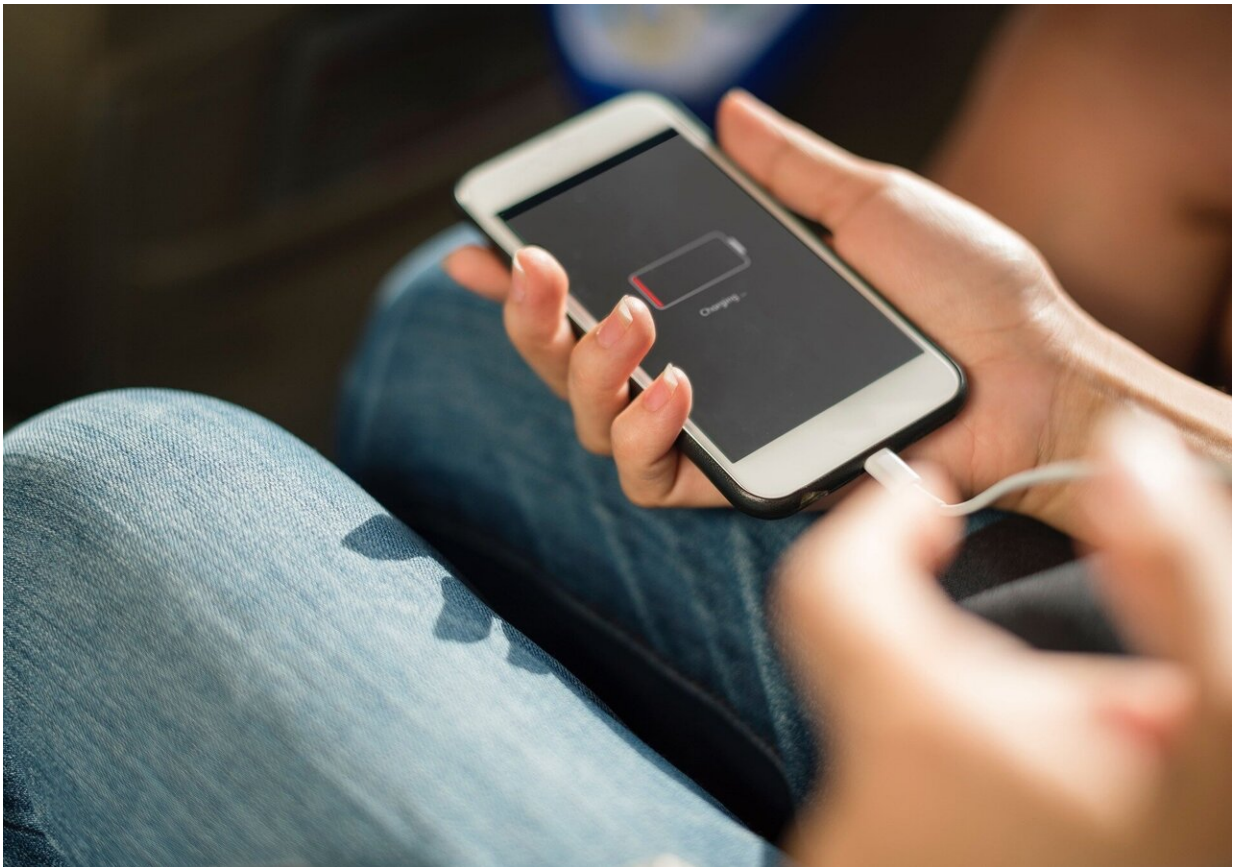


Everywhere you go, there's Wi-Fi. What if there was also a phone charger?

August 16 2019, by Maya Lora, Miami Herald



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

In three years, Freddy Sidi has proved that it is indeed worth the money to advertise on phone chargers.

Back in April 2016, Sidi and Chargello co-founder Johnny Bosche installed their first high-speed charging unit in a riverside Miami restaurant. Two years later, Chargello's units are in 6,000 fixed locations in 25 countries around the world, with 300 in Miami alone, said Sidi.

Sidi has his eyes on the continued expansion of the Chargello brand.

"We want to be well known and kind of a household brand," Sidi said. "We want to create a culture of asking for a charger everywhere you go and (one) becoming available for you, everywhere you go."

Bosche now works internationally for Chargello and travels between Miami and Doha, Qatar, said Sidi.

Shortly after launching, Chargello was chosen as an Endeavor Entrepreneur, gaining access to Endeavor's mentorship and capital. Chargello's big ideas helped them win the honor.

"Batteries in our smart devices cannot keep up with the needs of our modern day life, so they're fixing that problem," said Juan Pablo D'Alessandro, Endeavor's manager of entrepreneur selection and growth.

Chargello is trying to fix the problem in a way "that no one else was doing," D'Alessandro said.

There's more to Chargello's plan than just providing a high-speed charge. The company also wants to deliver advertising messages.

That's part of the reason Chargello's batteries are large and bulky. The design serves three goals: providing a much faster charge than a traditional wall outlet, keeping a customer from easily making off with the [charger](#) and providing a large, clean space for advertisers.

The design doesn't seem to bother customers.

At the 1 Hotel on South Beach, customers often use the property's 50 chargers, said Director of Outdoor Dining Ramsey Pimentel.

"The chargers are great and the perfect way for guests to charge their phones without having to leave their devices with our staff," Pimentel said in an email.

Since launching, Sidi said Chargello has secured several large advertisers, including American Express, Disney, Mastercard and Bacardi.

And Carnival Cruise Line is testing the batteries in bars on some of its ships, said Carnival spokesperson Vance Gulliksen.

Venues like restaurants, tattoo shops, car dealerships and banks can receive Chargello units for free, as long as Chargello has secured an advertiser for those units. But for a \$200-per-kit fee, venues can choose to both use the chargers and deploy their own advertising.

Sidi's team developed the battery units, chargers and magnetic cables for the Chargello units, which only work together. But Sidi sees Chargello's major competition as other advertising avenues, not other battery and [technology companies](#). Chargello's strategy: target the likeliest customers by matching the message to the location, such as placing chargers advertising Pampers in neonatal care and OBGYN offices.

"No one is watching TV; no one is reading the magazine anymore; everyone is on their phone. So we have a very good pitch for doctors' offices: keep your patients patient," Sidi said. "And for Pampers, you know, nine months with a [pregnant woman](#), who had a great branding experience—there's nowhere better for them to advertise."

Chargello is opening an office in New York and will deploy 10,000 batteries into the market in the next three months, Sidi said. The company plans to open additional offices in Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas and Las Vegas before the end of the year, for a total of 20 U.S. markets by mid-2020.

Chargello brought in over \$3 million in revenue last year, said Sidi. He anticipates that figure will double this year. And he said Miami is already running profitably.

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Chargello

Founders: Johnny Bosche and Freddy Sidi

CEO: Freddy Sidi

Employees: 300

Founded: 2016

Based: Miami

Revenue: \$3 million in 2018

Milestones: Endeavor Entrepreneur

Website: chargello.com

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