

Battery Pack Maker Raises \$802,000 in Crowdfunding

ChargeTech Blew Past Initial Goal for Portable

Costa Mesa-company ChargeTech raised 2,675% of its fundraising goal on crowdfunding platform Indiegogo, taking in more than \$802,000 after setting an initial goal of \$30,000 for PLUG, which it says is the first portable battery pack that has two AC wall outlets. Indiegogo, like its competition, Kickstarter, matches donors to startups, typically providing a product or some other reward in exchange for cash.

PLUG also can run on solar power. It's one of two charging products lines the company has developed. PLUG is for consumers; the second is a charging station for businesses such as coffee shops and hotels.

ChargeTech is conducting a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo's InDemand platform, which allows companies to keep raising money via crowdfunding after a previous campaign ends without having to set a fundraising target or meet a deadline.

The latest campaign is ChargeTech's fourth, founder and CEO Jeffrey Maganis said. It has raised more than \$1.6 million via crowdfunding overall, he said.

"The ChargeTech team is extremely grateful to our crowdfunding supporters who backed us on PLUG, the world's most powerful battery pack," he said via email. "We love crowdfunding. It's the best way to launch a product, get rapid, iterative product feedback and connect with your most excited customers."

Maganis said all of the raised funds will be used "to continually push innovation, stock up on inventory and reach out to new customers through Facebook and Google ads."

On-Demand Oil Changes

A brand-new Costa Mesa-based company has developed an app to order oil changes, which it provides at customers' homes or offices. Loil is starting with oil changes in hopes of breaking into the market, and intends to eventually branch out into other on-demand maintenance work, said founder Zachary Martin, who's also community manager of The Vine, an Irvine Co. property in University Research Park.

Loil has obtained a convertible note in the tens of thousands of dollars and wants to raise a "big seed round" of approximately \$250,000, Martin said. It's also trying to get into an incubator, with an eye on one operated by Jaguar Land Rover at a technology center the U.K.-based automaker has established in Portland. The incubator encourages, promotes and supports software-based automotive technologies in development by U.S. tech start-ups. It follows a research-and-development center opened in Portland in 2014, the company's only product-development site outside the U.K. at the time.

Loil gets a lot of its mechanics from local trade schools. It can pay its mechanics, who are independent contractors, a higher wage because it doesn't have some of the overhead costs that brick-and-mortar auto shops do, Martin said.

The technicians bring along ramps that hold up to 16,000 pounds. Loil charges \$38 for a conventional oil change and \$60 for synthetic, Martin said.

"People know it's a hassle going to an auto shop and waiting there," he said. "I want to provide this seamless process where people book an appointment and get it done for the same price, if not cheaper than the competition."

LOIL is targeting business customers next and would like to service fleets of cars at rental car companies, Martin said.

Accountant Launches Two

A Laguna Hills accountant and certified fraud examiner has started two companies, one designed to help small-business owners remember tax deadlines, the other targeting restaurants with its bookkeeping services.

Mona Scimeme, who's operated RRS Accounting Services for 16 years in Laguna Hills, created both.

Aliso Viejo-based RRS Tax Reminders is a cloud-based software service that sends email reminders to subscribers who pay \$99 a year. The emails alert them to impending state and federal tax deadlines and include links for instructions and forms for annual business filings. Missing tax deadlines can result in fees of \$250 or more, Scimeme said.

It's also a good way for real estate professionals to make sure they do all of the filings on their properties at the proper time, including annual state franchise tax, she said.

Scimeme started the other startup, Munita LLC, with business partner Sherry Roberts. The Laguna Hills-based firm provides traditional accounting services, specializing in franchisees, franchisors and privately-owned restaurant locations.

Firm Stretches to SF

Irvine-based ILTG Inc., short for "I Like This Grape," launched its first service through the Postmates app, which arranges for the delivery of goods to local markets all over the country. ILTG's deal with Postmates covers only the San Francisco market.

ILTG aims to bring wine culture to millennials via its website by pairing wine recommendations with fashion, film, food and music.

Its first foray on Postmates pairs wine only with music, inspired by tunes San Francisco residents are listening to, based on the culling of various lists and data from sources such as Pandora Internet Radio, a music streaming and automated music recommendation service.

ILTG started with Postmates' San Francisco market because it has a relationship with Cheers Market, a liquor store owned by a childhood buddy of ILTG founder and Chief Creative Naushad Huda.



STARTUPS
Deirdre Newman



Maganis: crowdfunding also brings "rapid, iterative product feedback and connect with your most excited customers"

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