

The Future of California Innovation

The 8th Annual University Venturing Summit

by Fred Schonenberg | 5.15.19



Fred Schonenberg, Founder of VentureFuel Speaking at University Venturing Summit May 14, 2019

For the 8th Annual University Venturing Summit, USC once again hosted the Los Angeles entrepreneurial scene to showcase 20 of the best startups from top universities like USC, UCLA, UCI, UCSB, Pepperdine, LMU, Cal Lutheran, CSUN, and CSULA. The entrepreneurs gave an exclusive look into the cutting edge of Southern California's innovation as they pitched their ventures to top angel investors and venture capitalists. I was honored to give the Keynote for the Summit and to sit in on each of the pitches and talk with the founders afterwards. I was struck by the diversity of ideas, business models, technologies, and the quality of the founders themselves. We saw unique approaches to machine comprehension, autonomous docking stations, enterprise SaaS for dentists, and reliable fabrication of composite structures. Applying the VentureFuel corporate partnership lens, here are 5 of the companies that brands should be paying attention to now.

[Brevvie](#)

Brevvie is a smart locker platform installed in apartment buildings, allowing you to rent high quality things you need – tools, appliances, sports equipment – at a fraction of the price of ownership. For landlords, the rev-share model is attractive, plus, the obvious convenience differentiation could add to

increased rents. For brands, Brevvie offers a way to sample your products, provides unique rent-to-own sales channels, and potentially can play a role in the last-mile delivery challenge Amazon is causing in the industry.

[The Hurd Co](#)

By making fabric from Cannabis waste, The Hurd Co enables brands to tell an impressive sustainability story, while being more affordable than other market alternatives (trees, etc.). Their “soft, drapey fabric” takes advantage of natural waste from a burgeoning industry to fuel a huge challenge to the environment. An extremely smart company, with a dynamic founder that has identified a real niche.



[eliqs](#)

I am tempted not to tell anyone about eliqs as I just want to use it for VentureFuel’s events, like Innovation Brew and Rogue Women, but they are too smart not to share. They create personalized cans of local craft beers for events (corporate, wedding, concerts, etc.). In a world where each event needs to stand out and be unique, this is a clever way to get your message into your consumers hands. Their Instagram feed is a fun scroll: @ELIQSCOLLECTIVE

[Pullquest](#)

Fashion designers and PR showrooms loan clothing to celebrities, influencers, and editors to get publicity (aka “And who are you wearing?” red carpet questions). Pullquest has designed a subscription-based loan marketplace that streamlines PR workflows, allowing designers increased publicity. Think a private, elite version of Rent-the-Runway.

[Roost](#)

Roost provides travelers with the quality of a hotel room for the price of a hostel. Their platform connects like-minded compatible travelers to share a hotel room and split the cost. It’s an incredibly interesting hybrid to the Air BnB model for college backpackers, concert, and convention goers. Think alleviating some of the drama of finding reasonable rooms at SxSw.

The University Venturing Summit is a testament to the incredible quality of the Southern California University school system and their support of entrepreneurship, as well as the strength of the startup ecosystem here on “Silicon Beach.” Professor Patrick Henry, Director of the University Venturing Summit, commented, “Every year the ventures launching out of our Southern California universities are more robust, well into market, and many very fundable!”

This Summit is another reminder to the corporate innovators that the best solutions to your challenges, are being solved across the country in a variety of programs, in a variety of locations, and by a diverse group of entrepreneurs. If you are interested in any of the companies above, or to get the full list of startups that presented, please email us at info@venturefuel.net

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About VentureFuel, Inc.

[VentureFuel](#) helps corporations around the world unlock growth by partnering with startups and breakthrough technologies. Our innovation programs allow brands to transform their organizations, solve specific challenges and discover first-to-market opportunities – all with the focus on delivering tangible results. We are 100% independent, sourcing from our global network of the best investors, scouts, founders and academics to find only what has sustainable and scalable impact for our corporate clients. Learn more at: www.venturefuel.net