

# THE STARTUP PAGE

A look at innovative organizations, concepts, products and people

## Competition

### CureMetrix By TKO, Technological Knockout

■ By BRITTANY MEILING

Medical software firm **CureMetrix Inc.** has won first place at the **Philips Innovation Challenge**, landing the startup a contract with global technology firm Philips, along with other partnership benefits.

The innovation challenge, which took place earlier this month in the Netherlands, was a competition between 90 medical startups who applied for a chance to pitch the global technology firm. The event was co-hosted by startup accelerator **HighTechXL** and startup competition group **Get in the Ring**.

Only 10 startups got the opportunity to pitch, and CureMetrix took home the trophy.

**Kevin Harris**, CEO of CureMetrix, said the pitch competition was pretty intense.

"We literally had to get into a boxing ring with lights shining down on us," Harris said. "Then two companies had to pitch at the same time, head to head."

Harris said the competition consisted of five rounds, each only 25 seconds long.

"They literally took our mic away after 25 seconds," Harris said, laughing. "When they say 25 seconds, they don't mean 28 seconds."

CureMetrix is a startup fighting cancer with artificial intelligence. The company has developed an algorithm for image analysis, which is currently being tested to identify lung cancer in X-rays and for breast cancer detection in mammograms.

Harris said Philips guaranteed the winner a contract and a pilot program, though details are not ironed out yet on what that will mean for the startup.

"It's not entirely clear to them or to us," Harris said, as this is the first time Philips participated in this particular pitch event.

Since Harris returned from the event, he's already had a meeting with a local Philips representative, and says the two companies are "working through the details."

Kevin Harris

## San Francisco, Here We Come ...To Steal Your Tech Talent

■ By BRITTANY MEILING

If you build it, they will come. If they don't... well, then lure them with tacos.

An unprecedented effort to recruit tech talent from Silicon Valley down to San Diego will launch early next year, with hopes of legitimizing San Diego's technology brand and adding some fuel to the startup fire.

The plan is to place a digital billboard on one of the Bay Area's busiest and most gridlocked freeways, with sassy one-liners to bait technology workers down south (For example, "Get a job. Get a life. Get a taco," "Hey engineers: Remember how much fun you used to be?" and "Today's surf report: San Diego is better").

### SanDiegoisBetter.com

That's the main theme of the campaign: San Diego is better. In fact, every billboard message will sign off with "SanDiegoisBetter.com" — a website that markets the region's perks (263 days of sunshine, and an average of 23-minute commutes, for example).

The cheeky campaign is the brainchild of the **San Diego Venture Group** and its president



Mike Krenn

**Mike Krenn**. The idea is more tech talent will lead to more venture capital funding for local startups.

"San Diego has to become a more recognized technology brand," Krenn said. "We need to make an impression in Silicon Valley. We have to be up there consistently with powerful messages."

Krenn said the idea for the campaign came from recent chatter about new graduates in San Diego taking the first flight to San Francisco.

"I'd heard this conversation a hundred times," Krenn said. "But I realized, these people are 21 years old, and they've just graduated... we should let them go. Let them get trained up at **VMware (Inc.)** or **Intel (Corp.)** — and when they're frustrated by traffic, or they're upset that they can't get their kids in a good school — then we'll bring them back."

### Vibrancy of S.D. Tech

Technology recruiter **Jared Sanderson** said the venture group's campaign is right on the money. He said when recruiting Bay Area talent to San Diego, his biggest challenge is convincing them that San Diego's technology hub is vibrant and varied.

"They want to know there's going to be multiple opportunities, and that they'll have plenty of exciting technology companies to work for

if they move around," said Sanderson, director at **Savya Solutions**.

While the weather, beach, and overall quality of life are big selling points for San Diego, Krenn said building the technology hub's brand is the first priority.

"People understand the quality of life thing," Krenn said. "They misunderstand the technology here."

Besides the legacy technology firms that have been in San Diego for decades, Sanderson said he's seen an increasing number of job opportunities coming from the local startup scene. It's these newcomers, along with the existing powerhouses, that the campaign will highlight.

### The Job Fair

The San Diego Venture Group will launch the campaign in February, culminating in a huge job fair in Mountain View that is expected to draw 500-1,000 attendees. Fish tacos and San Diego craft beer will be provided, of course.

Krenn said the job fair will feature more than 40 San Diego technology firms, including **Illumina Inc.**, **Dexcom Inc.**, **Human Longevity Inc.**, **Qualcomm Inc.**, **ViaSat Inc.** and **Intuit Inc.** The job fair will also feature local startups, including **Portfolium**, **Classy**, and **Seismic**.

Participating companies are helping to finance the costs of the campaign, which are expected to reach \$80,000.



Photo courtesy of San Diego Venture Group

A digital billboard will be placed on U.S. Highway 101 and University Avenue in Palo Alto, one of the busiest freeways in Silicon Valley, with messages meant to lure frustrated tech workers to San Diego.

## Clarify Raises \$3.6M in Funding Round

**\$3.6 MILLION:** Medtech startup **Clarify Medical** (formerly Skylit Medical) has raised \$3.6 million in a new round of funding.

The cash comes from new and existing investors, although none were disclosed to the public.

Clarify Medical is developing a hand-held UVB light device that can be used to treat skin conditions such as psoriasis, eczema and vitiligo. The mobility of the device allows patients to treat their conditions at home instead of visiting doctors or clinics several times a week. The device is also handy to physicians, as they could treat skin conditions without dedicating office space or labor hours for phototherapy.

Longtime skin care entrepreneur and investor **David Hale** is chairman of the board at Clarify, and serial entrepreneur

**James Sweeney** is the company's CEO.

Clarify Medical plans to submit its system for clearance by the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** by early 2017. Later that year, the company plans to introduce its product and information support services to customers.

The new cash will be used for FDA clearance and early commercialization, said **Martyn Gross**, Clarify's VP of innovation.

Brittany Meiling

