

Community College

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New service allows students to rent out their own books

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Campus News

Everyone hates expensive textbooks, including us here at Campus News. Sure, you can rent textbooks to save some money or buy your books from places like half.com and Amazon, but what if there was a way where you could make money off of your textbooks at the end of the semester when you don't need them anymore? Well, there is a way, thanks to Alan Martin, the CEO of CampusBookRentals who recently launched a RentBack model where students can rent their textbooks out to other students around the country and get money for doing so.

CampusBookRentals is the pioneer for textbook rentals. As an alternative to the traditional one-time BuyBack model most, if not all, of us are familiar with, CampusBookRentals allows students to rent their books out to other students and receive payments via cash, check, or credit towards future rentals.

I had the pleasure of talking with Alan Martin, the CEO of CampusBookRentals, who told me more about his company and how it works.

Me: What gave you the idea to create this business?

AM: Well, like any student, I was always looking for ways to get cheaper textbooks. I used to buy my textbooks like anyone else and then sell them back for a cheap price. Eventually, my company's founders and I came up with a way where students can rent out their textbooks and put money into their pockets to put towards books. We were just a group of recent college graduates trying to figure out a way to help other college students save, and even make, some money.

Me: How does the RentBack system work?

AM: RentBack works by delivering as much value to the students as possible. RentBack extends the life of the text-

book by making it available to students all over the country instead of other students on an individual campus where textbooks may have a shelf life of a couple of semesters. The student has continuous ownership of their books. The students who follow the instructions on the website (www.rentback.com) will be able to send their books to CampusBookRentals, and we make that book available to other students. The books have their own individual codes so we know who is the original owner and that owner will receive payment based on how often the books are rented.

Me: CampusBookRentals offers textbook scholarships. How does one get a scholarship and how beneficial is it?

AM: Every semester, kids can get scholarships by filling out the form on our website. There is a random drawing where our computers scan through the numbers and the ones the computers lands on gets a scholarship. The scholarships are about \$250 per student, which can go a long way with buying or renting our textbooks.

Me: How has communication between students helped your business?

AM: Word-of-mouth between students has been a really big help to us. While living in the world of social media now, news spreads a lot quicker than it used to, and that has helped extensively as well.

Me: I noticed on your website that your company partnered with Operation Smile. Why did you choose that particular organization to partner with?

AM: We believe that giving something back to the community is important. In the past, we have partnered with One Laptop Per Child, we built a school in Guatemala, and we've donated sports equipment to schools. However, we chose to partner with Operation Smile because one of our founders' wives brought it our attention. Through our partnership, CampusBookRentals has



donated over 1,000 surgeries to children with cleft lip and cleft pallet. We want to give back to the community that gave so much to us.

There are many advantages to renting textbooks that students may not be aware of. For example, although many students like the option of owning their textbooks because they can make notes in the book itself, some institutions that have the renting option allow students to write in the books while they are renting it. Another advantage is that renting your books is a space-saver. Many dorms and apartments are really small and books take up a lot of space. When you don't need the book anymore, you just send it back to the company instead of having it around to collect dust. Another benefit is being able to get your book on time. Campus bookstores usually buy a certain number of copies of the book and they can run out within the first couple of weeks, but since renters have large inventories and are often stored in ware-

houses, there's more room for them to have large amount of books; since professors typically issue their course requirements a couple of weeks before classes start, renting would be a way for you to get your books on time and not have to wait in a long line to pay for said books.

Overall, renting textbooks is a convenient way for students to save money, and CampusBookRentals found a way to allow students to rent the books they need so they can save money as well as extend the life of a book AND put money into the students' pockets. This is a company that cares about college students because they were fairly-recently college students themselves and had the same experiences that we are having today. I urge you to check out Rentback.com and, if you feel so inclined, to try it for yourself. What do you have to lose by making some money and allowing other college students around the country to use your books so they may further their own education?