

# 6 Entrepreneur Experience



Charles Dwyer of Loflo, a water management and leak detection company



John Vaughan and Olive O'Driscoll of medical device company AventaMed

## Meet the makers of the

This month, up- and -coming business people will have the chance to learn from veteran entrepreneurs, thanks to the Entrepreneur Experience. Last week, we profiled the first 12 businesses taking part – and below,

**Tom Lyons** profiles the final 12

**T**he Entrepreneur Experience provides unique advice and access to 24 emerging entrepreneurs who get to work with 24 leading business people over 24 hours to discover ways to better grow their company.

The event, which is now in its seventh year, takes place in Ballymaloe in Co Cork, on April 7 and 8.

The Sunday Business Post is the media partner of the event, and this week it profiles the final 12 of the 24 emerging companies that will be taking part in this year's Entrepreneur Experience.

### Kami Intelligence

**Alex Cheung and Jonathan Chan**  
Kami Intelligence is a British-based artificial intelligence (AI) company that enhances human-machine interactions through conversations. Founded by Alex Cheung and Jonathan Chan, it uses virtual assistants built on Kami's AI conversational platform. These assistants hold meaningful conversations and give relevant personalised replies that build trust with human users.

Cheung has worked for 15 years in project management, development and IT system design for fast-growing start-ups including Travelzen Group, Synaptic Technologies and Cherrypicks. Chan is a recent graduate of the University of Oxford where he studied engineering and materials science. He is passionate about AI, conversational commerce and advanced data analytics.

### Rash'R Vests

**Tom Cotter**  
Tom Cotter, the founder of Rash'R Vests, has been involved in the outdoor recreation industry for over 15 years. His e-commerce start-up wants to become a market leader in offering exciting and creative rash vests to windsurfers, sailors, surfers and other users.

A rash vest is an athletic shirt used to protect the wearer from rashes caused by abrasion or exposure to the elements.

Cotter has previously worked as general manager of Yachting Victoria State's training centre in Melbourne where he successfully grew the business until it made its first profit in the company's history. Cotter's new business wants to sell online and through partnerships with social media influencers. He hopes to team up with well-known watersports athletes and get them to drive sales through their network of followers.

### Solo Energy

**Killian O'Connor and Mark Hamilton**  
Entrepreneurs Killian O'Connor and Mark Hamilton founded Solo Energy in 2015 to socialise the benefits of low-carbon renewable generation through the delivery of intelligent energy storage solutions. Solo believes that the standard electricity supplier business model



Francis Fitzgibbon of Storystock.com, a platform that licenses news stories

is becoming redundant. As an electricity supplier, Solo wants to allow individuals participate as energy 'prosumers' in their distributed virtual power plant concept. Solo deploys battery energy storage systems in homes and businesses across the grid at no upfront cost to customers. The company has created a cloud-connected software platform that centrally monitors and controls distributed batteries as a virtual power plant. Solo can offer low-cost renewable electricity supply to customers while delivering essential balancing services to grid operators as levels of intermittent renewable generation continue to rise.

Solo's chief executive, Mark Hamilton, was previously behind British tidal energy start-up Scotrenewables, while Killian O'Connor has advised on numerous onshore wind projects.

### Storystock.com

**Francis Fitzgibbon**  
Francis Fitzgibbon, chief executive and founder of Storystock.com, is an experienced journalist, having worked in radio, television and newspapers for TV3, Newstalk and Independent News & Media. He has done everything from being a reporter on the Pat Kenny show on Newstalk to creating a documentary for TV3 that was watched by 300,000 people. Storystock.com is a new technology platform that is building an international community of storytellers, journalists, bloggers and activists. It licenses their stories, primarily in video, to the media and brands. Each time it licenses or sells a story, it take a commission.

### Westbrite Technologies

**Sean Ganley**  
Westbrite Technologies is an expert in photocells – the photoelectric sensors that control streetlights and turn them on and off at dusk and dawn.

The company, which is led by Sean Ganley, has recently invented and patented a new technology that will turn streetlight photocells into an Internet of



Emmet Hogan and John MacMahon of security company RE:SURE

Things platform for smart cities. It has developed a closed camera photocell as an Internet of Things hardware and software solution that can be plugged into standardised sockets on existing streetlights. The Mayo company's photocells create a network to provide a broad range of IoT-enabled smart solutions.

Ganley is experienced in export sales and international business development. His co-founders are Sean Noone, a physicist and technologist, and Jerome McDonnell, a lean manufacturing expert.

### AventaMed

**Olive O'Driscoll and John Vaughan**  
This Cork-based medical device company has developed an innovative device which transforms ear-tube surgery in children and adults.

This surgery involves the insertion of a tiny tube into the eardrum to treat infections and hearing loss.

The insertion of these tubes is the number one reason why children undergo surgeries in an operating room with gen-



Killian O'Connor and Mark Hamilton of electricity supplier Solo Energy

eral anaesthesia; more than two million children require such tubes annually, making it a €5 billion market globally. AventaMed has created a handheld device that allows ear-tube insertion by a specialist surgeon in just a few minutes without the need for general anaesthesia. Chief executive Olive O'Driscoll and chief technology officer John Vaughan have invented and completed early device development with support from Enterprise Ireland.

### Evolution Innovation

**Declan Wallace**  
Evolution Innovation is an international construction technology consultancy specialising in modern methods of construction, especially modular and panelised light gauge steel. It provides a complete suite of services, from structural engineering design through to specification development.

Its chief executive, Declan Wallace, has 17 years of experience in construction. He is preparing the business to scale upwards



Tom Cotter of Rash'R Vests

from its base in Cork after opening offices in Dublin and Britain. Evolution cuts the cost of construction by eliminating costly over-specification while still being fully compliant with all regulations.

### FoodCloud

**Aoibheann O'Brien**  
Former investment banker Aoibheann O'Brien co-founded FoodCloud to match surplus food in the food industry with charities in Ireland and Britain.

FoodCloud has won lots of awards

including Social Entrepreneur Ireland's impact award and an award from ice cream maker Ben & Jerry's.

FoodCloud has developed a technology platform that allows food outlets to easily notify local charities to pick up food directly from those outlets in order to pass it on to others.

FoodCloud has hubs in Cork, Galway and Dublin. It believes that food waste prevention is an opportunity to save resources, create jobs, alleviate hunger, conserve water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.