COMPANY OVERVIEW

We at Atlas Load Bearing Equipment have developed a style of lightweight, ergonomic device that can relieve back pain and increase agility for its users. The device was inspired by the needs of police officers. And, it has been developed and tested with those officers for two years. We are currently commercializing the device: finalizing its forms for different body types, designing for manufacturability, applying for patents, preparing more extensive field trials, and preparing our sales channels. We expect to make a line of the devices available to consumers by June 2010.

Atlas was founded in winter 2008 by John Cromie and Matt Coleman. John received a dual degree from UC Davis in Mechanical Engineering and Aeronautical Engineering. He then received an MS in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University. From Stanford, Matt received a BSE in Product Design Engineering and is currently completing an MS in Management Science and Engineering. In 2010, the founders brought on Cara Silver, who holds a BS in biomedical engineering and is completing an MS in mechanical engineering from Stanford. During our extensive work with police officers, the Atlas team has developed a passion for serving those who serve.

GEM PROJECT

The Atlas GEM team will have the opportunity to work on two critical, interrelated projects. First, the team will be asked to develop a marketing strategy and implementation plan to support the launch of Atlas’ first product line. The team will be given broad latitude in their design of the strategy, as well as be fully supported with data, prototypes/demo units, and the founder’s time. Broadly, we expect a marketing strategy that supports online and direct sales, with varying levels of marketing expenditure, during the course of a product rollout that has been parsed into several phases. More specifically, the GEM team should plan on delivering a presentation or paper that describes the marketing strategy, as well as an annotated Gantt chart used to guide the implementation of the strategy. Other forms of the deliverables are acceptable as long as they clearly explain the strategy and necessary implementation steps.

The GEM team will also be asked to create a demand forecast for Atlas’ first line of products, which the firm will use for inventory planning. Ideally, the demand forecast will accomplish the following three tasks: First, it should be informed by the GEM team’s marketing strategy, detailing the anticipated effect of marketing spend, sales effort, etc. on sales volume. Second, it should address varying levels of demand for Atlas’ three SKUs. Third, it should augment the comprehensive statistics provided by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (readily available) with frontline research at police
departments across Northern California. The demand forecast should be delivered as an annotated timetable and explanatory paper.

**BENEFITS**

Working with Atlas represents a unique opportunity for the GEM team: First, the team will have the opportunity to make a tremendous impact on an action-oriented, lean startup. Second, as noted above, the team will have broad latitude in design of their strategy. Third, the team may also obtain the opportunity to implement that strategy, if they choose to stay on for the summer. Finally, the team can be deeply involved with all aspects of the business, watching the effects of their strategy on product design and operations.

**PROJECT EVALUATOR**

The project will be evaluated by Perry Klebahn. After graduating from Stanford’s Joint Program in Design, Perry shepherded his innovative snowshoe company to an acquisition by K2. Perry went on to run Sales and Marketing for Patagonia, where he successfully launched the company’s foray into spring apparel and surfing. In 2007, Perry became CEO of Timbuk2, turning the company around in under two years. This spring quarter, Perry will be mentoring the founding team in ME301: Launchpad at Stanford’s D.School.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

We welcome any questions you have about the project. Please contact Matt Coleman at (T) 310.488.0405 or (E) MColeman20@gmail.com anytime.

**LIKELY TEAM MEMBERS**

Since Atlas is a fledgling firm, we have recruited GEM team members to minimize the risk of dissatisfied students for the GEM teaching team. So far, we have recruited:

- Matt Coleman – MS in MS&E
- Vinita Venkatesh – MS in MS&E
- Cara Silver – MS in ME
- Grégoire Leleu – MS in MS&E
- Adam Forbes – MS in MS&E