

PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

Entrepreneur: Naya Energy helps companies save energy costs through data, IoT

HAYLEY RINGLE

Reporter | Phoenix Business Journal

With a background in data analytics, serial entrepreneur Ketan Patel started Naya Energy LLC to help companies reduce energy costs using telemetry data and the Internet of Things.

The challenge Patel sought to solve: He was told virtualizing software to talk to multiple IoT devices couldn't be done in a way that could be modular.

While advising Phoenix-based Akida, an energy IoT device manufacturer, Patel decided to start his own company around the idea. Akida ended up being his first customer.

"The key to IoT is marrying what matters to you," said Patel, who has an electrical engineering degree from Johns Hopkins University. "Our goal is to take commercial energy usage and make it actionable. The goal is to look at energy data in real time to optimize and reduce energy costs."

Naya Energy's customers include commercial property owners, such as hotels, warehouses, office buildings and apartment complexes.

Companies are notified through trademarked "Nayaalerts" notifications when changes need to be made. They can make the changes themselves, or Naya Energy can remotely make the changes through various IoT devices.

It's patented and trademarked "Nayalytics" tracks patterns used to identify any issues.

Patel started Naya Energy in 2011 and spent four years building the software by reassembling a team from his previous companies.

"We've been in stealth mode for the last

Ketan Patel is the CEO of Naya Energy, a startup that recently won the AZ Commerce Authority's Innovation Challenge.



JIM POULIN

five years," he said. "It's better to be careful when disrupting an industry."

The company spent \$2.2 million to develop the software, half of which was self-funded by Patel and half from friends and family.

Patel's most successful exit was selling his company Lead Karma to Bankrate Inc. in 2010 for the \$50 million-plus deal. The founders retained more than 50 percent in the Massachusetts company sale, he said.

Naya Energy was one of six winners in the Arizona Commerce Authority's spring 2017 Arizona Innovation Challenge in June. The company will receive \$250,000 from the challenge if they meet certain milestones.

The company's first paying customers were mostly in Asia in 2014, until Patel moved its focus back to the U.S. in September

2015 when Salt River Project made its net metering rate change. Now, they have 30 Arizona customers.

The 14-employee company plans to hire another five workers by the end of the year. Most of his employees are based around the world because they're pulled from different teams he's worked with in the past.

Naya Energy became profitable in April. Last year, the company made \$168,000, and this year is on track for \$1 million in revenue.

Patel moved to Scottsdale in 2009 with his wife and two kids after falling in love with the area during a family vacation. He grew up near Boston and was born in Kenya. He moved to the U.S. at 4 years old.

"I don't think there's a better place to start a company than Arizona," said Patel, a founding board member of Seed Spot.