

Madison digital coupon company Hopster acquired

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By Kathleen Gallagher of the Journal Sentinel

Inmar Inc., a North Carolina processor of transactions for retailers, manufacturers and others, said Monday it has acquired Hopster Inc., a Middleton digital coupon provider, for an undisclosed price. Hopster's acquisition will result in no job losses, the company's top executive said, and it will provide an opportunity to expand Inmar's Wisconsin office.

Hopster gives Inmar a technology it didn't have, while Inmar brings relationships with thousands of brands Hopster can sell its services to, said Brian Wiegand, who founded and runs Hopster. That means Wiegand will have the opportunity to scale up Hopster's business and expand a Madison-area office for Inman, he said. "I could potentially grow the Madison office," Wiegand said. Inmar will keep all 16 of Hopster's employees in the Middleton office, a company spokeswoman said. Wiegand founded Hopster in 2012 with the idea of taking coupons out of the newspaper and putting them online. The company has a digital media platform that helps customers distribute print-at-home coupons while controlling distribution. The start-up also helps consumer product brands to identify individual shoppers and measure how well online marketing campaigns are affecting in-store sales. Hopster is the fifth company Wiegand has started. His biggest previous success, Jellyfish.com, was acquired less than two years into its existence by Microsoft Corp. for a reported \$50 million. Wiegand also co-founded Alice.com; BizFilings, which was acquired by Wolters Kluwer; and NameProtect, which was acquired by Corporation Services Co. Wiegand worked for Microsoft for about seven months after the Jellyfish acquisition, but was unable to build its presence in Madison.

"It was such a big company, it was hard to be successful as an entrepreneur," he said. Privately held Inmar has about 4,300 employees, Wiegand said. The company calls itself the leading processor of digital coupons, having processed more than 100 million of them. The Hopster acquisition adds print-at-home as well as mobile and social couponing to Inmar's offerings, the company said.

About Kathleen Gallagher

Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Kathleen Gallagher covers technology, entrepreneurship, and investments.