Move In Move Out (MIMO)

Brief report on 2013 summer operation

Date: October, 2013
RECAP OF MIMO INITIATIVE

Every year, thousands of students move out, throwing away countless usable items. At the same time, many new students move in and need these same items. The problem is that students move out in May / Jun, but students move in in Aug / Sept. A bridge is needed to channel the items between the two groups.

Established in 2012 by Northwestern students, Move In Move Out (MIMO) is an award-winning social enterprise dedicated to reducing move-out wastage. We collect usable items from students who move out and resell those items to students who move in. Proceeds are donated to Evanston Ecology Center and unsold collections are donated to Connections for the Homeless and Salvation Army.

We were featured on Bloomberg Businessweek in June and continue to receive media attention:

- Evanston Now, Aug 2013
- Evanston Edge, Aug 2013
- Daily Northwestern, May 2013

MIMO OPERATIONS 2013

In summer 2013, we started our first year of operation at Northwestern University in Evanston. Students moving out in May / Jun could schedule onsite pick-ups with us. The collections were then sorted, cleaned, tested and inventoried. Students moving in during Aug / Sept could find a wide range of housewares on our e-commerce platform and enjoyed a one-stop shopping experience.

(Image: (left) MIMO staff is diligently cleaning mini-fridge to make sure products are fine before we sell. (right) MIMO collection crew are recruited from undergraduate students in Northwestern who are passionate about reducing waste)
MIMO IMPACT

Move Out

- We have provided onsite pick-up service to more than 120 students
- We have collected >1,000 items of furniture, appliances and housewares, diverting 6 tons of waste from Evanston’s landfill (equivalent to over 240 suitcases that carry the maximum weight of 23kg!)

Move In

- We sold 852 items (85% of our collections) and recorded revenue of $16,882
- We have recorded a profit of ~$3,200 after deducting costs of $12,400 and sales tax of $1,200

Overall

- We have recruited a total of 20 student managers to help manage operations and provided summer jobs for 120 man-days
- We have donated 15-20 boxes of housewares and 30 pieces of furniture to Evanston’s Connection for the Homeless as well as The Salvation Army

(Images: (Left) Our happy client who donated her household items to MIMO through onsite pick-up service. (Right) Photo with staff from Connection for the Homeless in appreciation of our donations)

From the results, we are proud to say that we have proved the validity of MIMO business model – we can reduce waste by channeling to right people while achieving financial sustainability. We also gather a lot of useful data about students’ behavior in moving out and moving in, which are beneficial not only for our future operations, but also provide insights for similar operations in other college towns across the country.)
MIMO LOOKING FORWARD

In year 2014, MIMO has the following plans:

- Continue and scale up our operations in Northwestern University
- Expand MIMO to other colleges that see similar waste problem. We have started reaching out to Michigan State University in Lansing and University of Michigan in Ann Arbor
- Strengthen organizational development in terms of governance, team communication, finance and legal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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- **ISEN** for giving us the grant to make MIMO financially possible
- **Thermal Laminating Corporation (TLC)** in Evanston for the storage space
- **City of Evanston** for assisting us on locating storage and marketing
- **Kellogg Dean of Office, SustainNU, Off-campus office** and **International office**, SEED group in Northwestern University for marketing support
- **Hoosier to Hoosier**, an Indiana University waste reduction program, for providing guidance and example on their operations
- **Kellogg professor, Jamie Jones; Kellogg student group, HUB** for providing guidance and support
- **MIMO move-out clients** who have donated their items
- **MIMO move-in clients** who have purchased and reused the items
- **MIMO supporters** who have participated in our fundraising event
- **All MIMO stakeholders**, which include all groups and individuals who have supported us through the journey

MIMO TEAM

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