HOW TO START A BUSINESS AT HOME

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THE PEOPLE, CONCEPTS & EXECUTION BEHIND THE BRILLIANCE

100 BRILLIANT COMPANIES

YIPIT, led by Jim Moran (left) & Vinicius Vacanti, puts an inspired spin on the daily deal model

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THE WATCH-MEN

REST ASSURED LETS SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES KNOW THAT SOMEONE HAS THEIR BACKS

WATCHFUL EYES: TELE-CAREGIVER SANDY MARTINDALE.

Keeping a senior in a nursing home is incredibly expensive. Bringing in a home healthcare aid may be more economical, but a nurse can't monitor each client 24/7.

That's the niche Rest Assured fills. The system sounds like something out of Orwell: A typical setup includes two-way video monitoring and an array of sensors that tell the Tele-Caregiver at Rest Assured's home base in Lafayette, Ind., how long a senior has stayed in the bathroom or if they've opened the medicine cabinet to take their prescriptions. It also measures the temperature, calculates carbon monoxide and even indicates when a client sits in a specific chair or goes to bed.

But the heart of the system is a little less big brother and a little more warm and fuzzy. Caregivers interact with clients, checking in at set times each day, appearing on a video monitor with reminders to take medicine. Some drop in digitally during dinnertime to keep their clients company. If there's a problem they can't handle remotely, they'll dispatch someone to the home or contact a family member.

"There are some people out there who say no way, but those people usually say no to homecare service in general," says Dustin Wright, general manager of Rest Assured. "When we tell them they can control what the caregiver sees and how much they interact and that this is a safety net for them, adoption is a lot easier."

The Rest Assured system was developed five years ago as a joint venture between the Wabash Center, which provides services to the developmentally disabled, and ResCare, a home healthcare provider that offers the system commercially, and in collaboration with Purdue University's College of Technology. But the concept is only now starting to take off. Many of the 400 systems installed so far allow children who live in another state or city to check in on their parents remotely, like the Rest Assured Tele-Caregiver.

"There needs to be a cultural shift in people's minds before the market adopts this," Wright says. "[But] the baby boomer generation is more tech-savvy than their parents. I would be shocked if we don't double business in the next year or so." —J.D.

MORE BRILLIANCE

ConnectAde This free website's step-by-step process helps people create a personalized Care Action Plan for hands-on assistance and care for aging parents.

ElderTreks An adventure travel company designed exclusively for ages 50 and up offers off-the-beaten-path, small-group trips in more than 100 countries.

MedCottage These pop-up "granny pods" are fully equipped, state-of-the-art modular medical homes designed to be placed on the family's property.

Omhu The brightly colored wooden Omhu Cane was inspired by Scandinavian furniture, bicycles, hockey sticks and skateboards.

Senior Cupid A dating site for sophisticated seniors.

Smooth Mooove This moving company offers personalized assistance to seniors and their families during every step of the relocation process.

Tree Rings Retirees and seniors provide telephone support to their peers on a variety of topics, from technology to banking and insurance.

vibrantBrains Modeled on traditional fitness clubs, these brain gyms help aging baby boomers keep their minds sharp with computer training programs that boost memory and alertness.

YourEncore Leverages the experience and knowledge of retired scientists and engineers across the country and connects them with contract-basis gigs.

BARGAI HUNTER JIM MOR AND VINICIU VACANT

[VALUE]

THE DEAL SEALER

YIPIT UPENDS THE DAILY DISCOUNT MODEL, SCANNING THE WEB TO AGGREGATE OFFERS

The recession gave way to a nation of cheapskates. No one wants to pay full price for anything anymore, and consumers continue to spend 30 percent less than they did in 2008, Gallup's consumer spending poll shows.

But consumer spending on daily deal sites is set to soar to $3.9 billion by 2015, says a recent study by BIA/Kelsey, a media consulting firm. And with sites like Groupon and LivingSocial bringing in $1 million a day in revenue, a market that didn't exist three years ago is expected to grow 138 percent in 2011 with a staggering $2.7 billion in revenue, TechCrunch reports.

The real winners of the new frugal economy are the businesses helping people save that precious dough. One of the more ingenious is Yipit, a website that aggregates and recommends local offers from more than 400 deal sites in 32 cities. Rather than signing up for loads of different services, users can simply sign up for Yipit, enter their preferences (e.g., send restaurant deals, but not bungee-jumping deals) and receive a single, personalized e-mail each day.

"It's a one-stop shop," says Vinicius Vacanti, who co-founded Yipit with business partner Jim Moran in February of 2009.

"We quickly realized that people don't necessarily just love deals—they love doing great things and living better lives without paying full price," Moran says.

Since raising $1.3 million in venture funding last summer, Yipit has been basking in the limelight with spots on *The Today Show, The Early Show* and CNN. Its subscriber base grew 25 percent each month this year and now tops 185,000.

Though the company is tight-lipped about revenue figures, Yipit's business model is two-fold: affiliate revenue directly from the featured deal sites, and what it calls Yipit Data Product, a competitive report that is sent out to deal sites nightly detailing all the activity in the daily deal space in a given city and nationwide.

Up next: Continued expansion into all major metro markets in the U.S. and internationally, as well as added location-based features. "Philosophically," Vacanti says, "it's all about building the best experience possible. —KARA OHNGREN

MORE BRILLIANCE

CalcMoolator With tools to help users do everything from manage their mortgage payments to compare job opportunities and pay off debt, this website aggregates more than 175 financial calculators.

Deal Current Who needs Groupon? This outfit helps companies develop their own customized daily deal programs.

a purchase.

RelayRides A neighbor-to-neighbor car-sharing service that helps car owners lend out their vehicles by providing the proper insurance and technology for a safe, easy transaction.

RetailMeNot A coupon clipper's dream: A website that enables users to search for discount codes from more than 65,000 e-tailers.

SmartyPig It's a virtual piggy bank: Set savings goals and solicit donations from friends and family through Facebook and Twitter—all with a competitive 1.35 percent interest rate.

Swap.com Bartering is cool at this online swap shop. The site has reportedly coordinated 1.9 million swaps, saving users a whopping $11.9 million.