

SMART IDEAS

Send 'Em Packin'

KIDS EMPTY OUT THEIR DORM ROOMS EVERY YEAR. THANKS TO THIS GUY, THEY HAVE A PLACE TO KEEP THEIR STUFF.

BY P. KELLY SMITH

WHAT: Storage service for students
WHO: Arnaud Karsenti of Collegeboxes Inc.
WHERE: Miami
WHEN: Started in 1999

RARELY CAN YOU USE AN IDEA FOR A school project to make millions. But as a junior at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, Arnaud Karsenti got a chance to do just that when he wrote a business plan for his own student-run storage and shipping company in an engineering class. Using Duke's own campus as a prototype, the now-22-year-old set up shop as Dukeboxes, offering to store students' belongings for the summer. By his senior year, he'd

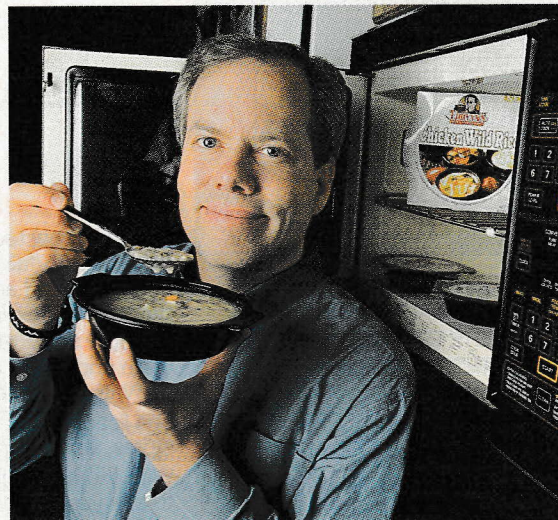
changed the name of the company to Collegeboxes Inc. and expanded to nine campuses. By year-end, he'll have launched locations on 41 college campuses across the country.

So how does it work? "Think of us as a college UPS service," Karsenti says. "We're a full-service company that will literally go upstairs to a third-story dorm room and pick up the belongings from a student."

Collegeboxes then either ships students' belongings to their homes or stores them in a climate-controlled warehouse for the summer, then delivers to the students' doors at the beginning of the school year. Collegeboxes charges on a per-item basis, and customers can store anything that isn't fragile—from bikes to desks and couches—for \$35 to \$75 per box or per item.

Karsenti, who graduated last year, prides himself on the fact that not only does Collegeboxes cater to the college market, but student managers also run the business. "We really believe in the student marketing presence," Karsenti says.

The demand for the business, expected to make \$2.1 million in 2001, is clear, he says: "At the end of the year, like selling back books, we become kind of the thing to do on college campuses."



SOUPLY SALES: There's money to be made in frozen soups, says Tim Bryan, even if Campbell Soup Co. couldn't do it.

Running Hot and Cold

WHAT: Microwaveable soups
WHO: Tim Bryan of T. Bryan's World Famous Soups Inc.
WHERE: Shoreview, Minnesota
WHEN: Started in 1997

TIM BRYAN IS NOT A SOUP AFICIONADO. But he did have enough of a taste for it to realize his mother's soup actually tasted better after it had been frozen and reheated. Bryan set out to create a frozen soup that combined great taste with high-speed convenience.

Using his 20 years of marketing experience, Bryan pitched his idea to local grocers, who warned him that Campbell Soup Co. had tried to make a frozen soup but never succeeded. Bryan figured they just underestimated the power of convenience.

"Most food companies want to put [the product] into a big bag—the smaller you go, the less profitable it is," Bryan says. "But [smaller packaging] is what the consumer wants. Now that we know how to do individual [servings], the sky's the limit."

Today, Bryan, 43, sells seven varieties of microwaveable soups to local grocers and vendors and donates 5 percent of the company's profits to local charities.

THINKING INSIDE THE BOX:

Arnaud Karsenti hated hauling stuff out of his dorm room every summer, so he knew a company handling that chore would be a hit.



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