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eMerge Americas - The Premier Tech Event in Miami

By

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The tech industry in Miami and South Florida is booming. Many local startups, such as Fintech Firm or Softbank, have already reached billion-dollar status, and the value keeps rising. According to CB Insights, in the first three quarters of 2021, Miami startups raised \$2.4 billion, tripling the \$811 million they raised in the same period in 2020. In venture investment, Miami happens to be the epicenter of the North American flower industry.

I am always on the lookout to help find unique and innovative ways to strengthen and grow the floral industry, and that's why I like to go to the eMerge Americas event. It is a premier tech event held in Miami. I hoped to find startups and innovative products or business ideas that might translate well to the floral industry and decided to ask them a few questions.

Before we move on to the interviews, let's first look at the eMerge Americas event.

eMerge Americas: The Premier Tech Event in Miami

eMerge Americas is a venture-backed platform that aims to transform Miami into a global tech hub. Its global tech conference is held annually at the Miami Beach Convention Center and was launched in 2014 as its signature event.

The event attracts thousands of attendees from over 40 countries and showcases new tech startups that could potentially advance the tech scene and help in different sectors in the community. The group of startups competes in an award for \$400,000 in investments.

For its 2022 Miami Beach Convention, which I visited, the featured speakers included Peter Smith, the co-founder and CEO of Blockchain, Alexis Ohanian, the co-founder of Reddit, and the mayor of Miami, Francis Xavier Suarez.

Interesting agendas included the art of selling, the future of tech, venture capital, and the cultural landscape of communities.

It was interesting to see how different tech sectors were merging together in this convention. One prominent agenda was carbon footprint reduction and how many startups were focused on it.



The Earth Says: I spoke with Esteban Vasquez Montano of “The Earth Says” is focused on optimizing the pollination process as it is important for producing fruits and most importantly seeds. According to Vasquez, bees are the main organism used to propagate this process, and they are dying at an alarming rate. The Earth Says develops unique technological solutions that speed up the pollination process and, in turn, crop production.

The company has developed two technologies that can increase crop production by 10%. The first is the Beehive Diagnosis, used to determine if the beehive is optimal to pollinate or not, and the second is a system to monitor the hives using IOT devices to ensure productivity and optimization.

When asked how such technologies can help the fresh-cut flower industry, Vasquez replied, “We work to deliver optimal beehives with our technologies for farmers to propel the pollination process and increase seed production and produce an optimal yield; that can help the floral industry.”

This makes sense to me- if you optimize beehives, you optimize production and output. It would be interesting to see what a seed producing company could do with this.



Enrique Bautista, Agro Products EBA: Agro Products EBA are the major organic growers of avocado, macadamia, and other vegetables in Mexico. They want to create a substitute for chemical fertilizers and reduce the harmful impact on animals, humans, and the environment.

After a lot of research, Agro Products EBA has developed a 100% organic fertilizer. They did so by recovering wasted fish materials and transforming them through hydrolysis. The resulting liquid is concentrated, purified, and enriched with natural minerals and organic supplements, which can be used as a fertilizer in every agricultural sector. They aim to contribute to the world's health by creating an organic, effective, and productive fertilizer.

As with vegetables and fruits, this fertilizer may improve and speed up the production of flowers and ensure sustainability.

I am not a fertilizer expert or a grower but if a product like this is an innovation or can be a better product compared to what is out there than it is worth a look.



Christina Stavridi, Carbon Limit: The world is moving toward greener solutions, exactly what Carbon Limit is doing. They have developed a unique additive formula that allows concrete to actively attract and absorb CO₂ directly from the air. The CO₂ will then be stored in the concrete safely and permanently.

Originally, their tech started from a sister company, Smog Armor. It produces greener and sustainable materials like paints, cardboard boxes, etc. Formerly, they have developed paint with zero toxins, no VOCs, safe for pets and children, and dries quickly. Most importantly, the paint absorbs all air pollution, including CO₂ and formaldehyde. They aim to integrate a similar form of this technology into cardboard, ink, and other materials.

This product is interesting in any industry where carbon monoxide can be a factor in affecting the quality of the product. An idea would be to coat the inside of flower boxes with this CO₂ absorbing paint- it would have to be tested of course and ran through a few trails- I am curios.



Miguel Fernandez, Imageryst: Imageryst uses machine-learning and AI to access drone and satellite imagery and use it to deliver geospatial insights. This data can be used for industries related to natural resources and urban planning. They work with top EO data providers to make predictions based on environmental conditions, such as temperature, weather, etc.

They have also used their technology on different farms. They use satellite imagery to calculate and estimate waterlogged areas, temperature, and chemicals in the crops to help farmers make smarter decisions.

They aim to identify high-performance areas and green spaces and manage and understand the impact of climate change on different sectors.

And that is all, folks! It was truly a wonderful experience, and I was excited to find three startups that could relate to the floral industry with the potential to use these innovations to increase flower yield, improve sustainably and increase the vase life of flowers by reducing carbon monoxide in the boxes. I believe in being more curious than judgmental as being judgmental creates roadblocks and curiosity break those roadblocks and turns them into opportunities and innovations.

New Bloom Solutions and **Above All Flowers** believe in supporting startups and entrepreneurship within the flowers industry and we are here to help. For more exciting interviews, innovations and conventions, follow New Bloom Solutions.

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About Sahid Nahim | 

With over two decades of cross-segment experience, Sahid has witnessed the flower industry's metamorphosis first hand. From the introduction of digital commerce, social media, and venture innovation. He founded New Bloom on the firm belief that it is those that best understand each corner of this industry who will be most apt to transforming inefficiencies into innovation—and delivering long-term, sustainable growth.

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