



Coming Clean: Shiva Swami with Hygienix wristband. PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE FOR THE JOURNAL

## Scoring a Scoop on Kitty Litter

*Boxiecat relies on own pet to create cleaner clumping clay.*

Lugging heavy bags of cat litter that create mini-dust storms when poured was a pain for Josh Wiesencamp.

He wanted a cleaner cat box. So he founded Boxiecat in West Los Angeles. It's an online subscription cat-litter service that delivers 8.5-gallon bags of clumping clay cat litter.

His initial product was vacuumed to remove dust, but his system now uses a better system to remove even more particles.

"We knew we could make it better," said Wiesencamp.

Dr. Don Frank, veterinarian at Bel Marin Animal Hospital in Norwalk, used Boxiecat at home more than a year ago. She prefers it over other clay litters, which she said are dusty



In Bag: Josh Wiesencamp with Boxiecat litter.

or don't clump as well.

"A lot of people will choose the really expensive money litters because they don't like the smell or the dust of the clay," she said. "But cats prefer clumping clay. This particular product seems to last longer."

The 16-pound bag ships for free and can last a pet owner one month. It costs \$39.95 a bag with discounts for orders of three or more. By contrast, Walmart.com lists a

40-pound bag of scoopable clumping litter for \$9.98.

Wiesencamp's litter is sourced from multiple sources in the United States. Boxiecat packages and distributes the product.

Wiesencamp had worked as a storyboard artist for commercials and animation before starting Boxiecat in 2009. He didn't launch the service until two years later, because it took time to formulate its clay litter. He tested it on his own pet.

"My cat was the quality standard," he said. "Startup costs were about \$50,000 and he said the company is profitable. He has one employee."

The litter is available through e-commerce giant Amazon.com Inc., which began purchasing it wholesale two years ago.

Now the focus is to expand Boxiecat's wholesale business.

"If we want more people to use the product, it's urgent to get it out to other people," he said. — *Salvino Barrios*

## Getting In Sink on Cleanliness

*Hygienix's wristbands keep track of waiter's hand-washing.*

We've all seen the signs in restaurant washrooms. Wash, keep your hands clean. Hygienix, a West L.A. wearable technology firm, is taking that reminder to the next level. The startup is marketing a wristband that gives those workers a gentle buzz as a reminder when it's time to wash up.

The firm said that it hopes its device catches on at restaurants, but more importantly, at health-care establishments, because the hand-washing regimen at hospitals could be

improved. By some estimates, 100,000 people each year die from hospital infections in the United States.

Shiva Swami, chief executive of Hygienix, thinks many of these infections could be avoided if health-care workers simply washed their hands more. It's a personal issue for him, he said, because he lost his mother last year after she picked up numerous infections at a hospital.

"Hospitals are dangerous places to be," he said. "This tries to change the behavior."

Hygienix sells a package that includes connected wristbands and servers that go on soap dispensers and near hospital beds. The scope is not just by Hygienix, although it does sell soap holders. The wristband detects when a hospital worker, for exam-

## Making It Work for Chief Execs

*Conference to help on networking for connect with CEOs.*

You don't often get 3,500 chief executives together. But when you do, how can you keep them busy?

That's the question for the organizers of the Young Presidents Organization's annual conference this week at the Nokia Theatre in downtown Los Angeles.

The answer: bring in lots of star power and provide the attendees with a selection of hands-on sessions that they'll want to attend.

The star power, billionaire biotech entrepreneur Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong, famed movie director James Cameron and long-dance swimmer Blaine Niyah, among others.

YPO membership is restricted to chief executives and other top-level executives of companies with significant revenue and employee counts.

Minimum age for joining is 45; members can later graduate to the World Presidents' Organization for executives over 50.

Members of the organization come from 125 countries.

The L.A. area is YPO's biggest regional chapter and the region's ethnic diversity was a factor in selecting the city as the host of this year's conference.

"With more than 220 languages spoken here in Los Angeles, our organization's global reach is nowhere better represented than here," Rosenthal said. — *Howard Fier*



Rosenthal

But it's the two days of networking sessions that set this event apart.

That's when chief executives, presidents and managing directors of more than 3,000 companies will share ideas among themselves, according to Jeffrey Rosenthal, chief executive of Rose Investments in Los Angeles and host city chairman for the conference.

And the discussion won't be limited to how they run their companies, topics including how to balance work with family and how to get children into top-notch international schools are expected to come up.

"We want this to be the most successful networking event for executives, with the focus on the executive as a complete person," Rosenthal said.

## Winning Pitch to Aid Non-Profit

When Gene Urcan, managing director of Santa Monica investment firm Cappello Group, was brainstorming a pitch for a business trip to Las Vegas in November, he was surprised to find he was selected for his childhood hero, filmmaker James Cameron.



Urcan

Star struck and amazed, Urcan started a conversation with the sports figure he so long admired. Turned out, the two have a lot in common. Both Urcan and

three-miler at noon plus a 1,000-meter swim or two-to-hour-mile run at 8 p.m.

But why would a family man with a 30-hour workweek do all that?

"I want to see what I am made of and what is it at my core ... Instead of sitting a clock, I'd rather earn it," Urcan said.

**Double Duty in Retirement**

Retirement may be a life of leisure for some, but that hasn't been the case for Mark Liberman.

The former chief executive of

the Los Angeles



Liberman

Canadian Board retired more than a year ago, but he's been keeping himself busy on the board of San Francisco's Midpoint Mission.

It's downtown L.A.'s oldest Jewish synagogue. Said Fier and the Southern California Athlete's Association near Koreatown.

"You do this for two reasons," said Liberman, 67.

"One, to help others and, two, it's a rewarding experience." He said he'd like to do both organizations and to provide direction and volunteer work, especially around the holidays.

Liberman said he doesn't use his new tools as a job, but a chance to give back.

Besides, when he had a full-time job, he simply didn't have the time to give the non-profit what they needed.

"When you're working, you can't get involved," he said. "You really have to spend some quality time with these organizations. By being retired, it allows me to do that."

Said reporter Anna Mikoyan and Susan Madsen contributed to this column. Page 2 is completed by Charles Crumpley. He can be reached at crumpley@businessjournal.com.

## PAGE 3

CHARLES CRUMPLEY

"After hearing what Joe and his foundation are doing to keep kids safe, I knew I had to do something extraordinary to help," Urcan said.

So on April 26, Urcan, 40, will run a 50-mile ultramarathon along the Pacific Crest Trail. It will take him about 11 hours. His goal is to raise \$30,000.

His daily routine now includes a 3 a.m. run of six to eight miles, a two- or