

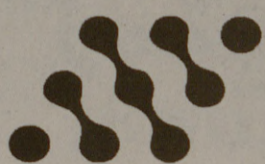
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AGGIELIFE

Hear the one about the Students find owning business rewarding

BY JEFF WOLFSSOHL
The Battalion

Take an idea and put it to good use. Start a business that can benefit the world. A person who remembers this can become the next member of the Fortune 500. But when the person also happens to be a full-time student, academics and business compete for time and effort.

Travis McHam, a senior journalism major, is Webmaster for companies and individuals. He operates his business from his home.

"I design, implement and create Web sites," he said. "I do everything from graphic design to taking pictures. From start to finish, I do the whole Web-creation process."

McHam chose the business is largely because of his love for computers.

"Two years ago, my boss asked [me] to learn how to build a Website," he said. "I found that I loved it. I then began developing Websites for organizations that I was in."

After these experiences, McHam decided to turn his hobby into a business.

"I started finding people around town that needed help [approaching] me before I would ask," he said.

McHam's friends and family began to recommend him by word of mouth, which led eventually to his decision to go to business for himself.

"A lady overheard me talking about the Website I was designing, and she asked for help on a project she was working on for Dell," he said. "After that, it's been nonstop. I have the work if I need it."

After being in the Webmaster business for more than a year, McHam said he has realized many people are still unfamiliar with computers.

"Most of the people I work with are computer illiterate, so they aren't familiar with the process of Web hosting and design," he said.

McHam said creating one's work schedule is a tremendous advantage for those who own and operate their own businesses.

"I feel more comfortable being in charge of my work and the output I create," he said. "I have high standards, and if I am in charge of the whole process, then I can be sure to meet those standards."



Aggie

whose business got traded
WALL ST?

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

McHam said his Internet business is something he is in for the long run.

"I've found myself in a pretty good position with the experience and the connections I've made with companies," McHam said. "I feel like my career has already been established, and school now is more like a formality."

Ben Taylor, president of Kappa Sigma, the fraternity in charge of "Wicked Woods," an outdoor haunted house and a senior management information systems major. He said student organizations interested in a business venture should be prepared to plan in advance.

"We are in the process of building some things [for Wicked Woods] right now, but we started putting together ideas at the beginning of the year," Taylor said.

He said the haunted house does take up much of his time.

"I take a break when tests come along, but I'm used to balancing my schedule anyway," Taylor said. "This is not an 8-to-5 job: at times it can take more than a regular job."

Despite the time he must put into the project, Taylor said it is well worth it.

"We are helping the community and people have fun," Taylor said. "We especially like to watch the high school kids come out and get scared."

Perennially cash-conscious students must identify potential financial pitfalls and plan accordingly. Taylor said the land used for the Wicked Woods is on Kappa Sigma's property, allowing the fraternity to save in rental costs and ultimately to increase the profits.

"We give the majority of the money to the Ronald McDonald House," he said. "The remainder helps to support the house."

Students who begin a business while in school can reap the rewards of hard work. Anthony Scabron, Class of '94, is a student at Universal Tan.

Scabron said he worked his way through school at another tanning salon while he was in school and learned from his experiences how to operate his own business.

"After I graduated, I left my job so I could do my own thing," he said. "I looked at what we were doing and saw what would really be their business."

As a student worker, Scabron said he was first to hear complaints, which ultimately led him with his own business venture.

"People would tell me things because I was a student," he said. "It was like, 'insider' information during work."

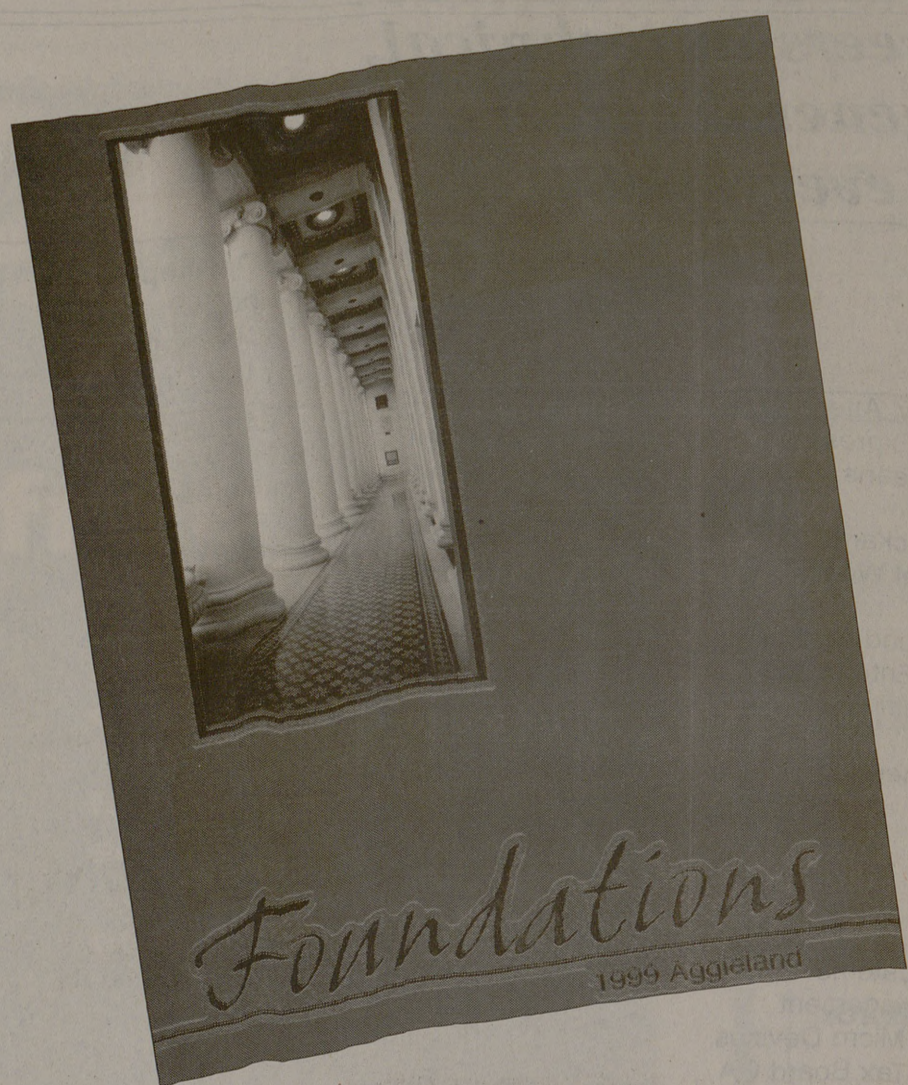
Scabron said the owner of a business has the ability to control his work environment. Power is accompanied by responsibility.

"We, as owners, don't manage at all because your level of intensity is hard to control. You have to do it," Scabron said.

Scabron said he does not believe that getting to ownership is important. What one does when they get the ownership is more important.

"Sometimes you make unrealistic plans. Even I've done that — and when you don't do them, you can get depressed," he said. "Why you must work to be realistic and follow through in order to accomplish

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