

## Fresh Shot of Capital

Kevin Robinson-Avila / Journal Staff Writer

A fresh, \$1.3 million capital infusion is helping TruTouch Technologies Inc. conduct a global marketing blitz for its newly remodeled intoxication-detection device.

The Albuquerque startup, which formed in 2005, has completed a three-year design and engineering makeover of its intoxication-testing machine. It uses a flash of light on a person's finger to detect the presence of alcohol, eliminating the need for invasive and time-consuming blood, breath or urine tests.

The first 50 units rolled off the production line in late 2012, and the company is now training distributors from the U.S., Europe, Mideast and Asia to market it.

"We'll have 35 distributors worldwide ... leading our efforts to really ramp up sales," said President and CEO Richard Gill. "We started shipping product at the end of December."

To help finance sales and build more units, the company raised another \$1.3 million from private equity investors that had previously backed TruTouch. Since 2005, nearly \$13 million in venture funding has flowed into the company, much of it from the Verge Fund in Albuquerque. Current investment, however, is valued at only \$8.3 million, because a "cram-down" deal in 2009 lowered share value then from \$4.6 million to \$460,000, paving the way for new investors to come in at lower cost.

That allowed TruTouch to overcome some development snags. The company has re-engineered its original bulky devices into a tabletop unit that only requires a finger touch for testing.

Clinical trials conducted by Albuquerque's Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute show the device is effective, achieving intoxication results in seconds, said Verge Fund general partner Dave Durgin.

"We expect sales to accelerate dramatically this year," he said.

TruTouch is targeting the workplace, allowing companies to rapidly test employees for alcohol before they begin shifts. It will lease machines for between \$1,200 and \$2,000 per month, depending on number of employees.

TruTouch has also partnered with TK Holdings Inc. to adapt the detection device as a built-in sensor in automobiles to block ignition when a driver's alcohol levels are too high.

TruTouch is one of four companies spun out from InLight Solutions Inc., which licensed optics technology from Sandia National Laboratories.

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- [Executive's Desk: Capital sources evolve over life of business](#)
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- [Executive's Desk: Investors bring benefits beyond capital](#)
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