



TRACY RAETZ | Staff Photographer

An aspiring entrepreneur, junior Ashley Haddy has already gained firsthand experience on how to own a small business. Her 'Scizzor Happy' stand at the Elon Community Church farmers market is open every Thursday from 3-6 p.m.

Getting 'scizzor happy' to make some money

Justine Vadini
Senior Reporter

For a kindergartener, getting "a little scissor happy" usually means cleaning up a big mess. But for Elon junior Ashley Haddy, it means relaxation, friendship and the name of her new business, "Scizzor Happy," the newest addition to Elon's Community Church farmers' market.

Haddy began crafting on her own starting in the eighth grade but has been surrounded by scrapbooking and creative keepsakes for as long as she can remember. Her aunt is a graphic designer, and all the women in her family have every birthday, holiday

and family reunion preserved in paper memory.

Haddy decided to take her own spin on scrapbooking, using pictures and decorative paper to embellish journals and other personalized gifts for her friends.

She uses different mediums such as colorful paper, stickers, decals and punched letters to create personalized planners, corkboards, picture frames and composition notebooks. Haddy also began a line of Elon Phoenix jewelry during the summer.

But as an entrepreneurship major, Haddy wanted to combine her love for crafting with the experience of being a small business owner.

"Why not see how business works on a small scale with something I'm passionate about?" Haddy said.

After one month, Haddy has learned that running a small business is no easy task.

"You have to know your customers really well, cater to them and learn to use marketing skills like Twitter and other social media," she said.

But after just three weeks, Haddy has gained more than just great business experience. Having a table at the farmers market has allowed her to get to know the unique skills and artistry of many members of the Elon community. Meeting locals and Elon students who visit the market has given

her what she calls "a creative, relaxing outlet."

The farmers market, which is held every Thursday from 3-6 p.m. through October, is located on a small plot of land next to the Elon Community Church. And while it is not far outside the realm of what university students call "the Elon bubble," it provides a great opportunity to appreciate and support the town's local taste and talent.

In the future, Haddy plans to start her own hobby and crafting store, with hopes of it growing to a franchise one day. But for now, she'll be at the corner of North Williamson and West College Avenues, an Elon student, artist and member of the greater community.

Student entrepreneurs learn from their real-world CEO experiences, look toward future business careers and goals

Edith Veremu
Copy Editor

While some students are struggling to find internships or part-time jobs, other students have opted for another route: wearing different hats as CEOs or founders of their own organizations. Elon University junior Ryan Vet and senior Nick Martin, both marketing majors, are among the group of student entrepreneurs.

A tale of two students

In 2005, at the age of 15, Vet created Digi Tech Studios (DTS), an organization he said focuses on progressive marketing.

"I've always been entrepreneurial, from a lemonade stand to starting a local newspaper and everything in between," Vet said. "Five years ago, TV spots, billboards and print ads were big. But as the generation grew up, our focus turned digital, and that's what we do at Digi Tech."

Vet said although DTS doesn't market itself to a broad range of people, it is still fairly well-known and uses word-of-mouth to gain clients.

"There's very limited marketing we do," he said. "We've developed overtime a reputation of integrity, credibility and people have noticed."

Some of DTS's clients included Elegant Baby, which Vet described as "the J. Crew or Banana Republic of baby clothes." For the company, Vet and his team developed a competition in which contestants took pictures with a polka dot rubber ducky and could win an iPod Touch, according to Vet's personal blog.

Along with two friends, Martin founded Now is the Time Marketing, or NT Marketing, a virtual management and consulting firm whose aim is to help small businesses out of the recession and get them back on

track with current and new clients, according to the firm's Facebook page. NT Marketing is based in Wall, N.J., Martin's hometown, but it has no physical location.

"I had been thinking about opening my own company for the past year and it's been taking off quickly," said Martin, CEO and director of marketing of NT Marketing. "We have four to six clients and two are under contract and we're looking to get more clients."

Other founding members are Taylor Madaffari, a 2011 Elon graduate, who serves as Chief Promotions Officer and director of visionary planning at the firm and Mike Santilli, Elon junior finance major and Chief Financial Officer and director of sales at NT Marketing.

Work-study balance

Juggling academics with work responsibility isn't easy, but it's doable, Vet said. He said he's often considered dropping out of school to focus primarily on DTS but has decided not to.

"I don't set success by a dollar amount," Vet said. "Instead, I set it by how much you love doing whatever it is you're doing. There's also no parallel to the education you get on campus. I'm just trying to be as normal as I possibly can."

For his part, Martin uses the weekends to communicate with his business partners and clients because during the week, he's swamped with academics and extracurricular

activities.

"It's tough to find a balance because I have several leadership positions on campus and I let Taylor help me with the clients," Martin said. "The weekend is a really big time when I talk to clients. I could be on the phone for hours on a Saturday morning."

What's next?

NT Marketing has been officially filed under North Carolina law and the organization will start looking for clients in the Burlington area, Martin said. He said there are some small businesses the company has started looking at, and it will try to sign the contracts with those businesses within the coming weeks.

"We will analyze the businesses' demographics, current clients and see how they can target more clients," Martin said. "We can build on the array of services we offer and we can build plans based on what the businesses offer."

DTS is looking to expand, and if it acquires enough new clients, then the company will have a physical location by April 2012, Vet said.

"We have a unique business model," he said. "We pull the best contractors from wherever they are. We have people from California, South Carolina and Raleigh. Right now, we're working on trying to acquire large national accounts and through that,

we'd have to expand fairly greatly and we'd open a physical location. It's a six-month plan."

In the meantime, Vet said he'd like to keep working with his team and just enjoy life in general. An autobiography is also in progress, according to his personal website.

"In five years, I just want to keep doing what I've been doing," he said. "Keep living the dream, enjoying life and never letting anything I do, whether it's traveling, writing or business, distract me from enjoying life."

Martin said he would like to see his company headed in the right direction and would like to acquire another job while he and his team continue to work at NT Marketing.

"I'd like to see this business be successful as a side job while I work at another day job," he said.

Words of wisdom

Both Vet and Martin said through their role as CEOs and founders of their companies, they would like to inspire young adults to be entrepreneurs and inspire change.

"I never took an entrepreneurship class, but I've talked to a lot of people in the business school," Martin said. "You can sit through classes every day, but at the same time, I've learned a lot more by doing NT Marketing."

Vet said as a speaker and entrepreneur, he's also learned a lot and wants other people to take advantage of the chances they're offered.

"I've taken every open door that's been opened to me," he said. "A lot of people in our generation get shot down a lot. We actually have more power because we have younger and fresher minds. My goal is to inspire others towards a positive change. People are capable of more than they get credit for."

-Ryan Vet
CLASS OF 2013, CEO OF DIGI TECH
STUDIO