winning the battle.

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Benefits</i>

What will your business look like when you overcome the challenges you described?

How much more revenue and/or profit will you produce?

What will this mean for your family, your company, employees and the important people in your life?

List the transformations and positive effects next to each challenge.

By this point in the book and workbook, you have detailed your company vision and have identified how awards will play into this vision. By now you will have noted what has resonated with you from the interviews, listed your top challenges, and discovered what business will be like when these challenges are addressed. I am excited to show you how having a list of awards after your company's name and properly leveraging these awards will help you resolve the majority of your concerns.

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Separate Yourself from the Competition

...or they will separate themselves from you!

Standing out from the competition is crucial for winning business and growing your company. This is one thing I see that many companies are NOT doing. You must have something that differentiates you from other companies offering a similar product or service. Work through this section to see how reading and implementing the knowledge from **Becoming an Award-Winning Company** can and will do this for you.

In the first column, list the *Awards* you have determined you are going to win.

In the second column, list *Traits* that describe your company in relation to this award.

In the third column, list the *Benefits* that these traits bring to your *Customers*.

For example, if you were named a Top Workplace in your community (*Awards*), some descriptors of your company could be consistency, positive company culture, high retention, low turnover, satisfied team, taking care of people (*Traits*), and the *Benefits* to the *Customer* would be high quality products or services, security in knowing you will be around, positive people to do business with, working with those with integrity, and money well spent.

Just remember that you can list all of your selling points and cool marketing jargon for your potential customer, but you must also make the connection to show them how they will benefit from what you have. Once you determine the specific benefits of each award, you can consider how that relates to benefitting your customer.

Separate Yourself From the Competition

<i>Your Awards</i>	<i>Company Traits</i>	<i>Customer Benefits</i>

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Credibility

You either have it, or you don't — so go get it!

Without credibility, you are in trouble. Consider the contrast for the customer having to search high and low to determine if a company is worthy, versus finding a company that walks to the table with their credibility stamped all over them. This section will help you to see if and how you are credible, how it is communicated, and if you are not, how to be so quickly.

What are you doing now to build credibility with your customers, vendors, potential team members, and the entrepreneurial community at large? Think about vendors, potential team members, investors, banks, etc. and the credibility awards would give you with each.

How would this process be magnified and sped up as a result of winning awards?

How would your sales presentation, marketing, and website alter as a result?

Credibility

You either have it, or you don't — so go get it!

How else would this overall credibility help to grow your company?

Is there anything in your company right now that makes you lack credibility?

If so, what do you need to do about it specifically and by when?



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Free PR

One of the biggest money-makers around!

One of the biggest benefits of winning awards is the media attention and exposure you receive. Not only is this really fun to experience, but if leveraged properly, it can be an enormous money-maker and a return on your time investment. In fact, much of the dollar value of winning awards comes from the free PR you receive. Answer the following questions, and start building your lists and practicing your scripts. I have included a few samples to help.

If you haven't done so already, make a list of all your contacts and connections in the media world. I've created a spreadsheet on the next page you are welcome to use.

This list should include writers, editors, owners and operators of publications. Send them an introduction card. That's right, a real card in the real mail, not an email or a phone call — just yet. Mention that you will be calling them soon to try set up a time to get coffee and share your story with them. To sweeten the deal, include a \$5 gift card to a local coffee shop in your card. The back of this workbook has a really cool website I use to do this quickly and cost effectively.

Use these examples as a springboard for creating an attention-grabbing script for your cards.

#1 — Thank you for allowing me to introduce myself to you. I follow your work in The Post and love what I read. I'd love to be able to help provide you with some awesome stories and would enjoy the chance to share my business with you. I'll call next week to see when you have time for a quick coffee—my treat! I'm looking forward to putting a face with the name.

#2 — I just read your story about economy-boosting practices in the ABC Town Times on Monday. I am excited to share a story that would piggy-back on that article. As I am connected with a large network of local business men and women, I would also love to create a working relationship with you, so I can be a viable source of business news from our community. I will call you next week to see if there might be time for us to connect over coffee, and I'm buying!

Free PR

One of the biggest money-makers around!

A week later, make calls to invite the people you sent cards to sit down. Does it encourage you to know that I have never been rejected for a sit down when I send a nice card with a \$5 coffee gift card? This is a great lead in when you call.

Here is a script and some pointers to get an appointment.

You: Is Tom there?

Tom: This is Tom.

You: Tom, Hi! This is Matt with M & E Painting. I just wanted to follow-up and make sure you received my card.

Tom: Matt, I sure did. Thank you so much. What's up?

You: I know you are busy. Is this a good time? (This is crucial as media people are on deadlines.)

Tom: Sure, I have a quick minute.

You: Great, I will be brief. Tom, as I mentioned in the card, I would love to buy you coffee and sit down with you to tell you a little about my company and make sure I can be lead source for you when you need me. When are you free for 30 minutes to meet in the next few weeks?

They will either consent, decline, or ask for you to call back.

Most of the time, they will be willing to meet with you. People in the media are always looking for more connections to potential stories. If they agree, set up a time, and call the day prior to confirm. Make sure to respect their time and be on time. If they ask to be called back, set a time to do this and follow-up accordingly until you get your meeting.

Free PR

One of the biggest money-makers around!

When you sit down, make sure to share your story, which you should have worked on by now. Usually, the story you created that appealed to the awards panel of judges will also appeal to the media people you talk to.

Remember, these people will be a very valuable asset to your company, but their time is also valuable and deadline-driven. Be sure to give them what they need in a short amount of time. For now, just concentrate on making your list. Once you get your list, you can send your cards and do your follow-up. Make sure to finish reading the book and working through the workbook before you call the media. Practice a few rounds of scripts with another company member or another trusted entrepreneur. Have fun, and have them hit you from different angles to practice your responses. Pay great attention to the book section on creating a story that appeals to the award. This can, in turn, be your pitch to the media.

I have made cold-calls, sent letters and emails, knocked on doors, and dropped by houses, but I have never had more success with turning a potential lead into an actual meeting than by sending a card in the mail with a personal message and a \$5 coffee card. Do this, and you will have results.

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You Must Have Sales to Survive... ... and Tons of Sales to Thrive!

Improving the closing ratio is the key to success in every business. The more leads you can convert into revenue and profits, the healthier your business will be. If you spend \$100 on a lead, and you need to meet 10 leads to make a sale, then that one sale just cost you \$1,000. If you only need to meet 5 leads to close a sale, your close ratio just doubled and your marketing cost was cut in half! So, let's take some time here to work on your sales ratio and close more sales.

Think of your sales process from initial contact to the closed deal and beyond. Where could you use the ammunition of being an award-winning company to win more sales?

Create a list of each step within your sales process. Next to each item, explain how this step of the sales process could be improved by the addition of awards under your belt.

Where can you add extra value, or build more of the “know, like, and buy” cycle to this process?

You Must Have Sales to Survive...

... and Tons of Sales to Thrive!

From the previous section, how are you different from your competitors, and how do you show this value to customers?

By how much do you think your sales could increase based on this strategy? Put it in terms of dollars and cents.

	Current Sales	% Increase	Additional Sales	Total New Sales
Year				
Month				
Week				

Are there tie-ups or snags in your sales process that can be relieved?

If you have a sales team, how will you be able to implement this into your sales training?

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Your Team Makes You Money, So Make Sure They Are the Best

The old saying that good people are hard to find is true. In today's economy, the market is flooded with more than its fair share of people needing work. Hiring somebody just because they need a job and you have one does not work. Recruiting is an art form and must be done carefully. Quality recruiting is the key to building a lasting and loyal team. Here are some things to work through in terms of recruiting.

Think of your current company culture. What would becoming an award-winning company do for your company culture?

How would it affect your recruiting process?

What does your recruiting and interview process look like?

Do recruits know your vision?

Do you know their vision?

Your Team Makes You Money, So Make Sure They Are the Best

How do you find out what is most important to potential team members in a career?

Do you feel like you are truly recruiting, or are you merely hiring and filling seats?

How would this change if you were an award-winning company?

Once you begin to win awards, how will this change the standard of what you look for in a team member?

Do you feel that you will be able to attract and retain better talent?

What will this do for your productivity, profitability, and efficiency?

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The Art of Networking

Knowing people, and knowing how to help and serve them, is one of the keys to having all the success you can imagine. Once you are an award-winning company, you will be thrust into a community of ambitious business leaders and have the opportunity to network with them. If you come off the wrong way, it can severely damage your career, business, and reputation in the community, and you can never go back to make that first impression.

Knowing that, you will need to develop awesome networking skills. Take some time to think about the following:

At the last meet-and-greet you attended, did you seem to be more on the side of giving or receiving?

Were you a puker?

Did you feel that you genuinely got to know the other person?

Did you introduce this person to anyone who could help him or her?

What things did you do well at your meeting?

What could you have done better?

The Art of Networking

What kind of positive impact would amazing networking skills have on your business?

Think of the last five people you met through networking. Now, think of one person you could introduce to each of them who would benefit from the connection. Make those introductions right now!

Here is a sample script I like to use. This text is typed in an email that I send to both parties I am introducing.

Ted and Craig,

I just wanted to introduce you to each other, as I know you would both benefit from a business relationship.

Ted Jones is a business affiliate of mine, and is currently working on helping companies with their hosted computer solutions. From his reputation, and from the companies I know he has helped, I can assure you that he runs an excellent company.

Craig Williams is the owner of ABC Solutions, and a vendor for our company. ABC is the state's largest collection agency, and we have had a long and wonderful relationship with him.

Craig, when we had coffee last week, you said that you were exploring computer solutions. Ted is the best I know of for what you need. Ted, I imagine you might need Craig's expertise as you handle your own business affairs. I believe you could have a mutually beneficial relationship, so I will let you both take it from here.

Have a great day!

The Art of Networking

I also make sure to attach an electronic business card from each so they can easily save the other's information into their contacts.

Here are a few points to remember when making an introduction.

- **Make sure to mention how you know each person being introduced.**
- **Show the benefit of each party meeting. Don't try to sell anything, just recommend they meet.**
- **Mention what each person does and how it will benefit the other.**
- **Throw in a kind word or two about each party.**
- **Attach electronic business cards.**
- **Let them take it from there!**

Go ahead and do this right now. Yes, I mean right now! This is how these things get going—by seizing the present moment. So, put this book down, open up your email and fire those introductions off! You'll thank me. The connections you make for others will tie you further into the larger community of business makers.

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What Does Your Company Smell Like?

I made the decision to lay off two key team members from M & E Painting after listening to sales guru Jack Daly talk about the morale and “smell” of a company. He posed the question, “What does your company smell like?” I knew right away that mine smelled like garbage that had been sitting for way too long, and I knew it was past time to throw that trash out.

Company morale, team member satisfaction, and cohesion are the keys to having an award-winning workplace. Think about the following questions as they relate to your business.

Describe the morale of your workplace currently.

Do you think it could be better?

Do you have any trash that needs to be taken out?

What Does Your Company Smell Like?

If so, set a date to have that done. I know this can be difficult, but what will happen to your company once the trash is taken out?

What will winning awards do for this morale?

What specific awards could you win that would be significant morale boosters?

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Be the Expert!

How can you leverage the award you are going to win to become an expert in your field?

Think specifically about what events, organizations, and groups could use your expertise and how you could bring benefits to their business by the service you provide.

If you don't have connections with these groups and organizations now, look back to the networking and media contacting section to get in touch with these groups.

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The Myths

When I first discovered the secret of winning awards, I thought back to the myths and things I believed about this process, industry, and benefits to business. I discovered they were completely false, yet so many think they are true. Answer the following questions.

Write down any preconceptions you may have about winning awards.

What do you feel will hold you back from becoming an award-winning company?

What kind of companies do you feel win awards consistently?

The Myths

**Right now, do you feel like you can become an award-winning company?
Why, or why not?**

If you have any “no” answers, are those answers true, or just in your head?

If they are true, what action steps do you need to take in your business to change these things?

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Get Ready to Take Action!

Once you understand the benefits and eliminate the myths, it is time for action. Here are some questions and activities to help you take action now.

So, where do you go to find these awards?

Obviously, the Internet is an endless supply of leads. Any search engine is a gateway to numerous awards. Search for “business awards” along with your state, city, or region. Now, make a list of the awards you discover that you are going to apply for.

Get Ready to Take Action!

Keep your eye open for notices in the papers and magazines of other companies winning, and look up those awards by name to learn how to apply. Once you make yourself aware, you will be amazed at how many awards have been right under your nose.

At the front of the book is a list of awards for which I have been nominated and won. Feel free to use that list as a starting place. Another great source is the trade organization specific to your industry. For example, organizations like the Home Builders Association, or the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America, have long lists of awards on their websites.

Keep your list updated. It will constantly change as you add awards, apply, win, and re-apply.

Make a list of the awards in which you are interested by the order of application deadlines. As you begin to apply and hear the results, keep a list of awards you are applying for, have won, and will win. Keep deadlines for applications in order, and stay in the game.

I recommend a basic Excel file. Here are fields you can use across the top of the sheet:

- Award
- Application Open
- Application Due
- Entry Cost
- What is Needed
- Researched Past Winners
- Entered
- Confirmed
- Won
- Finalist

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Your Story

As I mentioned in the book and previous work section, having a compelling story that hooks potential customers, vendors, and associates is key to maintaining and growing your company. Here are some questions to ponder as you create and get ready to share your story with judges. These questions will help you to build on the story you have already created.

Explain why your company is unique and innovative in your industry.

What obstacles and challenges has your company faced and overcome?

Your Story

Describe some unique things that make your workplace stand out.

How does your company compare to your competitors?

How has the current economic climate affected your business, and how have you handled changes?

Your Story

What is your business doing to contribute to the community?

What are your long term-plans and vision for your company?

Above all this, what is your story? Is it an amazing one? Have you told it yet? How often? What are the selling points of your story? What makes it unique?

Your Story

Answer these questions to help create your story:

What was your introduction into your business? What did you do before?

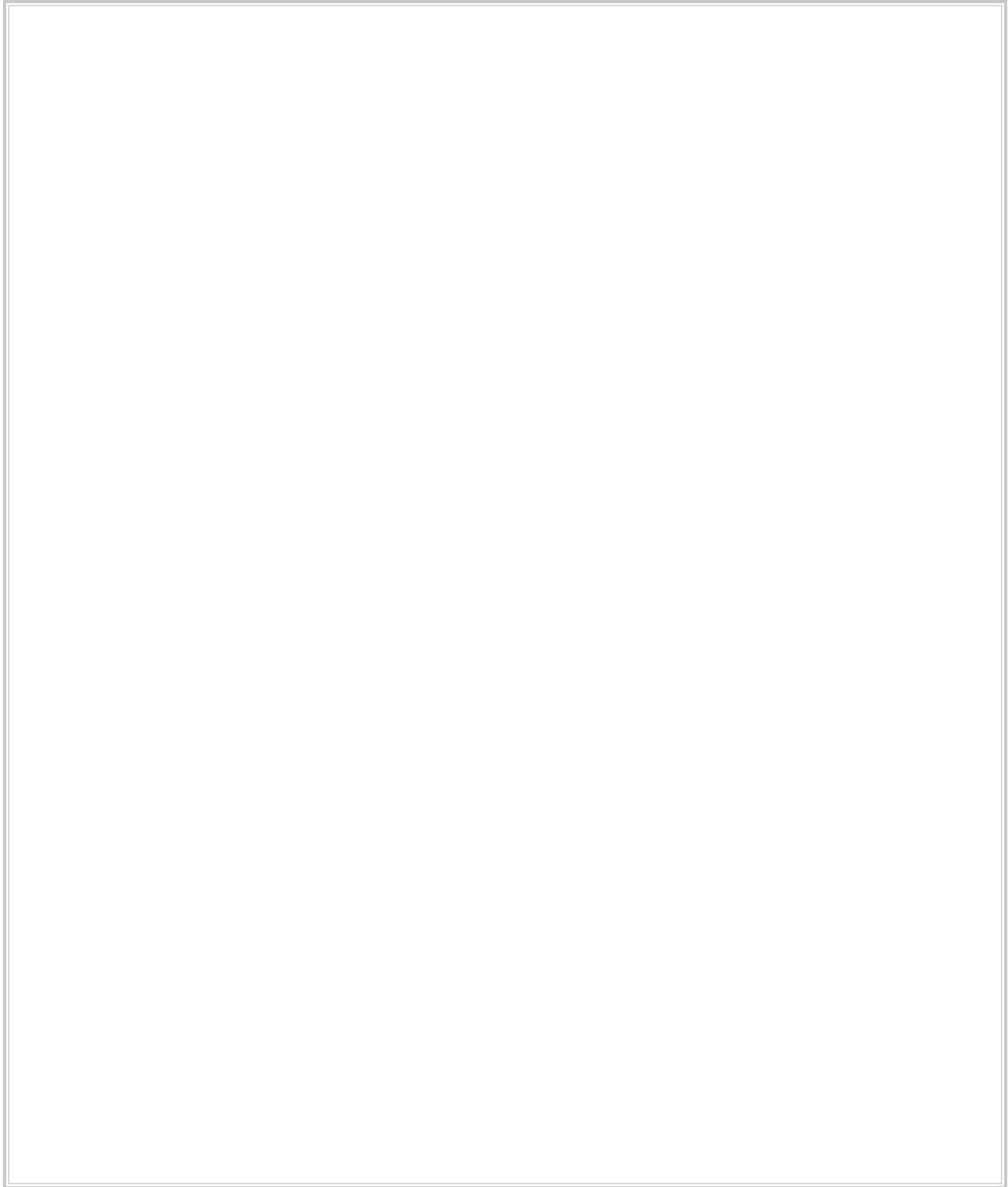
What were some of the challenges of starting your business?

What have been some lessons learned?

Talk about the turning points in the business or big realizations.

What makes your company unique in the market?

Write Your Story Here



Remember that all stories have a beginning, build up to a major event, climax, and end. Where is your business in this journey? People love to hear a success story that goes against all odds. Award judges are no exception.

Your Story

Many of the questions that an awards organization will ask will help you to develop and craft your story.

When I started my company, I had no idea that the initial \$100 deposit I made into my bank account would be so crucial for developing and creating my story. You may be doing things in your business right now that are going to be key points in your story, so keep this in mind.

Search for past winners of the awards you aspire to win. Find their biographies and look for trends and similarities between award winners. In this way, you will get inside the “mind” of that particular award to discover what most appeals to their judges particular senses. Obviously, you must avoid plagiarism. The idea is not to take their story, but to determine what made their company appealing, and find similarities in your own story. You can then build your answers around those common traits.

Brainstorm a list of topics, stories, and pitches related to your company. Begin to think about how those could work for numerous different angles. The fundraiser you held last year might show your community involvement and be a great answer for any question about your philanthropy, but it also might work for a question about team dynamics to show the servant nature of your staff or their ability to coordinate well outside the work walls.

Describe some unique things that make your workplace stand out.

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Make It or Break It with Your Editor

This truly is one of the points in your action steps where you make it or break it. You either sound like an entrepreneurial superhero or look like a dummy. After doing all of the work to create your story, make sure it is edited and organized well so that it is ready to share.

Brainstorm a list of editors you know or people or resources to lead you to an editor. If you have not begun to apply for awards, send an email correspondence, a newsletter or the text from your latest advertising flyer to an editor.

Does his or her voice match your style? You still want your work to sound like you and not your editor. You just want it to be a polished you!

Are there noticeable improvements after the editor has gone over your draft?

Make sure the person you choose is easy to work with and understands your goals. Is this someone who can represent you well?

Track and Follow Up

This can easily become the part of the process where people slack off. Once you have done all of the hard work required for the application, be sure to track your progress with all of your awards and to follow up. Fortune is always in the follow up. Stay on top of your game.

Remember, you should have already created your excel sheet to track and follow up on all your awards.

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Award-Winning Rockstar!

Share it with the World!

When you win your first award, how will you share it with the world?

What are some of the methods and media contacts you will use?

Do you have your contact list developed in order to do so?

What methods of mass-contact and database management will you use?

Now that you have worked through this book, you are ready to become an award-winning company. Going back and reading the book again may help to make your plan and strategy more clear. Thank you for reading the book and taking the time to work through the workbook. I think you will thank yourself many times as you begin to reap the rewards. You are a rockstar! Now, go win some awards!

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Helpful Resources

- In the section **FREE PR—One of the biggest money-makers around**, I talked about sending a card to a list of media contacts with gift cards enclosed. At first, this sounds like a lot of work, but it is actually very simple. I use a service called Send Out Cards. Their site allows you to import and manage contacts, and send greeting cards (along with gifts and gift cards) from the convenience of your computer. You select, create, and personalize the card (you can add photos and videos), and they take care of the rest. That's right! They print, stuff, stamp, address, verify, and mail the card for you. This has been a big time-saver for me, and the cards are about a third of what you would pay traditionally. Visit www.sendoutcards.com/mattshoup to see how this service works. I will even let you send a few free cards on me. Have fun!
- Another resource I have created is the website www.becomeanawardwinningcompany.com. This site is consistently updated with videos, award deadlines, and blog posts from other entrepreneurs that will help you grow your business and become more of an award-winning company. **Feel free to become a blog contributor yourself.** When you downloaded this workbook, you gave me your email. I promise not to spam you with crap! I really want to give you helpful information. I will email you each time I am looking for a blog entry, and when you contribute, I will post it on my site which will give you and your company FREE exposure. Please be sure to check this site often for new content.