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# Learning to Market a Labor of Love

To help take a small business to the next level, RWU students learn the art it takes to make its signature treat



RWU students in an advertising campaigns course document Jorge Schuhmacher, owner and chief executive officer of Bold Macarons, as he readies macaron mix to bake. Over the semester, the students have been developing a full marketing campaign to help Schuhmacher take his business to the next level.

April 19, 2018 | Juan Siliezar

**PROVIDENCE, R.I.** – In a townhouse on the east side of Providence, a handful of RWU students gather around a long kitchen table. Placed neatly on the table is a stack of sheet pans, a bowl, and a bag of sugar and flour giving the impression that they’re here for a private baking lesson with their host – Jorge Schuhmacher, owner and chief executive officer of Bold Macarons.

They will learn some baking skills today, but the students have a deeper goal. They hope to learn how to take Schuhmacher’s business to the next level by learning the art and labor that goes into making his bold-flavored macarons.

“You never know what might turn into something that could be used [in a marketing campaign],” says Assistant Professor of Marketing Geraldo Matos, who teaches the Marketing 302 Advertising Campaigns course the students are in.

Students are seeking to discover something unique in Schuhmacher’s hand-crafted process that they can integrate into the marketing campaigns they are developing for him as part of their 302 course.



Students listen as Schumacher goes over his baking process.

By making their own macarons, Schuhmacher hopes students “get a sense of what it takes to make a good macaron,” and what makes his cookie stand out from the rest.

Professor Matos partnered with Schuhmacher to give his class of 27 interdisciplinary students a real-world advertising challenge: put Schuhmacher’s Providence-based startup on the map.

After initially meeting with Schuhmacher in Feb., students were placed into five teams, researched market-trends and came up with base-strategies for their campaigns.



Wasabi-infused macarons.

Now they are ready to flesh out the details with content that uniquely positions Bold Macarons – which uses unexpected flavors like wasabi – in the macaron-making market.

The experience today could be a key part to that, so the students listen, take notes and ask questions as Schuhmacher explains his process and the equipment and ingredients he uses – such as yuzu juice from Japan, eggs cracked two days in advance, and 100 percent chocolate imported from France.

Then, as French music plays lightly on the stereo, they get to work.



Natalie MacPhee, a first semester senior smells a bottle of yuzu juice. Schuhmacher uses it in some of his most popular macarons.

First, they chop the chocolate they will use for the macaron filling, called ganache. After Schuhmacher cuts the first half, sophomore Sarah Caron, a business management major, takes over.



Sarah Caron '20 chops chocolate with Schuhmacher's guidance.

“Not half bad, right?” Caron asks.

“Excellent,” Schuhmacher replies.

Once the chocolate is chopped, Schuhmacher heats it in a bowl before he adds cream and blends it together.



Students document Schuhmacher’s process so they can use it in their campaigns for Bold Macaron.

As he does, the students, each representing one of the five teams in the class, take photos and videos to be able to use in their campaigns.

“This smells incredible,” Josh Rosenberg, a senior marketing major, says as the chocolate blends with the cream, giving it a milky shine.

With the ganache done, Schuhmacher explains that “now is where the action starts,” as he starts making the macaron cookie mix.



Students watch as Schuhmacher makes the macaron cookie mix.

When it's nearly done, he adds bright pink food coloring then hand-mixes it using a large serving spoon. The pink and white swirl looks like art.

"When it's ready, it has to fall off the spoon," Schuhmacher says of the now fully pink mix.



Schuhmacher shows students how the macaron cookie mix should look when it is ready.

Marketing major Natalie MacPhee, a first semester senior, says that for her watching the process brings out the "artistic thought that goes into" creating the macaron.

It's helped her think of ways to bring that artistry into the campaign.

"It's really getting insight into what the brand is about," MacPhee says. "It's art you can eat."

When the cookie mix is finished, Schuhmacher pours the pink mix into a pastry bag and starts putting dollops of the mix onto one of the sheet pans as the students watch and take photos and video.



Students take photos and video of Schuhmacher placing the cookie mix on a sheet pan.

The students take the lead on the second sheet with Schuhmacher's guidance.

"That looks very good," Schuhmacher says.



Schuhmacher explains to senior Josh Rosenberg how to properly hold the pastry bag.

As a finishing touch, lavender sugar sprinkles are added to the smooth pink circles.

So now, finally, it's time to bake, Schuhmacher says.

The smell of fresh-baked cookie fills the air, as Josh Rosenberg, the senior marketing major, reflects on the process. Seeing it and talking to Schuhmacher about his techniques has helped him see how much care goes into each batch.



Natalie MacPhee and Josh Rosenberg take photos of Schuhmacher with a plate of macarons.

“It’s a labor of love,” Rosenberg says. “It takes a lot of time. I feel like we should incorporate the time it takes. We need to reflect the hard work he does in a marketing campaign.”



Macaron tops fresh out the oven.

As one of the sheet pans comes out the oven, the private baking lesson starts winding down. Students, however, keep up their questions to Schuhmacher because their work is really just getting started.

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