

Alumnus gives hot dogs his stamp of approval

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Almost every other street corner in New York boasts a hot dog cart. But something stands out about Snap Dog's carts: Each hot dog is stamped with the word "beef" and the Snap Dog logo, letting consumers know that they are eating a specially manufactured product.

Snap Dog is the creation of Keith Dorman (A&S '92), who traded in a job as a bonds salesman for the life of an entrepreneur. Since launching in 2013, Dorman's company now has 30 stands located throughout New York City, with plans to add dozens more.

It's not surprising that Dorman would be drawn into the food industry given his family's history. Back in 1896, his great-grandfather, Nathan, started Dorman's

Cheese Co., which delivered milk, eggs and cheese in Manhattan by using horse and buggy. And his grandfather, Victor, altered the way that cheese was packaged by introducing the method of putting paper between slices.

Dorman hatched the idea for Snap Dog after seeing the success of Subway, noting that the sandwich business expanded globally with a lower cost than other chain restaurants. Dorman thought he could use a similar approach with hot dogs. He saw a way to both break into the business and immediately stand out.

“People don’t know what they’re getting when they buy a hot dog,” he says. “But when you put your name on the side, people know exactly what they’re getting.”

Snap Dog’s product is made from 100 percent beef that comes from the company’s smokehouse. A special cellulose casing shows the logo, providing a unique—and informative—brand.

Starting his own business was one of Dorman’s longtime goals. He even worked as a hot dog vendor to help him better understand the market. But he credits his Tulane education, which included accounting and marketing courses, as well as art professor Gene Koss for instilling his work ethic. Koss taught Intro to Glass Blowing, a class whose principles, Dorman says, prepared him to go forward to create Snap Dog.

“I was taught valuable lessons,” he said. “It was inspirational. I learned how to think about taking that next step and how to get the end result you want.”