

Past Tides

EVENTS AT THE
COVE @ UCI



Orange County Business Journal Innovator of the Year Awards / September 2020

Michael Katz, partner at Maschoff Brennan law firm, presents Martha Montoya, CEO of Wayfinder startup AG Tools, with Orange County Business Journal's Innovator of the Year award during the event's sixth annual celebration. The pre-recorded virtual ceremony features a brief Q&A with each winner.



VC Speaker Series with Unlock Ventures / October 2020

Sanjay Reddy, partner at Unlock Venture Partners, discusses the firm's philosophy, investment criteria and other interesting stories from the Southern California tech ecosystem with Luis Vasquez, UCI Beall Applied Innovation associate director of Venture Collaboration.



UCI Beall Applied Innovation Introduces Event Series: Making Waves: Entrepreneur Conversations

UCI Beall Applied Innovation is launching Making Waves: Entrepreneur Conversations, a new signature event series this year, sponsored by UPS. The Making Waves events will bring successful entrepreneurs from the local community and around the world to the Cove @ UCI to inspire the next great idea.

Each event will feature a speaker delivering either a keynote message or a lively discussion via fireside chat with a moderator or panel of entrepreneurs. These discussions will include stories of how those successful entrepreneurs got started, how they scaled, why they failed and their lessons learned from their experiences.

The Making Waves: Entrepreneur Conversations series will be held virtually for the near future and occur on a quarterly basis. The events are free and open to the public.

The first event was held in December 2020, which featured Leen Kawas, founder and CEO of Athira Pharma, Inc. Read more about this special event in the March 2021 issue of Rising Tide magazine.

Sign up for our newsletter to receive updates about these events and more: innovation.uci.edu/subscribe



All of these events were held over virtual platforms and did not take place at the Cove @ UCI. All photos on this spread are screenshots from virtual events.

The Cove takes great care in ensuring a safe environment for tenants and visitors. COVID-19 safety measures include requiring face coverings and temperature checks, providing hand sanitation stations, designated workstations, and displaying public health signs throughout to encourage cleanliness and social distancing.



Since the Cove @ UCI has been open, an average of 40,000-50,000 people have come through the building per year in support of innovation, entrepreneurship, industry and the community. Take part! Check out and register for upcoming events: innovation.uci.edu/events



AG Tools optimizes the food and agricultural supply chain by providing real-time data analytics to farmers, buyers and shippers.

SUCCESS STORY

AG Tools Stacks Up Successes

THE STARTUP THAT HELPS USERS MANAGE MARKET VOLATILITY AND REDUCE FOOD WASTE KEEPS ON GROWING.

2020 proved to be a challenging year for many. Despite this, some companies were able to be successful amid the pandemic. One such company that found success was Wayfinder* startup AG Tools, the software company that brings big data, analytics, reports and forecasts to the agriculture supply chain.

Led by CEO and founder Martha Montoya, the startup not only managed to make headway, but also continually hit new milestones, won awards and attracted attention from discerning organizations.

In 2020 alone, AG Tools won first place and a \$200,000 investment at the San Diego Angel Conference, first place and \$125,000 at the Flywheel Investment Conference, and had their software validated and listed on the Microsoft Azure Marketplace, which lends the company more credibility with corporate America and overseas. The company also won “Best Investment Opportunity” in Next Wave Impact’s Founders of Color Showcase, received an Investor Judges’ Award at Octane’s Tech Innovation Forum, and was recognized as one of 20 winners from a pool of more than 4,500 companies in Pepperdine University’s Most Fundable Companies competition.



EVERY SINGLE COMPETITION AND AWARD REQUIRE US TO STOP AND REVIEW WHAT WE ARE DOING AND ADJUST OR KEEP ON SOME OF THE PATHS WE HAVE CHOSEN.”

– Martha Montoya

“Today, everyone, including non-industry stakeholders, understand the terminology, which is our core competency,” said Montoya. “On top of that, people watched news stories about food waste happening in this country, not only across the globe. It is allowing us to move faster on both investment and customer acquisition.”

Montoya herself was the recipient of a number of awards, including the Rising Star Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the Women’s Venture Summit and an Innovator of the Year Award at the Orange County Business Journal Innovator Awards, both of which occurred within days of each other in September.

Montoya likens the pursuit of competitions and programs to training for a major sports tournament and recommends it to other entrepreneurs.

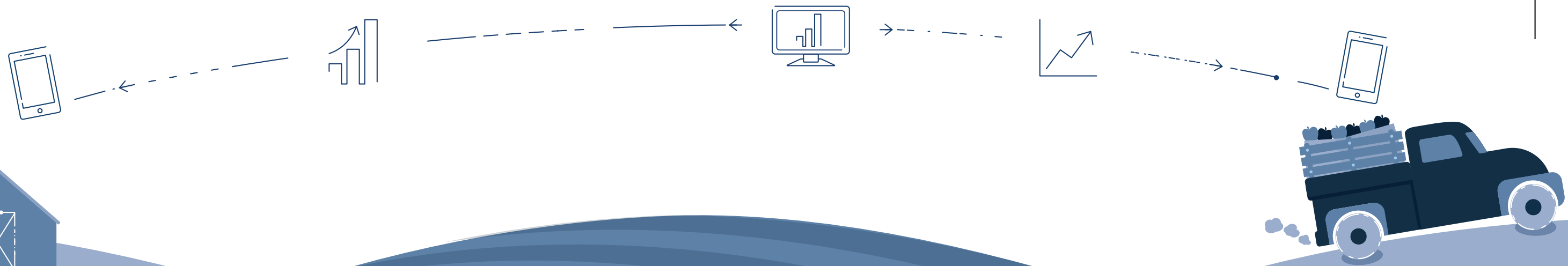
“You need to keep practicing at every single tournament you can get in to,” said Montoya. “On top of that you get amazing mentors, comments and analysis that makes you only better. It requires a high element of time management and discipline so it is not for everyone, but if you can do it, you must do it.”

AG Tools’ future plans involve focusing on programs that open doors to new potential customers and prepare the company for the long term. They also have plans to further develop their intellectual property before making a global push with their technology.

Learn more about AG Tools at agtechtools.com ///

AG Tools was also accepted into accelerators, incubators and other like-minded programs that will aid the company even further. Programs include Women in Cloud, a community-led economic development organization; the Techstars Farm to Fork Accelerator, which focuses on companies taking on major food system challenges; the Larta Institute, an accelerator that caters to companies in the agriculture industry; an agtech accelerator program in North Dakota through Plug and Play, an innovation platform; and the Boston Consulting Group and Msaada Partners-backed Majira Project, which provides resources to post-accelerator companies that help underserved communities.

The increased buzz, according to Montoya, is in large part due to pandemic-related supply chain challenges that many Americans were finally able to witness firsthand – something she’s been entrenched in for over 25 years.



*Resources Mentioned in this Story

Wayfinder
innovation.uci.edu/programs/wayfinder-incubator