



Luminary: Dennis Swanson in Lamps Plus' Chatsworth store.

LIGHT BULB MOMENT

How one retailer worked with the internet and prospered

By HELEN FLOERSH Staff Reporter

Lamps Plus Inc. plans to open a new store in Austin, Texas later this summer. While it's the Chatsworth specialty retailer's first opening in nearly a decade, it comes at a time when most chains are shrinking before the growing strength of online competitors.

But working with the internet rather

than against it has been a major contributor to the company's success. It has installed internet kiosks in its stores and incentivized salespeople to use them. In practice, shoppers often visit the store, see available items and then buy the exact model and color they want through the website.

More than half of its sales take place on LampsPlus.com, where it offers roughly 65,000 lighting and home decor items from

both external vendors and its own product lines.

"I noticed that if you buy an outdoor light, you buy a family – a post light, front door light, side lights – but you could never carry an entire family in a store," Chief Executive Dennis Swanson explained. "So I thought, if you put the internet in a store, they can find it there."

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PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

Video Links Keyes to Car Buyers

AUTOMOTIVE: Program logs 30 percent conversion rate.

By CAROL LAWRENCE Staff Reporter

Despite the ubiquity of ecommerce, people still have to buy their new automobiles from dealerships – and they still distrust salespeople.

Keyes Automotive Group Inc. in Van Nuys understands that, so the company has begun offering car shoppers live and interactive video

tours of their desired vehicles through the dealerships' websites in hopes of building trust and converting shoppers into buyers.

The service is implemented at Keyes' 15 dealerships throughout the Valley and Valencia, and it takes the trend of pre-purchase online research a step further.

Larry West has put the new software-based tool through four months of testing as general manager of Keyes Honda in Van Nuys, where

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PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

Sold: Keyes Honda's Estrella, West.

Firm Delivers Bed in a Box

MANUFACTURING: Mattresses beat stiff online competition.

By MARK R. MADLER Staff Reporter

Rick Swartzburg wants to get you into bed.

Preferably a bed with a mattress or pillow made by his company, Relief-Mart Inc. in Agoura Hills.

The company is one of the top sellers in the sleep business through ecommerce giant Amazon.com Inc. And it has become a pioneer of custom-made pillows

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Swartzburg

Fix for Bedsores

MEDICAL DEVICE: Lift prevents pain for patients, caregivers.

By STEPHANIE HENKEL Staff Reporter

Margarita Clement came to the United States from Aruba to pursue a career in nursing. However, once she started working at a local hospital, paralysis in her left hand that had developed during childhood prevented her from lifting and turning patients properly. Then after her American mentor and father figure fell ill, she was faced with a similar problem in caring for him.

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PROFILE



LOFTY: Frank Miller is the new executive director at Hollywood Burbank Airport. His first assignment: Build a terminal while not disrupting passengers. He talks with the Business Journal about why he feels motivated by big construction projects.

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Dole IPO: Billionaire David Murdock proposes taking company public.



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Hospital Building Boom Providence Tarzana, right, leads pack of health-related projects.

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Campus Hotel Developer signs agreement to bring hospitality to CSUN.



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Sharky's Puts Money in Plate for Hungry Kids

CHARITY: Restaurant chain's two-month campaign raises \$10,000 for food service.

Sharky's Woodfired Mexican Grill has completed a two-month campaign to raise \$10,000 for No Kid Hungry, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit that connects low-income children with programs that provide meals and nutrition resources.



GIVING & NONPROFITS

Helen Floersh

The Westlake Village restaurant franchisor, which has 25 locations in Southern California and Nevada, donated \$1 from the sale of each "wild Alaska" menu item purchased between Feb. 16 and April 13. Sharky's was introduced to No Kid Hungry by Chief Marketing Officer Steven Goldstein, who alone raised \$25,000 in donations for the nonprofit last May in

conjunction with Chef Cycle, a charity cycling event for the restaurant industry.

"My experience led me to what I saw as an opportunity for our organization to do some food-related giving," said Goldstein, who joined Sharky's in September.

No Kid Hungry conducts campaigns in Los Angeles throughout the year, including a

breakfast program that provided food for 350,000 public school students in 2015, according to the nonprofit's website.

Separately, Sharky's also benefitted No Kid Hungry in early May with donations collected during its "mock service" event for its Summerlin, Nev. restaurant, its first outpost outside of California. No Kid Hungry also will receive proceeds from the launch of a Sharky's restaurant in Marina del Rey, slated to open later this summer. The restaurant is matching donations from each event up to \$2,500, Goldstein said.

'Refashion the Future'

Westfield Topanga and the Village is among nine Westfield locations that have partnered with sustainable fashion recycling nonprofit I:Collect to give new life to shoppers' old clothing.

The program, called I:Co, encourages shoppers to drop off used clothing at a Westfield location in exchange for discounts from participating retailers. At Westfield Topanga, those include not only national retailers such as H&M

but also small brands like Cotton On and The Vine, said Westfield Topanga Senior Manager Molly Unger. More retailers have signed on with the program since its April 22 launch, and the list is expected to grow, she added.

"It's the big guys and the little guys all doing their part," Unger said. "The partnership between

Westfield and I:Co has natural synergy – and it solves the quandary of what to do with clothes when you're done wearing them."

While other programs limit donations to gently-worn pieces that can be resold as used clothing, I:Co takes items in any condition and sorts them into more than 350 categories. Unwearable items may be "down-cycled" into wipe cloths, or turned into insulation for buildings and cars.

"The goal is to close the loop or create a circular economy," Jennifer Gilbert, chief marketing officer at I:Co USA, explained. "This is not just a one-day promotion – consumers need to change their habits in terms of textiles, and Westfield is helping them do that."

I:Co purchases the donated clothing from Westfield, which then turns all proceeds over to Glam4Good Foundation. The New York nonprofit conducts fashion and beauty initiatives in partnership with domestic abuse shelters, women's charities and other organizations.

"When you really look at Glam4Good their focus is strengthening and empowering girls and women, the No. 1 customer that is taking part in this program," Westfield's Unger said.

JetSuiteX's Angel Flight

Individuals with serious medical conditions will be able to jet out of Hollywood Burbank Airport in Burbank free-of-charge, thanks to a donation to Angel Flight West from public charter service JetSuiteX.

The Santa Monica health care aviation nonprofit announced at its annual Endeavor Awards gala on May 6 that it had received \$25,000 in seats on JetSuiteX flights, which will



Wilcox

cover transportation for 100 patients between airports in Burbank, San Francisco and Las Vegas. JetSuiteX also donated a \$2,500 Napa Valley travel package to the Endeavor Awards silent auction.

JetSuiteX Chief Executive Alex Wilcox said his company was

inspired to promote the work of Angel Flight after hearing feedback from JetSuiteX customers who said that its charter service had enabled their elderly parents to travel again.

"When we started JetSuiteX we wanted to take the hassle out of air travel, and some of the unexpected feedback was that we had basically made untenable travel possible," Wilcox said. "We wanted to do what we did for elderly individuals for others who faced similar situations."

JetSuiteX was researching potential benefactors for a donation to commemorate its first year in business when it received a call from Josh Olsen, executive director of Angel Flight. The nonprofit's mission – to provide free, non-emergency air travel for children and adults in need of medical care – was a natural fit with JetSuiteX's product, Wilcox said.

"We liked Angel Flight's product," he said. "(They share) our real focus, so we wanted to focus specifically on them."

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Doctors Counter Allergy Surge With Surgery

MEDICINE: High pollen levels push demand for balloon sinuplasty procedure.

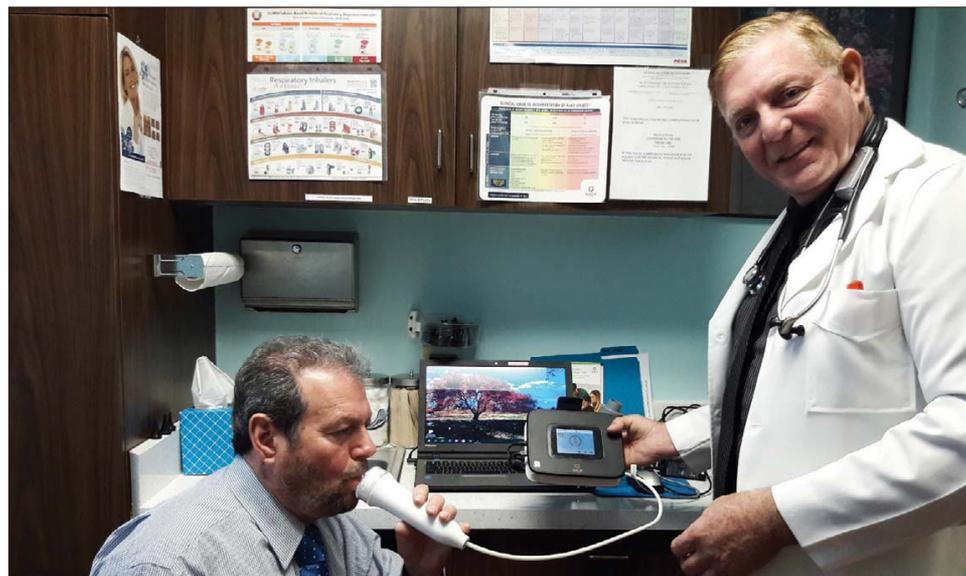
Allergists and doctors concur that this year is one of the worst allergy seasons in Valley history. The combination of rain, heat and wind have spurred plant growth, with multiple counties reporting higher levels of tree pollen much sooner than in previous years. As a result, doctors are seeing an uptick in patients with sinus problems and are offering advice and treatments to stop the sniffles.

Dr. Jacob Offenberger, an allergist at Dignity Health Northridge Hospital Medical Center, said he has seen a 15 percent increase in sick visits to treat allergies, while Dr. Marc Kerner of Calwest Head & Neck Surgical Institute in Northridge and Westlake Village has observed a 25 percent increase.

"This year, because of the rain, we are going to get a long allergy and pollen season," Offenberger explained. "Most people started getting sick around February."

To not miss work, Offenberger advises people who know they suffer from allergies to always carry an asthma inhaler and allergy medication with them, in case symptoms arise. For people who don't know they have allergies, if they have cold-like symptoms that last for more than 10 days, they should go see a doctor as it is most likely allergies.

"Unlike a few years ago when most (allergy) medications were prescription only, now both nasal sprays and antihistamines are all over-the-counter. If you take the medication and it doesn't get better in a week or two, it's



Breathe Out: Asthma patient tests lungs in Dr. Jacob Offenberger's Northridge office.



Operating Room: Dr. Marc Kerner prepares for allergy-relieving treatment.

time to see a doctor," he said.

For more severe cases, Calwest's Kerner offers a newer procedure called balloon sinuplasty, which uses a small balloon attached to a guide wire to open up blocked sinus passageways and drain mucus from the area. The entire procedure takes about 20 minutes with zero recovery time,

so a patient can go back to work the same day.

The process begins with a small injection of anesthesia. Once numb, a balloon catheter is inserted into the sinus and is then inflated to open it up. From there, a saline solution is sprayed into the sinus to flush out mucus before removing the device.

Balloon sinuplasty is covered by Medicare and most major insurers, and costs around \$2,500 before insurance reimbursement, Kerner said.

He has seen a 30 percent increase in this surgery this year, and added that more than 90 percent of his patients experience allergy relief after the procedure.

Simulations Plus Acquisition

Simulations Plus Inc., a Lancaster pharmaceutical modeling software provider, is acquiring Dilisym Services Inc. of Research Triangle Park, N.C. through a stock purchase agreement.

Dilisym provides similar services to Simulations Plus but is focused on the modeling of drug-induced liver injury.

Upon closing, which is slated for June 1,

Dilisym will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Simulations Plus but will continue to operate under the Dilisym name. The move will increase Simulation Plus's employee count to 79 from 68 and is expected to add more than \$3 million in revenue in 2018.

"The combination will significantly strengthen our software and consulting services efforts, and bolster our management team as well," Walt Woltosz, chief executive of Simulations Plus, said in a statement. "I am pleased that the existing management team of Dilisym Services will remain with the company."

Under the terms of the agreement, Dilisym shareholders will receive up to \$10 million – \$5 million up front and as much as an additional \$5 million over the next three years, based on the profitability Dilisym adds to the company.

Sienna's Series B

Sienna Biopharmaceuticals Inc. of Westlake Village has completed its Series B financing round, which raised \$40 million. The clinical stage medical dermatology and aesthetics company intends to use the money toward its pipeline as it continues to develop topical treatments for pruritus, psoriasis and atopic dermatitis as well as laser treatments for acne and light-pigmented hair removal.

The financing was led by Chicago-based Arch Venture Partners and VenVest Capital in Santa Monica. New investors, such as Fidelity Management & Research Co. of Boston, invested approximately half of the funds raised with the remainder coming from first round firms, such as Altitude Life Science Ventures of Kirkland, Wash.

"We are very pleased with the support of investors who share our commitment to developing innovative and disruptive new products in medical dermatology and aesthetics," Sienna Chief Executive Dr. Frederick Beddingfield III said in a statement.

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