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Competing businesses converge for entrepreneurship

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Three South Jersey businessmen spoke to Rowan's young entrepreneurs about their achievements and tips for business success on March 27 in Bunce Hall as part of the Miles Award 2006 Entrepreneurial Tour.

Seth DeForest, founder and CEO of the company Boomerang, is the recipient of the 2005 Miles Award. DeForest said he started out after college fish-monger fighting in New York City for the famous Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto but realized that the food buying business was leading him nowhere.

At the suggestion of his father-in-law, DeForest looked into a business that soon became his own.

"I buy assets from high-end companies and resell them," said DeForest.

DeForest believes his business is successful because of the decision to have a narrow focus.

"We realized there was no one specializing in the upper niche," said DeForest. "In the last five years, we've exponentially grown from two people to 20."

John Bialous represented Miles Technologies at the event, a business that was started with his friend Chris Miles in 1997. The company that began in a basement now employs approximately 45 people.

Bialous, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Miles Technology, wanted to attend the entrepreneurial tour to encourage young businesspeople and help them by answering questions.

Bialous stated that when starting a business, "there are definitely some nerves involved because you don't know yet [what to expect]."

Co-founder of Team Builders Plus, Merrick Rosenberg, focused his speech on the importance of enjoying what you do as an entrepreneur. Team Builders is the largest training and development company in the South Jersey area, employing eight people with a very low turn-over rate.

"Every year we've been growing," said Rosenberg. "In all these years, only one person has left the company."

Rosenberg's job is to go to other companies and assess what they can do to work more efficiently.

"We're able to really get big clients and keep them overtime," said Rosenberg. "We're very picky about the product lines we take in. I only take things I know are going to make a difference."

Rosenberg also said that a person's mind-set will make a big difference in where the company goes.

"The unsuccessful entrepreneur thought they were going to be successful. The successful entrepreneur knew they were going to be successful," said Rosenberg.

Senior business administration major Tom Simms serves as the president for Rowan's Society for the Advancement of Management and appreciated the presentation.

"We all have that desire to go out and start a company like these guys have done," said Simms. "It's hard to get those people to take time out of their schedule."

Although Simms learns a lot about management from his classes, he stated that it is always better to hear success stories from someone who has sat where he now sits.

"If we can place one person, I feel like we've done something successful," said Simms.

For more information on the Miles Award, visit <http://milestechnologies.com/mye2006>.

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