Medtech Saving Babies Before Birth and Dynamic Pricing Software for Small Hotels Win CHF 150,000

Venture Kick's jury awards KOVE and RoomPriceGenie 150,000 francs each, to support Swiss startups helping surgeons treat babies in the womb, and independent hotels earn more by pricing rooms dynamically.

Medical device startup KOVE is preparing long-term in vivo trials with University Hospital Zurich, while hotel revenue pricing algorithm RoomPriceGenie already serves more than 130 small- and medium-sized hotels around the world. The two Zurich-based spin-off projects earned Venture Kick's highest level of funding, training and support.

KOVE: saving babies before birth
Treating fetuses during pregnancy risks triggering premature birth. Currently the surgical instruments used in the womb often damage the fetal membrane, causing early births in many cases. University of Zurich BioEntrepreneur Fellow Yannick Devaud has patented a device that reduces this risk. Safer fetal surgery will open the path for safer treatment of fetuses.

Devaud, whose grandmother comes from the Brazilian Amazon, named the startup KOVE, which means 'to live' in the Amazon's Tupi-Guarani language. "The Amazon is an area of blooming life and constant renewal. We save babies before they are born. We want families to stop having to mourn the death of a child," he says.

The startup and the University Hospital of Zurich successfully tested the feasibility of its device on pregnant sheep, and now plan long-term trials before a seed round next year. Venture Kick's training has already helped KOVE's successful grant applications from Gebert Rüf Stiftung InnoBooster and the Swiss National Science Foundation's BRIDGE programs.

"Venture Kick is a mind-opener!" says Devaud. "For scientists like me, it forces you to leave your comfort zone and rethink a lot of aspects of your startup. It's a school for entrepreneurs."

venturekick.ch/KOVE

RoomPriceGenie AG: dynamic pricing for small hotels
Revenue management for many small hotels merely means a high-season and a low-season. That old-fashioned approach doesn't make sense to co-founders Ari Andricopoulos, author of 49 Tips to Supercharge your Revenue, Marvin Speh, and Jörg Siegel. The trio, linked to the ETH, the University of St. Gallen, and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, blend backgrounds in the travel, finance and data industries. Their algorithm draws on publicly-available data points to help small and medium-sized, independent hotels price dynamically to fill their rooms throughout the year while also increasing revenue by as much as 20 percent.

Venture Kick's pre-seed support enabled RoomPriceGenie to boost marketing and prepare to scale. In the past six months the team has doubled to 19 staff in three countries, and raised a 1-million-franc seed round from investors. The Zug-based startup will now focus on automating its customer acquisition processes before a further funding round in the second half of 2020.

Venture Kick training at the Kickers' Camps were the "chance to get out of day-to-day operations and look at the business from first principles again," says Andricopoulos, whose father's bed & breakfast inspired the startup's first algorithm. "We received deep and insightful advice. As a founder you're able to re-orientate yourself to focus on the important things for your startup."

venturekick.ch/roompricegenie
About Venture Kick

The philanthropic initiative Venture Kick provides up to CHF 150,000 in seed funding to Swiss startups. In addition, it offers a well-structured entrepreneurial path towards building a winning business. Startups pitch to expert juries at three stages to obtain funding, gaining direct feedback and access to an international network of successful entrepreneurs and investors.

Since its launch in 2007, Venture Kick has supported 640 Swiss startup projects with 27.3 million francs. The program of financial support, training and network, has led to the creation of 494 companies and 6,033 jobs. Venture Kick alumni companies have attracted a total of 2.5 billion francs, and represent 54 companies ranked in the TOP 100 Swiss Startups 2019.

In 2019, Venture Kick will pay out 4.35 million francs to idea-stage startup projects to bring Swiss science to global markets. More information in the Venture Kick annual report.

The Venture Kick Foundation is supported by Gebert Rüf Stiftung, Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Hauser-Stiftung, André Hoffmann, Hansjörg Wyss, Martin Haefner, Igor Fisch, Fondation Pro Techno, Rising Tide Foundation, ESA BIC Switzerland, Engagement Migros and Swisscom.

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