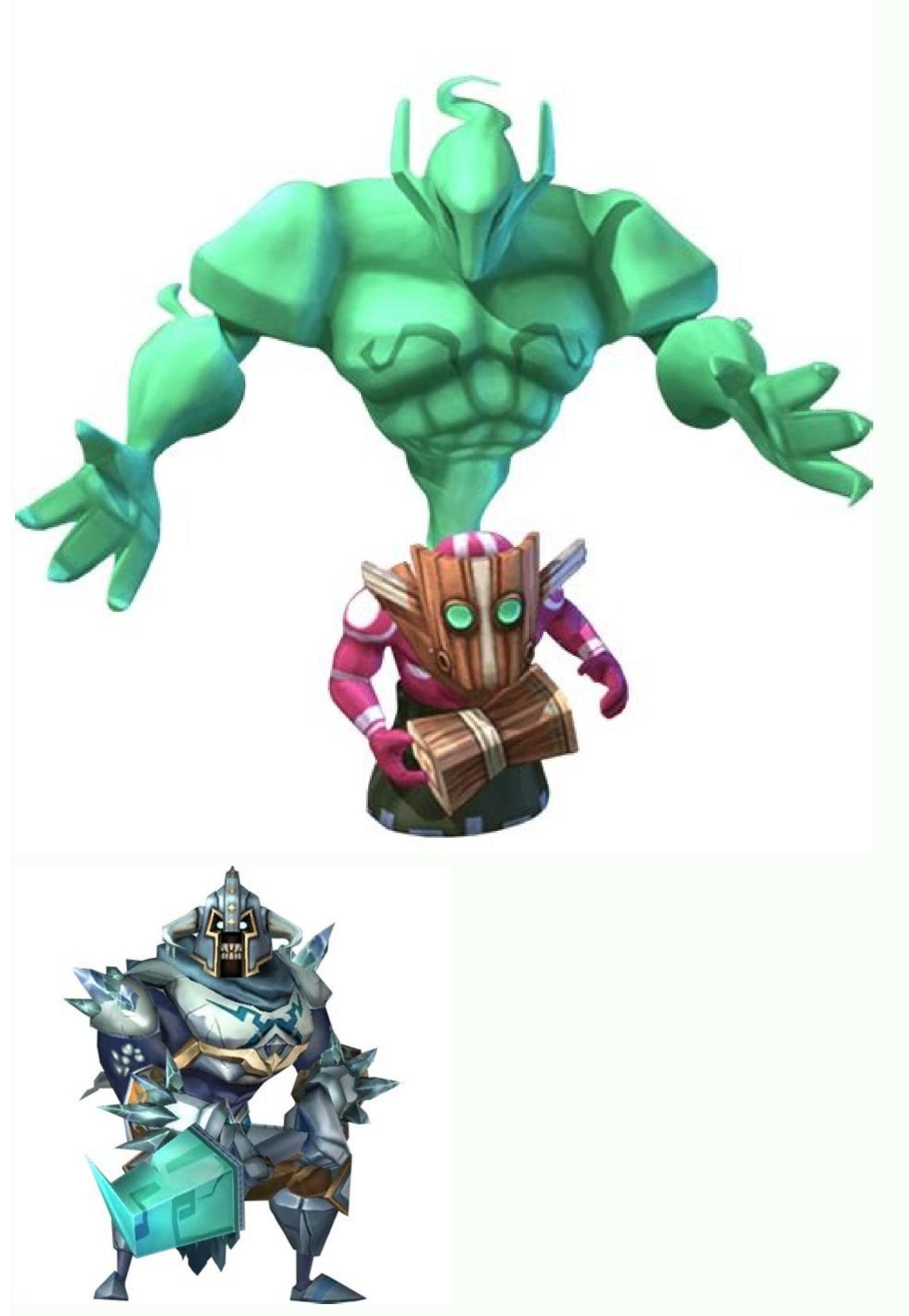




Taptap heroes familiar guide









This gives him courage for facing his most difficult challenge. After only a week in business, word has obviously gotten out: This food is worth the wait. Examples of Epic Heroes in Contemporary Stories Epic heroes are also evident in contemporary literature and film. After returning home, the hero learns how to balance his old life with his new knowledge of the world and himself. They typically start as ordinary people who must go on an adventure and return as a changed man. He partnered with Don Ghareeb, one of the largest Taco Bell and Sonic Drive-In franchisees in the nation, and now that their first location is up and running--with \$25,000 in sales in just its first week--they're hoping to open 20 more in Los Angeles County in the next two years and as many as 80 in the next 10. To be fair, 30-year-old Ashley Morris never expected to find himself in this position either. There are three distinct parts to this journey. With their stores averaging \$600,000 in sales, they asked about becoming area developers. Knowing that other people were just as fanatical about the chain, he figured opening his own Capriotti's was a surefire investment. Some experts identify as few as five traits, while others recognize as many as seven or ten. On Capriotti's Facebook page, which has 14,000 fans and growing, one person posted, "There are many sandwich shops in this world yes, but there is only room enough for one in my heart and that's Capriotti's! Thanks for showing me what a real sandwich should taste like!" That following has helped Capriotti's weather the recession with ease. "What we were buying was a 34-year-old name, fantastic recipes and a handful of stores." New Order Morris and his team spent two years rebuilding the company's infrastructure, from technology to training to distribution. California isn't the only state getting its first taste of Capriotti's. Morris discovered Capriotti's while attending the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "As soon as I heard that," Morris says, "I was fully committed." By Jan. Employees are calling out to customers by name, inquiring about what they like, making menu recommendations, asking how many peppers they want on their sandwiches. "We really reinvented the entire company," Morris says. However, there are certain characteristics they all agree are part of the epic hero. First, the epic hero is from a noble birth (sometimes the child of a god) and are not commoners in their societies. So he kept his job as a money manager at Wells Fargo, and with Valerin Engler, his girlfriend at the time (and now his wife), ran the three Henderson, Nev., restaurants that they opened over the next three years. "Now we're ready to really take on the growth." In fact, Morris is anticipating 500 locations by 2015. At \$7 to \$7.50 for a "small" 9-inch sub, the sandwiches are quite a bargain, too--one of the few in this tony neighborhood. When he joined Capriotti's in 2004 as a franchisee, he way we train, the way we train, the way we train, the way we train, the way we train t never change." Although his dreams for the sandwich chain are high, he also knows what he doesn't want it to be. "In a great market, this opportunity just wouldn't exist." Despite its devoted following, Capriotti's has staved relatively small until now, with most of its stores around where the two former owners lived, Delaware and Las Vegas. The final stage in the journey takes the hero home. He's seeking people with restaurant and franchise experience, and, with the credit market the way it is, people who have the resources to supply on their own the \$300,000 it takes to get a Capriotti's store off the ground. Facebook, Twitter and Yelp were abuzz with comments when the Beverly Hills store opened in January. And though this may not be the path he had planned for his life, watching him run to fetch extra dressing for a Capastrami and wax philosophical about chicken cheesesteaks, it seems that he's found his destiny. King Arthur and Beowulf are examples of epic heroes from British literature. "When we purchased the company, there was little if any infrastructure," Morris says. A lofty goal, but he is confident. Characteristics of an Epic heroes have distinguish them from other types of heroes. Despite his station in life and great capability, the epic hero generally does not boast about his accomplishments. With its current count at little more than 60, Capriotti's may seem like barely a blip on the radar screen in comparison--but it's a blip that makes people sit up and take notice. He fell in love with the food, so much so that he deliberately rented an apartment within walking distance of one of the company's 20-plus Las Vegas locations. Another famous example is Harry Potter in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. And that combination of guality and service has garnered Capriotti's guite a following--one that's been helped along by the advent of social media. The new store guickly won new fans, too. "And our values drive us in all of our growth and all of our operations. Many L.A. residents were familiar with the chain from weekend trips to Las Vegas and were excited to finally have one in their own backyard. But he says that growth will never come at the expense of what drew him--and so many others--to Capriotti's in the first place: the quality of the sandwiches. Examples of Epic Heroes in Classical Literature Some of the best known examples of epic heroes come from classical literature. They knew the brand had the potential to go to the next level but recognized that they weren't the right people to take it there--and they believed that with his financial background, maybe Morris was. "It was really the food that did it," Knyal says. They even redesigned the look of the stores, giving them a cozy neighborhood feel with brick-covered walls, checkerboard trim and small indoor seating areas. The title character in the Sumerian epic, The Epic of Gilgamesh, completed a quest before building a wall to protect his people. The Margolets had managed to grow the system to 44 stores since they began franchising in 1991--largely on the popularity of the sandwiches alone, because they had only four corporate employees and ran the business out of their home. At the top of the heap, of course, is Subway, which opened more than 2,000 locations last year and saw same-store sales soar into the double digits, thanks to its \$5 Footlongs. Within the departure, he hears a call to take on a task, refuses the call and eventually accepts it. Picture Courtesy: [Porapak Apichodilok/Pexels] An epic hero is a character originally found in epic poems and ancient mythology. After all, Capriotti's secret to finding franchisees is the same as winning customers: Just let them take a taste. The Hero's Journey It's difficult to ignore the similarities between epic heroes because they all follow predictable plots in their stories. In some cases, he may not want to return to his ordinary life. After successfully avoiding this temptation, he confronts his doubts and realizes his purpose. Wisconsin area developers opened one in Milwaukee in November, and Oregon, Tennessee, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Texas are all expected to see their first Capriotti's this year. "Our average gross sales are north of \$725,000 per store," Morris says, "and that's including the good, bad and the ugly." In fact, the poor economy has been more of a blessing than a curse for Capriotti's, especially when it comes to finding prime real estate--such as this location, on Wilshire Boulevard, just three blocks from Rodeo Drive. These characters perform great acts of courage and strength as they navigate obstacles on a quest to find their purpose. But the chain's founders, Lois and Alan Margolet, offered to sell them the entire company instead. First, he must leave home, a decision that often takes some encouragement from a mentor or supernatural force. Steps of the Hero's Journey Literature professor Joseph Campbell identified 17 steps the hero takes in his journey. "Part of our core values as a company is the quality of the food and the customer service," he says. With more than 32,000 stores in 90 countries, the sandwich giant is on the verge of overtaking McDonald's in the number of restaurants worldwide. "We're more of that jewel that people seek out." And that's exactly how he wants it to stay. With the area developers he's attracted, he expects to have 20 to 25 new stores open by the end of 2010. The Sandwich Phenom While the last couple of years have been tough on most businesses, sandwich franchises in general have done quite well, with many even experiencing record growth. In the next stage, the hero goes through a series of tests, including a temptation. However, he often receives supernatural help to escape, especially if he must return with a valuable object. Luke Skywalker in the original Star Wars movie goes through all of the stages of a hero's journey as he battles Darth Vader. He has the ability to complete great feats of strength, and he often demonstrates this during his quest. "Capriotti's is one of those brands where people are fanatical about the food," Morris says. This may be due, in part, to the fact that he typically receives supernatural help on his journey. "We'll never be on every corner," he says--undoubtedly a nod to Subway, which does in fact happen to have a location just a few doors down from the Beverly Hills shop. 1, 2008, he had transformed from money manager to sandwich CEO. Then he navigates through unfamiliar territory, facing dangers and challenges along the way. By the time the lunch hour is in full swing, the new Beverly Hills Capriotti's Sandwich Shop --the first California outpost since the chain was founded in Delaware in 1976--is packed with people wearing business suits and designer jeans. They're often the main character of the story and traditionally male, although the number of female epic heroes is growing. There is some debate about the number of characteristics they share. The quality of the ingredients and unique menu items, along with the employees' enthusiastic interaction with customers, makes Capriotti's feel more like an independent East Coast deli than a nationwide chain. As the former CEO of Franchise Mortgage Acceptance Co., he had spent years lending money to franchisees but never thought he would become one himself. Capriotti's signature creations, such as the Bobbie (turkey, cranberry sauce, stuffing and mayo) and the Capastrami (hot pastrami, Swiss cheese, Russian dressing and cole slaw) are stacked high with premium ingredients. Achilles in Homer's The Iliad and Odysseus in The Odyssey demonstrate bravery and strength as they face obstacles and overcome them. Of course, a hankering for the Bobbie isn't the only thing that Morris is looking for in franchisees--that would hardly narrow down the field. One fan, Omar Khashen, proudly blogged about arriving at 9:45 a.m. on opening day and waiting in the rain to be the first to eat a Bobbie made in California. In the end, he returns to his home and the people he left behind. In fact, the shop slow-roasts eight to 10 whole turkeys for 12 hours every might and pulls the meat by hand fresh every morning. The hero's journey is evident in all of the major epic poems from classical literature to contemporary tales. MORE FROM REFERENCE.COM The hungry customers start pouring into the tiny sub shop shortly before noon. The two well-dressed ladies waiting in line have no idea that the young man talking to them about his love for the "Thanksgiving on a roll" Bobbie--which was just named the greatest sandwich in America by AOL--is actually the company's CEO. That's what worked for Wayne "Buzz" Knyal, co-owner of the Beverly Hills shop.



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