



Brandon Labman (left) and Tommy Moore

ROCS' Stars

By Thomas Wilburn

Brandon Labman, Tommy Moore and Matthew Smith don't look like they run an award-winning staffing agency. They barely look old enough to drink. But as the minds behind Responsible Outgoing College Students (ROCS), they set up George Mason University students with jobs that will fit their careers. They've matched people to more than 150 companies, including Fortune 500 corporations, law firms, nursing agencies and a few chambers of commerce. They've been recognized by the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards. And they're doing it while still working on their bachelor's degrees. Labman (Co-CEO), Moore (Co-CEO)

and Smith (Director of Marketing and Public Relations) took time to talk our ear off about being the youngest staffing company around.

ON THEIR BUSINESS ATMOSPHERE

Labman: We go to talk to companies and I think the biggest thing we get in response is... we are horrible salesmen. We are bad. If we had to sell cars, we'd be on the streets. But we just go in, and if they let us talk about it, we'll talk their ear off about it.

Smith: We kinda had this concept where we thought we were gonna have PowerPoint presentations, and it just really got tabled. People aren't buy

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Photography by Anastasia Chernyavsky

ing the fact that we're super-professionals, they're buying that we're young entrepreneurs. When we go into meetings, they'll all of a sudden start talking to you about college. People are interested in being young, saying things that they'd never say in front of their kid, but it's kind of cool to say to us. We go to the Chamber [of Commerce], and they're like, "Hey, it's the ROCS dudes!"

Labman: We'll be at the office at like 11 o'clock at night on Friday, and other people around are out

Star, is an incentive program for students where if they work long enough, if they have good ratings from their employers, they get good feedback. We want to reward students and we're looking for ways to do that. You know, you work x amount of hours, you do this good work, there's anything from raises to gas cards to whatever as an incentive. Anything to make them feel like ROCS is taking care of them and that we're acknowledging their hard work.

Moore: It's kind of like how Microsoft has their

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Co-CEO, Responsible Outgoing College Students (ROCS)

going to keg parties. We're sitting there getting excited about some new staffing software.

Moore: Or some new bright idea for marketing.

Labman: Yeah, and Tommy's like... late nights, we're just in the office piddling around with something—boom. Someone comes up with a cool idea, ping-ping-ping-ping. [He mimes an idea bouncing from person to person.] And two hours later, one o'clock in the morning, we don't even want to go home. We go, get a quick nap, hop in the shower and come back the next day.

Moore: I think the worst is when we're out at a bar and we start talking, about to go out or whatever, and all of a sudden someone says something about the business or some idea, and then we don't know what is going on outside. Bunch of girls all around us, and we don't pay any attention. It's kind of sad. [laughs.]

ON HELPING PEOPLE

Labman: We had this guy who was like 25, 20-something, had been in the Marines, graduated. You're walking through campus, this huge guy comes up and shakes your hand, it's like, wow, that's cool, we helped him find a job and he's appreciative. It kinda feels like the stuff we were doing at first, it was a business, and it was fun doing it for our sake, and then boom: people come to us and that's even cooler, that's even better. The business thing is cool, but it's like a passion now wanting to help students out. We have a new idea every day, a new thing that could make us better. We keep that mindset, that we're always looking out for the students.

Moore: We have that tagline, "Students Placing Students," and we're planning on keeping that. It's really great experience for us, going out and recruiting and meeting the companies. And we relate really well—obviously—to students, because we are students.

ON ROCSTAR

Labman: The ROCStar program is feedback from our students and our companies. Hopefully we can turn that into something big.

Smith: Ideally what we're looking at, with ROC

certification or whatever. We can tell employers, after the student graduates, this student went through our ROCStar program. This shows that this is one of our top candidates here. And that not only helps the employer to pick quality people, but it helps the students themselves, because they know they have really good experience, and they've had a good time with our program. And it helps their work experience, going through our clinics and seminars.

Labman: Yeah, because most students know now that the idea of a college degree pretty much gets you average. And how society's moving as far as working goes, students and companies know you gotta have experience. If we design it right, so that they can learn the right tools and get the right experiences, we know that they'll be able to use them in the future. **nv**



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