dynamics. The company uses tiny water droplets to absorb and hold onto the heat of compression, using thermodynamic science to deliver up to 70 percent of the energy stored. The company effectively makes wind energy storage a viable reality, making it possible for wind farms to capture power at night and sell it at peak times of the day when the energy is typically far more valuable. Solar panels, likewise, can store the energy at peak sunny times of the day and use it whenever.

"We enable intermittent renewable energy sources to supply energy exactly when it is needed," said Steve Crane, CEO of LightSail Energy. "The lack of this technology is what has been holding back the viability of wind and solar power."

Other traditional means of storing energy include lithium ion batteries, which can be considerably more expensive and only last about seven to eight years. LightSail Energy's compression units cost a fraction of the battery and can last for up to 20 years.

Still in an R&D phase, the company plans to release its product on the market by 2014, focusing first on large enterprise wind and solar operations. It plans to be global from the start, as the technology faces considerable demand in Europe with greater government incentives for renewable energy. Though the company has yet to sell the product, Crane anticipates demand will be higher than the company can meet.

"There is pent up demand for this technology at the right price point that is just off the charts," Crane said. "I've never seen anything like it."

The technology is the brainchild of Co-Founder and Chief Scientist Danielle Fong, a prodigy who began her PhD in fusion research at Princeton at the age of 17, was recently featured in Forbes 30 Under 30, and is the youngest of this year's Technology Review 35 innovators under 35. Realizing that energy storage would provide faster solutions than fusion, Fong designed the solution and showed it to Crane, who realized this could not only be the makings of a billion dollar company, but could also make renewable energy a widely usable commodity. The two spent a year building a business plan before landing funding from Khosla Ventures. It took another year to get the first generation up and running at a 100 kw scale.

The company recently landed a round of funding from Bill Gates and Peter Thiel, the co-founder of PayPal, bringing its total capital to $52.3 million.

Though substantial revenue may be years away, Crane anticipates the company will break even by 2015 depending on how quickly it can scale. He doesn't see why the company couldn't have revenues of a billion dollars in five to 10 years.

"The opportunity to solve the world's energy problems quickly and cleanly is within our reach," Crane said. "You can put this application down on a wind farm and immediately increase its revenue, or put it in a remote community and power an entire village. We have the essential technology that can seriously reduce our dependency on fossil fuels."

Based in Berkeley, the company competes against General Compression and SustainX. RH

Madison Performance Group

Company:	Madison Performance Group
URL:	www.madisonpg.com
CEO:	Werner Haase
Sector:	Other
Country:	USA
VC$:	N/A

How can a company get its employees to excel? Madison Performance Group knows the answer. Over the last 40 years, the company has helped employers around the world motivate their workers to excellence. The key to this motivation lies in Madison's technology, which allows employees to be recognized for specific behaviors. Madison COO Alex Alaminos sees recognition as essential because "If an employee feels recognized, they are more likely to stay." Using the company's configurable business tools, an employer can recognize positive behaviors in the workplace, driving these behaviors and increasing overall worker engagement.

Speaking of engagement, Madison does not appear to have had any difficulty engaging those in the corporate world. The company is growing steadily at a rate of 10 to 15 percent per year and saw revenues in 2011 reach $117 million. At the current rate, Madison expects this year's revenues to top $130 million. These earnings are derived from usage of the firm's technology, along with other sources of income such as monthly project management fees.

Madison's client base is made up of more than 30 companies. On the surface, this number may seem meager for an organization that has been in business for 40 years. The catch, however, is that Madison Performance Group specifically targets companies with 5,000 employees or more. This approach has led the Group to work with massive multinational corporations like Accenture, Siemens, and Citi Group. In doing so, Madison boasts a high rate of retention. According to Alaminos, most of Madison's clients have been with the firm for five years or more. In addition, the firm's first client, acquired nearly 40 years ago, is still with them today.

These results have positioned Madison as a leader in performance improvement incentives and recognition, a $46 billion dollar industry. The company has led this industry since 1996 when it worked with MCI WorldCom to launch the first known recognition program for an HR suite. The launch was a success for Madison Performance Group, although success has tended to be the norm for a company which has been profitable since its inception. The company competes against TemboSocial.

Looking ahead, Madison has every reason to expect more success in the future. The company is privately owned and has grown without receiving outside investment of any kind. Also, despite working with companies that have thousands of employees, Madison itself has managed to remain small. The company retains a boutique feeling with just 75 employees. These employees work from the global headquarters in New York City and from additional locations in Brazil, Mexico, Sweden, China, and India. RH

Market Force

Company:	Market Force
URL:	www.marketforce.com
CEO:	Karl Maier
Sector:	Other
Country:	USA
VC$:	Yes

Running a retail chain throughout regional and international markets requires a mixture of guesswork and voodoo. Market Force removes the mystery of running a complicated retail network through hard analytics that optimize sales potential. Providing customer intelligence, the company collects various types of data at every level of the retail chain, tying it all together through sophisticated analytics that give an integrated view of how it all fits together. Based on that data, it then forms an actionable plan at the individual store level to drive up customer satisfaction, spending, and referrals in order to maximize financial performance.

One of the world's largest retail companies used the company's platform to measure out employee compensation, and managed to raise their store sales by 3 to 5 percent.

"We provide our clients a much easier way to understand what's going across their entire footprint on a local level," said Karl Maier, Co-founder and CEO of Market Force. "There's never really been a tool out there that gives these multinational stores the ability to drive action at the local level."

The company serves the $2 billion customer experience industry that includes auditing, customer satisfaction surveys, and call center information, as well as the $9 billion market research analytics market. It serves mainly big box retailers, mass merchants and wireless carriers, with its average client spend at $200,000 and larger customers spending $3 to 5 million. The company has also identified a number of other verticals for additional revenue.

After spending a number of years as a "turn-around guy" helping struggling venture backed startups, Maier teamed up with co-founder Paul Berberian, a serial entrepreneur. Berberian identified the customer intelligence space as an area ripe for consolidation, and the two launched Market Force. The business acquired a number of companies along the way to form its key technology and spent the last two and half years investing heavily in the next generation platform.

The company currently has over 300 clients for its range of existing products, including Travel Centers of America, Pilgrim, and Five Guys. It recently rolled out a new product solution, the Customer Intelligence Platform, that has a few customers with several more in the sales pipeline. The company has grown at 25 percent annually for the last several years.

The company has expanded considerably internationally over the last couple of years through a number of key acquisitions, including a Canadian company in March of 2011 and a UK company in September of 2011. It recently opened an office in Paris and another in Madrid, and through key partnerships has expanded to a number of European countries. It plans to soon enter the Latin American market.

Its competitors include Service Intelligence, Corporate Research International, and BestMark, and Maritz.

Based in Colorado, the company has raised just north of $50 million in equity, and carries $20 million in debt, most of which has been spent on acquisitions. Investors include Monitor Clipper Partners, Centennial Ventures, Boulder Ventures and Vista Ventures. Earning $60 million in revenue this past year, the company has been profitable at about a 10 percent rate. Maier expects the company to reach $100 million in the next year or two, and perhaps $300 to 350 million with high profitability in three to five years. The most likely exit for the company would be an acquisition or public offering, Maier said. RH

MedAvante

Company:	MedAvante
URL:	www.medavante.com
CEO:	Paul Gilbert
Sector:	HealthCare/Pharmaceuticals
Country:	USA
VC$:	Yes

Traditional clinical trials for mental health simply don't work. In fact, even FDA-approved medication fails 50 percent of the time in clinical trials. Paid a considerable sum per patient admitted to each study, health centers running the tests face little incentive to get the right people into the programs, as the more patients they provide, the better they're paid. This results in slanted tests on patients whose symptoms may not be severe enough or applicable to the drug. At the same time, those given the tests are often provided different training parameters per facility, resulting in a bias that further skews the results. This results in a high cost to approve mental health drugs, discouraging the pharma industry from coming up with solutions to mental health disorders that will affect one in four people over their lifetimes.

MedAvante uses video conferencing and technology to make such testing objective rather than subjective. Trained psychologists interview each patient on a large video conferencing screen. The company is not paid per patient, and the reviewer knows nothing about the extent of the patient's symptoms beforehand. Thus, the company receives no incentive to place those in the program who do not belong. The interviewers stay with the company long term, and can be trained to provide a consistent analysis according to the company's parameters.

"Our clinical interviewers are completely blinded to the subject's condition," said Paul Gilbert, Co-founder and CEO of MedAvante. "All our interviewers do is rate patients, so we can afford to invest in their training and hone their skills until the interviewers are virtually interchangeable. As a result, we bring objectivity and standardization to an inherently subjective process."

Such a centralized approach was demonstrated to work in 85 percent of head to head studies comparing MedAvante's solution to local research sites. Not only has MedAvante been proven in the clinician's lab, but in the marketplace as well. The company serves 14 different drug sponsors, including 7 of the 10 largest pharma companies. It has grown 50 percent each of the last five years.

Gilbert was inspired to found the company in 2002 alongside Co-founder Amy Ellis by his own family history with bipolar disorder. It took four years for the company to land its first drug study. Adoption was initially slow, but once the FDA accepted its first drug tested using MedAvante's method (a J&J anti-psychotic) three years ago, traction took off. Last year, the company made $30 million in revenue, and expects at least $45 million this year. It reached the break even point in the second half of 2012.

The company has had $34 million investment, including $14 million in smaller investments from a number of pharma and Wall St. investors, and a $20 million round from Goldman Sachs' Principal Strategies Group.

Six years into testing mental health medications from a centralized strategy, Gilbert doesn't worry about a competitor stealing