

Gimme Vending: Updating the Vending Machine Business

Cory Hewett and Evan Jarecki were students together at Georgia Tech when Hewett came up with an idea to fix an age old problem in the vending machine industry. A year later, [Gimme Vending](#) is headed to the Finals of the [TAG Business Launch Competition](#) on May 11.

Jarecki, an Electrical Engineering graduate at Georgia Tech, had his first job lined up and was ready to move to Savannah when Hewett invited him out for a drink to share his idea. Less than 72 hours later, Jarecki gave up his engineering position at a Fortune 100 company to join the startup. After a year of learning, Gimme Vending now has several hundred beta users from its first customer, and is planning a full scale release of their product in August of this year.

At the core of the vending machine industry, which is approximately 6 million vending machines in the U.S., is the task of opening the door of every machine, physically connecting an end-of-lifed, \$1,200 Motorola MC-70 handheld computing device with a \$70 cable, downloading the sales and inventory data from that machine, and then finally syncing that mobile device to the vending machine company's systems at the end of the day. While that process is not difficult, it is very time consuming, and both the cable and the Motorola device are expensive and prone to failure, costing the vending machine driver and owner even more time.

Gimme Vending - the name captures their desire to "let customers know they could get what they wanted" - plans to disrupt this time-consuming daily process by inserting an iPad Mini and a Bluetooth dongle into any vending machine. Gimme's hardware/software combination removes the necessity of physically opening and connecting to the machine, saving precious time, and getting the data back to the vending machine's owner immediately via the iPad's cellular connection.

Hewett told us that their market entry point is vending machine owners who own more than 500 machines but less than 10,000 machines. He estimates that market segment to be 30% of the total vending machine market, or about 1.5 million machines in the U.S.

The Georgia Tech graduates are solving a problem systemic to the vending machine industry, but they are building the company on their core belief that their solution must be simple, fast, and beautiful. Gimme Vending won the popular vote among attendees at the March 17, semi-final event.