

STARTUPS & INNOVATIONS

By Jasmine Spearing-Bowen

SPACE

OCTANE's life sciences and technology startup accelerator LaunchPad is moving to the Five Point Gateway office campus in Irvine.

Chief Executive **Bill Carpou** said that LaunchPad will be relocating by the end of March, but said details are still being finalized.

OCTANE's main office will stay at its current location in Aliso Viejo's TechSpace building, at 65 Enterprise, he said.



Carpou: OCTANE CEO



Golledge: seeks OC HQ, plans to hire 100

Recruiting startup **Jobot** is seeking office space for a new Orange County headquarters after launching in Los Angeles last October.

Jobot is privately funded by founder **Heidi Golledge**, whose **CyberCoders** sold in 2013 for a reported \$100 million.

Golledge, an OC resident, is looking at space in Costa Mesa and Irvine and plans to move in the next six months.

She said Jobot will be hiring 100 people for the new office.

"With the plethora of good schools such as **UCI**, we have a lot of really good availability in terms of qualified [tech] people ... as well as recruiters, great experienced people throughout Orange County that we can network with and hire," she said.

Computer coding program **Coding Dojo** will open its 10th learning center at **The Hive** office complex in Costa Mesa, on Jan. 22.

The company, founded in 2013, teaches students three different computer coding languages in 14 weeks.

Company Chief Operating Officer **John McGinnis** said Orange County's growing tech industry make it a natural fit for Coding Dojo's next learning center.

"There are more startups going in [to OC] every year. There is more funding coming down here, which basically means that more of these companies are going to need tech workers," said McGinnis.

See separate VC story, page 1.



McGinnis: more startups in OC means more 'companies are going to need tech workers'

LAUNCH

UCI Wayfinder biotech startup **CBio** will begin testing the first prototype of its new live cell analysis tool, **Vision**, and cell-sorting technology, **cellPhoresis**, this month.

Users include several private companies and universities including **Arizona State University**.

Messias Soares, VP of product marketing at CBio, said the technology has applications in a wide range of industries, including biotech and medical research, because it allows for the study of live cells.

"Currently, we have a lot of destructive methods that can assess the same information out of a cell population. We can do that in a nondestructive way, and have an affordable solution as well," said Soares.

The company is based out of UCI's research institute Calit2, also known as the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology.

They have been financed so far by exit proceeds from Chief Executive **David Charlot**'s previous company, but are currently seeking \$2 million in seed funding for manufacturing and to hire a sales team.



VP Messias Soares, CEO David Charlot, CFO Ken Bright of CBio

Legal-tech nonprofit **ProBoKnow** will launch its new web platform this month. The **UCI Applied Innovation** startup provides a marketplace to connect attorneys with clients looking for pro bono legal help.

ProBoKnow currently serves only Orange County residents, but Chief Executive **Chad Trainer** said they will be expanding statewide.

Trainer said the nonprofit is funded through **LoBoKnow**, a platform that helps connect attorneys with clients who can pay for legal services, but not at the current market rate of nearly \$250 an hour.

Many people in the U.S. can't afford legal help, according to Trainer, and both platforms help to address the gap in services, as well as helping new attorneys gain experience, and streamlining pro bono services for existing attorneys.

"You can't land the job without experience but you can't get the experience without a job," Trainer said. "We're trying to offer a way out of that conundrum, while at the same time allowing you to give back to society by helping people who can't afford attorneys."



Trainer: web platform with ProBoKnow help

UCI Applied Innovation startup **InSolar** launched their online platform this month to connect solar customers with top solar panel installers at the lowest market price in each state.

Chief Executive **Ali Sina** started the company using his own savings after realizing that solar power was prohibitively expensive for many people because of the high cost of customer acquisition, which can be nearly 70% of the cost for a traditional solar company.

"We're just building a network using the data we have to build a tool for people to bypass and essentially save 50% more than they would," he said.



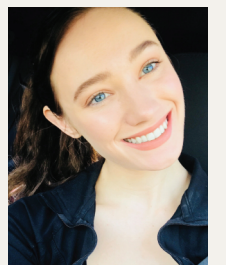
Sina: InSolar customers can save '50% more'

Launching this week, the **FitN-Flow** app allows Orange County subscribers to schedule time with a yoga instructor either one-on-one or in groups, at a location of their choosing, rather than at a studio.

The goal is to make it easier for people to make their own workout schedules, and give yoga instructors more control over their time, according to FitNFlow's founder, 19-year-old **Madison Chappell** of Laguna Hills.

"Because yoga studios or gyms only provide a few class slots, most yoga instructors have to get scheduled for classes in 10 different studios to be able to make a decent living," said Chappell in a statement.

60 instructors have signed up, she said.



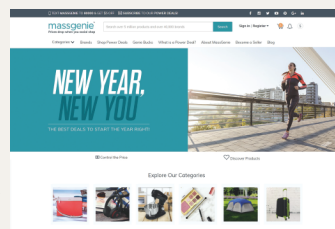
Chappell: founder of FitNFlow app

FUNDING

Online marketplace **MassGenie** recently closed out an investment round with Silicon Valley-based **SV Frontier**.

The Costa Mesa-based company combines crowdsourcing and e-commerce into "social shopping," allowing sellers to set deal pricing when a certain number of users purchase the item.

"The whole intent is to drive the price down by bringing a lot of people through social sharing," said Chief Operating Officer **Dan Devries**. "Our power deal price will always be cheaper than any other 'buy now' priced out there across any other marketplace."



MassGenie: receives investment from SV Frontier

MassGenie opened up their Series A round on Jan. 1. It's expected to close in the second quarter.

The funding will be used to fuel new customer acquisition and expansion of the marketplace.

The company has raised just under \$4 million to date, according to investment data from Crunchbase.

Customers spent about \$3.4 million using MassGenie in the fourth quarter of last year, a 2,000% increase compared to the same quarter in 2017, according to Chief Technology Officer **Thu Truong**.

EVENTS

CAREER BOOSTS

Jan. 21-30, 2019

Compiled by Brian Alvarado

THURSDAY, JAN. 24

■ **Building Sustained Innovation & Growth Strategic Partnering in 2019** (Executive Next Practices Institute), Irvine, 5 p.m., \$85, (888) 857-9722, enpinstitute.com

■ **Entrepreneur Startup Accelerator #21** (MasterMinds OC), Irvine, 5:30 p.m., \$20-\$30, mastermindsoc.org

FRIDAY, JAN. 25

■ **Lunch and Learn** (UCI Applied Innovation), Irvine, noon, free, (949) 824-2683, innovation.uci.edu/events

THURSDAY, JAN. 31

■ **Pitch Prep 101: Building Your Best Pitch** (Orange County Inland Empire), Irvine, noon, free, (714) 564-5200, goo.gl/SJeYmn

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 30

■ **How to Pitch to an Investment Panel With CSUF Startup Director John Bradley** (CSUF Startup), Irvine, noon, free, (657) 278-3464, goo.gl/PaeGUC

RECURRING

■ **1 Million Cups** (UCI Applied Innovation), Irvine, every Wednesday, 7:45 a.m., free, (949) 824-2683, innovation.uci.edu