

## CASE STUDY



CAMPAIGN TITLE:	Lemnos Labs Redefines Hardware
CATEGORIES:	Company Launch, Influencers, Influencer Events, Flagship Story, Hardware, Investor Targeting, Media Relations, Robotics
DURATION OF CAMPAIGN:	September 2012 - February 2013

## Background

Founded in 2011, [Lemnos Labs](#) is a hardware incubator that kick-starts technologies to solve real-world problems. The company equips hardware startups with the space, tools and network they need to bring high-value products to market and attract investors. Lemnos Labs enlisted Inner Circle Labs to raise awareness of the company's role in the hardware industry, attract emerging hardware startups to the program and garner attention from high-profile investors.



## Objective

Inner Circle Labs focused on developing lasting relationships with media in the technology and hardware industries. The overarching goal of our campaign was to expose Lemnos Labs to the hardware/tech audience in Silicon Valley and establish the incubator as the go-to source for insight on the state of hardware. We wanted to make Lemnos Labs a star with media and the hardware community in order to increase the number of strong applicants and investing dollars in the program. Inner Circle Labs first identified the incubator's warehouse (aka "the forge") and portfolio as key entities to highlight in conversations with top-tier media and industry influencers.

## Strategies

- 1. Redefine hardware:** Use the diversity of the companies in the Lemnos program – from aerospace to coffee machines – to redefine hardware.
- 2. Engage non-hardware-centric press:** conduct tours of the forge for general discussions about the industry and a look at "companies that actually build things".
- 3. Highlight the role of the incubator:** Focus on the Lemnos program, showcase its role in the life of a hardware startup, set Lemnos apart from how all other incubators work.
- 4. Establish Lemnos' voice:** Bring Lemnos' insights into stories around the development of hardware, exposing it as a growth industry.

## Tactics

Inner Circle Labs developed a high-impact campaign that included a media dinner, meet-and-greets with new targets and coverage for announcements about Lemnos Labs companies:

- **Tackle hardware buffs:** We identified contacts with a focus on hardware to establish Lemnos as an industry resource, encouraging mentions in all relevant stories. We positioned Lemnos Labs as a "must-have" resource for industry articles covering the growth of Silicon Valley – hardware and beyond.
- **Stand apart from the rest:** We emphasized the resources that Lemnos Labs provided that other incubators did not (tools, on-site advisory, space to work, etc.) by hosting tours of the forge. Coverage of the offering would drive a consistent stream of community interest and incoming portfolio companies.
- **Keep it casual:** To make the entrepreneurial expertise of co-founders Jeremy Conrad and Helen Zelman clear, we hosted dinners at their home (the mansion featured in the first season of Top Chef, which they rent with other startup founders). After a tour, a home-cooked meal was served while guests (including top-tier reporters, VCs and influencers) discussed the hardware industry and its future. The natural conversation drove personal interest in Lemnos and the portfolio.
- **Redefine hardware:** Through industry coverage and networking, we positioned Lemnos as an integral part of the hardware industry's growing success. Press meetings held at the forge let reporters naturally meet interesting companies outside their area of interest – inspiring them beyond the initial storyline and driving a broader perspective on hardware.
- **Keep Lemnos at the center of the conversation:** We examined the strengths of each Lemnos company and used them to highlight hardware's diversity. To ensure that coverage of an incubator company benefited Lemnos as a whole, we hosted incubator-wide media training to explain how to convey the overall Lemnos story when a specific company was speaking with press.



## Results

We pursued a flagship story exclusively with Bloomberg Businessweek. We weren't prepping for an everyday meeting either: hardware needs to be seen, touched and experienced, so instead of a meeting at the closest coffee shop, we invited Doug MacMillan and Ashlee Vance to visit the forge so we could immerse them in the Lemnos culture. This also allowed us to bring them face-to-face with the hardware the companies and what they were building. Those initial introductions led to a flagship print story in Bloomberg Businessweek which successfully established industry credibility for Lemnos Labs. We continued to use announcements from Lemnos companies to build relationships with new reporters, based on their personal interests. We offered exclusive access to TechCrunch, VentureBeat and GigaOM – outlets that carry weight with investors and potential partners.



Within the month of April alone, we:

- Placed seven feature articles
- Generated 13 pieces of media interest
- Secured nine top-tier media briefings



These results generated inbound interest from:

- At least nine reporters
- Four VCs
- More than 12 potential portfolio companies (Pantry Labs & Sproutling joined Lemnos Labs)

During the course of the six month program, we locked down more than 35 original pieces of coverage and scheduled over 23 phone and in-person briefings. The Lemnos founder commented specifically on the overwhelming response he received following the founding story with Bloomberg:

"The article has only been up a few hours and the response from my network has been incredible (I swear I could get engaged tomorrow and less people would care). Lemnos isn't an easy-to-explain company and it's been amazing to work with you guys to help hone our message and get our vision out there. It's rare to find partner who understands us and is as passionate about hardware, as we are, but every time we interact I'm reminded of how much you care."

- Jeremy Conrad, Lemnos Labs co-founder

The work we did for Lemnos Labs helped the company reach their business goals, including but not limited to:

- **Interest from investors:** Lemnos Labs co-founders reported that after the Bloomberg and TechCrunch articles went live, investors reached out and set up calls to discuss getting involved in their next fundraising round.
- **Inquiries from potential new companies:** Lemnos has seen an increase in hardware companies reaching out for consideration in their program, citing news stories as how they found out about the company's offerings. Lemnos Labs has grown its portfolio from three to 11 companies since our partnership began and has also brought their EIR in-house as a full-time partner to manage their newfound growth and act as a spokesperson for the influx of media requests.
- **Clear communication around Lemnos Labs' role with its program companies:** After the incubator-wide media training, we saw a jump in stories that included Lemnos Labs messaging – from 70 to 90 percent. This drove home that hardware startups who want to succeed are given the best shot with solid support – like one can find from Lemnos Labs.

## Coverage Sampling:



- Entrepreneur, The Humanoid League (May 2013 print edition)
- PandoDaily, [Is Grand St. the distribution engine the hardware movement has been looking for?](#)
- San Francisco Business Times, [Hardware retools](#) (also in print)
- VentureBeat, [Revenge of the Nerds: Hardware claims its place in startup society](#)
- Wall Street Journal, [How Crowdfunded Hardware Makers Hit It Big In 2012](#)
- WIRED, [Hardware, the Ugly stepchild of Venture Capital, Is Having a Glamour Moment](#)
- Bloomberg Businessweek, [Lemnos: A Silicon Valley Incubator for Hardware](#) (also in print) and [Burger-Making Robots Get Backers Favoring Tools Over Apps: Tech](#)
- GigaOM, [Exclusive: Hardware hack space Lemnos Labs gets new startups and new partner](#)
- WIRED, [How a Garage-Based Incubator Is Fueling the Hardware Revolution](#)
- GigaOM, [Podcast: How the internet of things may make parents less worried but more neurotic](#)
- TechCrunch, [NanoSatisfi Raises \\$1.2M To Disrupt The Aerospace Industry With Small, Affordable Satellites](#)