

Meredith H. McManus
Maptote
Executive Summary

This summer I was given the opportunity to intern at an up-and-coming tote bag company called Maptote. The company was founded in 2006 by Michael and Rachel Berick who combined their talents of cartography and fashion design to create quirky map designs placed on tote bags and other products. In only four years they have expanded their idea that began as a hobby into an internationally successful company.

At Maptote I have contributed to all of the company's many components: orders, sales, production, administration work, press, and design. My main responsibility has been to take care of all retail and wholesale orders. On a daily basis I collect, package, and ship all retail and wholesale orders. Maptote currently does not have a retail store of its own and thus depends on its website retail orders and wholesale orders to stores, such as JCrew and Kate's Paperie, for its income, thus making my job very key in Maptote's success. I am also solely responsible for keeping up with all in-house product inventories. With hundreds of products being shipped weekly, it is important that I keep Maptote's website up-to-date with accurate inventory numbers. A major project I headed this summer involved brainstorming and creating a more efficient way to keep up with the fast changing inventory numbers.

When the time comes to restock Maptote's inventor, I provide Rachel with a list of all the products that are in demand. All of Maptote's products are made in the USA with a very large majority of those being made right here in Brooklyn. Rachel and I frequently visit Maptote's bag manufacturer and silk screener in order to ensure that Maptote's products are being made in satisfactory conditions.

Researching and contacting new stores in which to sell Maptote products has also been a duty of mine. New Maptote locales are being released all the time, and it's important that I find stores in those locales that match Maptote's aesthetic. Other research I have participated in includes finding US textile mills that manufacture and sell 100% US made fabric. This is the most difficult of all the tasks I have taken on while at Maptote; for every twenty mills contacted only one or two have not outsourced to overseas markets.

At Maptote I have always felt involved and a valuable asset. Being able to work side by side with the two owners has provided me with countless opportunities to voice my opinions and concerns and, more importantly, to ask questions directly to the source. The knowledge I have gained while working at Maptote is priceless. I have experienced firsthand the amount of work required to make a little idea grow into a successful business.

Toward the end of my internship I was offered a paid position to work with the Maptote team – an offer I couldn't refuse! It is an honor to be Maptote's first employee and even more so to work for a company that challenges me daily, is fun, and realizes the importance of having American made products. I highly recommend this internship to any Sewanee student who is outgoing, enjoys taking on new tasks every day, and doesn't mind learning...a lot.