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Blender Earn Its Keep



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When you hear the word timeshare, the image of a cheesy vacation condo in Florida comes to mind, right?

Now imagine being able to timeshare awesome “stuff,” and you have the basic idea behind [SnapGoods](#), a tech startup that launched this summer in Dumbo.

The concept is appealing on a number of levels. You can request a reservation with an appliance you only need for one night—like a blender for a party—or take home a big-ticket gadget for the weekend—say an iPad—so you can be certain it’s worth buying. You can even earn a few bucks by renting out stuff that’s collecting dust in your closet—particularly the items that are on the SnapGoods “wants” list. (Right now, there is a woman in New York who wants a vacuum cleaner, a ouija board, a drill, a rickshaw and a kayak. There’s a joke buried in there somewhere.)

The idea was hatched here in Brooklyn, by native Ron Williams. Born in East Flatbush and schooled at Stuyvesant, he considered deferring Harvard for a year because he was getting radio time as a rapper, and wanted to pursue that further (C-Jax was his name, you can hear his rhyming skills in the [intro and second verse of this song](#)). Ultimately, he put down the mic and focused on economics and East Asian Studies. But after a few years of working in finance and as a consultant, he longed to do something more creative.

Last year, inspiration struck. He and his girlfriend had just gotten their motorcycle licenses, but Williams wasn’t ready to plunk down \$8,000 on a bike. They still wanted to ride, though, so he posted an ad on Craigslist and found a willing lender, negotiated a deposit, and rode it for the weekend. Afterward he realized there could have been a better way to go about the transaction—a third-party service that would make the exchange less risky, financially, and much faster.



This was the genesis of SnapGoods, which Williams, the CEO, founded with developer John Goodwin, Head of Product. Engineer and developer Mike Gioia joined afterward. (That’s them from left to right.)

One of the most popular rentals since the site went live in July is the [Roomba](#). But everything from a petanque set to a Cuisinart ice cream maker is for rent, by New Yorkers you may want to meet on purpose (Internet personality Baratunde Thurston, The Onion’s Web editor, is renting out an Android phone) or by accident (you never know what weird encounter will lead to romance).

There are similar sharing services—like [NeighborGoods](#) and [ShareSomeSugar](#)—but they only facilitate borrowing, without any financial incentive or protection. SnapGoods lets members, including local businesses, set deposits, name their rental price, and sell their products on the site, too. It’s like making that food processor you never use or the cargo bike you thought you’d love pay rent. It’s also a smart way for businesses to put their wares in the hands of potential buyers. [Homage Brooklyn](#), for instance, is one local store that’s using SnapGoods to let people rent or buy their skateboards. “When people try out new items, if they love them, they buy them,” says Williams. “So everyone benefits when you unleash the goods and emphasize the access to experiences.”

To celebrate their New York launch, and their imminent launch in other cities like San Francisco, SnapGoods is hosting their first “[For the Users, by the Users](#)” block party this Thursday, from 6:30-9:30pm at their offices in Dumbo. Brooklyn Brewery is sponsoring, and Rolling Orange will have their Dutch cargo bikes to test ride, along with Homage Brooklyn boards. Guests are also invited to bring their own party favors for everyone to use, in exchange for credits toward future reservations and limited edition, collectible schwag. The party’s free, once you register on [SnapGoods](#).

Photos by [Sean Corbett](#).

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