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Fresh Mind, Fresh Start, Freshman

Freshman Jared Mapes graduated from high school less than a year ago, and he already has his own business

By Brandon Ortiz
Skiff Staff

Something funny happened to Jared Mapes on the way to Starbucks Coffee one day.

The freshman advertising/public relations major was on his way to study and enjoy a cup of caramel macchiato early last semester when a man came up to him and said, "There is free food at Chipotle."

Like any college student, Mapes decided to check it out.

Mapes was met at the door by Suzanne Miller, owner of SPM Communications, a public relations agency. She told Mapes she was having trouble getting students to the restaurant, and she would like to get a lot of people to come for the upcoming TCU night. Mapes offered to help.



Sarah Kirschberg/PHOTO
EDITOR

After sampling a meal, Mapes went home and went to work. He made signs to hang in The Main and called everyone he knew. When TCU night rolled around, Mapes stood in front of The Main and told students Chipotle was serving free food.

Having finally done everything he could do to get the word out, Mapes drove down to Chipotle to see if his tactics had worked. As he drove around the corner, praying for a good turnout, he saw a line out the door that circled around the building and into the parking lot.

Mapes said he was dumbfounded.

He said he wasn't sure if he should keep driving straight, as he asked himself, "Oh my God, what did I do?"

Mapes had orchestrated one of the biggest Chipotle openings ever in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, Miller said.

His work impressed two Chipotle officials so much that they wanted to offer Mapes a job. A short argument about who was going to hire Mapes ensued between Miller and the Chipotle officials.

Since then, Miller has taken Mapes under her wing and helped him start his own business, RAYSD Communications. Mapes has worked with Miller to organize Chipotle openings all over the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

"It is starting to feel like my own business now," Mapes said. "I am just starting to get the hang of it. I love it. I can work on my own time."

Marc Simon, regional director for Chipotle, was immediately impressed with Mapes' enthusiasm.

"He appeared to be a bright energetic young man and was very excited about what we're doing," Simon said. "He struck me as a quick study. He displayed unusual ability to see an opportunity and go for it, and I normally do not see that in people that young."

Mapes' enthusiasm makes up for his lack of experience, Miller said.

"He is aggressive," Miller said. "He will figure out a way to get it done. He really cares about how many people show up at these events. He even likes to drive to these events to see how many people are at the door."

But his enthusiasm and ambition sometimes gets him into trouble when it comes to balancing school and work, Mapes said.

"Sometimes I want to cry myself to sleep because I get so stressed out," Mapes said jokingly. "It kicks me in the (butt) sometimes, it really does. I knew it was going to kick my butt. I have never been a great student as far as studying (goes)."

Mapes said his parents were worried at first about whether he would be able to juggle school and work. After they stopped having to deposit money into his account, they changed their minds.

"My dad was really skeptical about me," Mapes said. "He was really drilling me about it, and it affected me in the worst way. He finally came around when he didn't have to deposit money into my account. It kind of shocked him, and it made him realize I had done something good in my life."

Before Mapes came to college, he said he made a commitment not to let school consume him and to still have fun at college. His business has made it harder to do so, but he has still kept his promise, he said.

"(In high school) I was having a blast, partying all the time," Mapes said. "There are going to be a lot of late nights, and nothing is going to stop me."

Mapes' goal to have a social life has put his time management skills to the test, he said.

"Every day I wake up and open my planner to see all the things I have to do, and I still want to have a little fun after work," Mapes said. "Every day I wake up, and I say to myself, 'Why did I get myself into all this?'"

The difficulty of Mapes' job adds to this. His job is harder than just calling businesses up and asking them if they want free food, Mapes said. He said he has a hard time convincing businesses he is not a solicitor.

"I just can't randomly walk up to someone on the street and ask, 'Hey, you want to come to a VIP party?'" Mapes said. "Especially (since) I am 19 years old, and I look like I am 16. They laugh."

"It is really difficult for me because a lot of the corporations think I am a joke, and I have to be as professional as I can. It's kind of hard for me because I am used to being the jokester and playing around."

In addition to the importance of acting professional, Mapes said he has learned some life lessons.

"I have learned patience with (people)," Mapes said. "When they tell me no, I am patient, but I have to be persistent."

Despite his troubles, Mapes said he takes pride in his job.

“I couldn’t ask for a better job,” Mapes said. “It’s really nice to be looked up to after I say I have my own business. They laugh at me and I show them the certificate saying I own it. They don’t laugh at me anymore, and they look up to me.”

If not for a craving for caramel macchiato, Mapes would not have stumbled into his business.

“I was so close to not going (to Starbucks) and studying,” Mapes said. “But I really wanted a caramel macchiato. That is really all I went for.”

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