

JUAN IRBY

Owner, Mason's Mixer



February

Small Business Startup: Ready, Set, Go

February 8, 2022 **Tue** **10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Speaker: Eileen Joyce, US Small Business Administration
Fee: No Cost

Four Critical Factors for Creating Sustainable Growth and Profits

February 9, 2022 **Wed** **9:00 – 11:00 A.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Sherre' DeMao, CEO/BizGrowth Maestro
Fee: No Cost

Digital Marketing Automation: How to Free Your Time and Increase Productivity

February 10, 2022 **Thur** **7:00 – 8:30 P.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Toya Wilson-Smith
Fee: No Cost

Copywriting to Sell Almost Anything

February 22, 2022 **Tue** **12:00 – 1:30 P.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Toya Wilson-Smith
Fee: No Cost

Sales and Use Tax

February 23, 2022 **Wed** **9:00 – 11:00 A.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): NC Dept of Revenue
Fee: No Cost

March

Sell More with Data from Google Analytics

March 3, 2022 **Thurs** **12:00 – 1:30 P.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Toya Wilson-Smith
Fee: No Cost

Business Registration Basics Including DBA

March 7, 2022 **Mon** **6:30 – 7:30 P.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Ann Elmore, NC Secretary of State
Fee: No Cost

Using Sales Funnels to Ignite Growth

March 9, 2022 **Wed** **6:00 – 8:00 P.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Matt Rudisill, The Leadership Academy and The EXPERTS Game Podcast
Fee: No Cost

Search Engine Optimization

March 17, 2022 **Thurs** **6:00 – 7:30 P.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Toya Wilson-Smith
Fee: No Cost

ABC's of Trademarks

March 21, 2022 **Mon** **6:30 – 7:30 P.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): Ann Elmore, NC Secretary of State
Fee: No Cost

Online Sellers

March 23, 2022 **Wed** **9:00 – 11:00 A.M.** **Online**
Speaker(s): NC Dept of Revenue
Fee: No Cost

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Small Business SPOTLIGHT

Mason's Mixer | Juan Irby

One of the first things to know about the proprietor of Mason's Mixer is that his name is not Mason. It's Juan Irby. The second is that his home-based bakery business produces the freshest, most delicious, most original cookies you'll find anywhere.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and he was working from home, Irby spent so much of his spare time with quarantine baking that he decided to start his own business. Three years later, he's migrated from pound cakes, cheesecakes and brownies to specialty cookies, having discovered that his grandmother's chocolate chip recipe was a universal hit with customers. Although he has branched out into creative flavors that are often inspired by family, friends and customers, his signature item is still his tasty reproduction of Granny's specialty.

"I enjoy this because it allows me to infuse my love of people, my passion for baking, and my desire to be a better father into a single bite," Irby said. "My 'ah-ha' moment, when I really knew I wanted to pursue this with everything I had, came when my son, Mason, was born in 2019. I wanted to create something that could produce generational wealth and leave him something that he can continue and even pass along if he wanted to."

The birth of daughter Maya in 2021 offered even more motivation for Irby to continue his entrepreneurial dream. Mason's Mixer operates out of Irby's Kannapolis home, with help from his wife, Alexandria, who is a stay-at-home mother. Two-year-old Mason also loves to get in on the baking action when he can.

Although Irby had already established his home-based business while living in Alabama, the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Small Business Center was his go-to resource for help expanding and tapping into the Charlotte market when he relocated to North Carolina about a year ago.

"The Small Business Center has been such a great resource for me, advising me, pushing me, and helping me keep all my "T"s crossed and my "I"s



dotted," Irby said. "I would encourage other entrepreneurs to take advantage of what they offer."

The Small Business Center serves Kannapolis, Concord, Salisbury and surrounding towns, assisting owners of existing businesses as well as those looking toward a start-up venture. From free, confidential business counseling to seminars and webinars, the Small Business Center aims to provide business education and relevant, comprehensive guidance.

Although he still juggles the bakery along with a full-time job, Irby's goal is to focus solely on cookies eventually. "I hope to continue shipping across the United States and expanding my customer base," he said. "But I never want to get so big that I have to use an outside company. I want my cookies to have that homemade taste and be crafted by my hands."

Mason's Mixer ships fresh cookies every Monday, allowing the rest of the week for Irby to process orders, stock up on supplies, and of course, enjoy plenty of family time. The bakery also offers local delivery for a fee, as well as pickup at various locations in Charlotte and surrounding counties.

In addition to the signature chocolate chip, rotating monthly and seasonal flavors include best-sellers such as Birthday Cake and “Baker’s Favorites” such as Lemon White Chocolate. Irby keeps his recipes top secret since he creates many of them himself. Seasonal favorites such as butterscotch pecan, strawberries and cream, and pecan bourbon chocolate chip often come from the cookie wishes of family, friends and customers.

“I ask people what they would love to taste and then start experimenting,” Irby said. “I keep a note pad handy, even by my bed, so that when I have an idea, I can write it down.”

Irby developed a passion for baking cookies when he was a child helping in his grandmother’s kitchen, and he wants to continue her legacy by approaching his business sustainably and carefully. He works with local vendors to procure the freshest possible ingredients for both traditional and vegan options, and he gives back through nonprofit projects and community outreach.

In the end, he hopes Mason’s Mixer’s marketing tagline tells the story in six words: “Start with love. End with crumbs.”



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