Jason Howarth

Running a local business is not easy, but image the difficulties of owning a local business in a booming, college town. In Whitewater, Wisconsin this is the scenario that faces Level Up Games, a local video game store in town’s main street or downtown sector if you will. The store’s owner Allan Paquette opened the store in 2008. Paquette said that he dropped out of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater unsure of what to do with his life, until a friend of his suggested that Paquette “fill a service hole that was in the Whitewater community”. Paquette has agreed to take on the challenge and given his own love for video games this store is a natural fit for him.

Paquette said that he and his store have been welcomed into the community with open arms. However, he does acknowledge that being a smaller business requires advertising to get newer cliental through the doors. Paquette says the Level Up Games is currently one of the many things advertised at the local movie theater and “was part of a coupon book given to students on campus, but I heard those got discontinued this year”. To make up some of the lost business, Paquette has recently taken out ads in the university’s newspaper “The Royal Purple”.

There are other challenges to running a store like Level Up Games, especially in today’s internet era. Paquette admits that eBay doesn’t affect their sales too much, as “customers generally come here first and go to eBay if they can’t find what they want here”, but it doesn’t make things any easier either. He also says that dealing in largely used product is the right way to go in this type of business, stating that “unless someone orders something new through us we generally don’t deal in new product, as any missed sale with new product can immediately hurt our profit margin”.

Paquette throughout the struggles has made the store his own in more ways than one. In asking about the store’s interior design, he said the “store’s design accumulated over, I started putting up all of the posters on the after the original plan to have a person paint the walls a certain design”. Paquette plans to still be selling games in the near future and is excited to see the direction the store goes in. Allan Paquette is one those people who was lost and unsure what to do with his life, but with hard work and a passion for what he sells, he has created a thriving local business.