

Entrepreneurial ID «venture leaders» 2011



Name: Michael Dupertuis
Contact: michael.dupertuis@geroco.com +41 79 641 14 82
Project/ Company name: GEROCO SA

Short description: GEROCO is commercializing ECOWIZZ, a solution that helps people to better understand and act on their home energy consumption. ECOWIZZ makes energy saving fun.

Web site: www.geroco.com (Corporate), www.ecowizz.net (Product)

Industry: Cleantech

GEROCO SA	
GEROCO makes energy-saving fun!	
Status : <i>Company incorporated in Oct. 2009</i>	Company / team size: <i>10 people</i>
<p><i>Problem / Solution: Most people consume and pay their electricity without knowing if and how they can consume and pay less. At the same time electricity prices are increasing and the topic of energy efficiency is gaining more and more importance in the society. GEROCO's Ecowizz provides solutions to help people be more energy efficient, learn how they can consume less and visualize the result. The product has been made to address households and SME's: cheap, simple to install and fun to use.</i></p>	
<p>Market Opportunity / Target customers: We're targeting individuals and SoHos (Small office, Home office) that would like to reduce their environmental impact, save money or install an easy to use home automation solution. Our strategy is to partner with Utilities ready to promote Ecowizz to their customers. We're currently working with the biggest swiss utilities (ie: Romande Energie) and are now expanding with utilities in Germany. Utilities would like to partner with GEROCO because they need to encourage energy efficiency and provide their customers concrete solutions to help people reduce their energy consumption. They also need data to help them better understand how their customers consume electricity. GEROCO is for them an ideal partner to encourage their customers to be more energy efficient..</p>	
<p>Competition and competitive advantage: In the market of the Home Energy Saving market, GEROCO is competing against AlertMe (UK), Plugwise (NL) and Ijenko (FR). Our positioning and key differentiation is based on our capacity to manage and process the collected data in a way that we can provide some value added services for utilities or companies that are looking for profiled energy consumption data to provide new services for their own customers (Demand-Respond, new tarification, ...)</p>	
<p>Financing: We closed a Series A round in November 2010 of 800KCHF and are currently not looking for a new round.</p>	
<p>Growth objectives: 2011: 2 MCHF turnover with 9 employees, 4 in R&D + 5 in SGA (Sales and Administration) 2012 : 6 MCHF turnover with 13 employees, 5 in R&D + 8 in SGA 2013 : 9 MCHF turnover with 16 employees, 6 in R&D + 10 in SGA 2014 : 10 MCHF turnover with 16 employees, 6 in R&D + 10 in SGA The internationalization plan could change these figures and reflect higher growth.</p>	
<p>US objectives:</p> <p>1st) Find new business partnership opportunities to expand our business in the US : looking for contacts to US utilities, especially with their Marketing team.</p> <p>2nd) Share and challenge my business ideas with experts and investors in the cleantech domain and get feedback about opportunities in the US and the competitive landscape</p> <p>3rd) Define new possible partnerships and future products that could be commercialized by GEROCO with the help of US partners. Especially, find new ways to promote our services, complete our offer with new devices. This will be possible by visiting companies around Boston in the cleantech domain and possible distributors.</p>	



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Description:

Geroco is commercializing ECOWIZZ

Geroco's ECOWIZZ solution allows you to understand and act on your energy consumption (electricity and heating) at home in a simple way

1. Plugging the ECOWIZZ smartplugs to any high consuming devices (TV, PC station, coffee machine and many more...);
2. Connecting to your personal ECOWIZZ web account;
3. Visualize your instant and historical devices consumption in kWh, cost and CO2 footprint and benchmark it
4. Save energy by programming the plugs to cut off standby current when not needed

The solution is illustrated in figure 1. It consists of

- ECOWIZZ smartplugs that measure the energy consumption on the outlet or device on which they are installed and communicates it real-time to the Web platform with Zigbee (low power wireless standard). Plugs measure and communicate also the temperature in the room;
- a USB dongle plugged to a computer connected to the Web. It captures the data provided by the plugs and sends it to the Web platform and Geroco servers;
- the ECOWIZZ web platform (fig 2) that consolidates and presents the data on the user's personal portal in an easy to use interface . It sends advice to the user and it can program each plug to switch on and off devices automatically.

Figure 1 - Solution overview



The team

After a first success in a multinational company by creating from scratch an innovative department that grew from three to twelve people and 12Mio CHF turnover, I took the decision to create my own company by combining my experience in home automation and web technologies! I found complementary skills with two of my former colleagues and, together in late 2009, we created GEROCO SA, a customer needs oriented company that is providing solutions to help people to better understand their home energy consumption.

One year and a half later, Geroco is a well-known and successful startup active in its local market and planning now to go international.

My goal is to provide useful solutions that are not currently available in the market with the help of a great team. And today, Geroco's team is composed of ten highly skilled and motivated people and a strong board of directors with several senior manager. We are working hard to be successful worldwide and to make Geroco the biggest reference in its field.