

# With B-hyve tech and Platinum Equity support, Orbit is 'changing the way the world waters'

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In April, the New York Times published a product review of 13 different smart sprinkler controllers, timely information with the country seeing a surge in do-it-yourself projects related to stay-at-home orders because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The controllers are designed to help customers from underground irrigation systems by monitoring local weather and soil conditions, improving landscapes and conserving water.

The Times gave the B-hyve smart indoor sprinkler controller top honors when it comes to value.

“(It) is the least expensive smart controller you can buy and yet offers many of the features of our top picks, including smart scheduling, a nice app, and an innovative, slim design,” the author wrote.

It sells for \$64 on Amazon; two competitors with favorable reviews in the Times piece sell for \$140 or more.

Offering high quality technology at an attractive price point was a top priority when Orbit started developing the B-hyve technology a few years ago.

The tech allows homeowners and contractors to bring solutions to tending lawns and gardens while also conserving water at an affordable price, something the media has noticed the past few years, particularly at the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

“We are supplementing what Mother Nature does with rainfall,” Orbit CEO Stuart Eyring told Platinum Equity recently. “We’re letting Mother Nature do everything she can do to water and we make up for the rest of it.

“We’re changing the way the world waters.”

Based in Salt Lake City, Orbit is a leading provider of irrigation systems and related products for the residential home improvement markets. In business for nearly 50 years, Orbit has developed a global distribution network with products available in more than 40 countries.

Orbit’s longstanding brand coupled with its leading B-hyve smart technology platform made it an attractive investment when the family-owned company was sold to Platinum last year.

And as the company nears the introduction of its newest product, the B-hyve XR, the potential for growth is readily apparent.

“B-hyve continues to empower homeowners through high quality irrigation technology at attractive prices,” Platinum Equity senior associate Derek Green said. “It sits at the intersection of sustainability through water conservation, the expanding role of smart technology within the home, and a continued emphasis on outdoor living”.

### **‘Founded on a value proposition’**

Orbit teased the B-hyve XR at the CES in January before COVID-19 started dominating news alerts.

Several tech websites wrote positive reviews.

While it resembles a traditional indoor timer, it has a weather resistant design that can be mounted either indoors or outdoors.

It can control up to 16 zones – an upgrade from 12 zones with previous tech - so it will be able to handle larger residential

properties. It also includes three hexagonal screens on the face of the timer that provide current information about the weather, zone information, manual watering and more.

It contains both 2.4 Ghz and 5.0 Ghz radios to make connecting with home networks easier and more dependable. It also includes a 900 Mhz radio that will allow future connectivity with other B-Hyve battery-operated devices in the yard.

Pricing starts at \$149 and is scheduled to be available this fall.

“We’re a company that’s been founded on a value proposition that makes watering accessible to people who don’t want to pay a contractor or can’t afford a contractor,” Orbit executive vice president Mitch Lord said.

“Value is ingrained in the Orbit brand and ease of use is a vital part of that. We want to make it easy enough for anyone to do it.

“You don’t need to pay a professional to come in and do it for you.”

Sunset Magazine, a lifestyle publication focused mainly on the western U.S., wrote: “Orbit’s ... new B-hyve XR is a powerful new addition to the connected garden game. ... It also has easier setup and installation than past models, simpler controls, and has a stylish new exterior.”

Orbit prides itself on offering solutions ranging from the low-tech garden hose connected to a faucet to the high-tech B-hyve capable of measuring weather data and adjusting output for rainfall totals.

But the tech has other utility. States and municipalities offer rebates to consumers

who purchase tech that promotes water conservation. B-hyve technology can lead up to a 50 percent reduction in water usage, according to Orbit officials.

Orbit also announced the B-hyve smart flood sensor at CES. It’s designed to warn homeowners to flood hazards, notifying consumers of the presence of water next to a hot water heater or toilet. It can be placed outdoors and works with B-hyve controllers.

There is potential with large scale commercial and agriculture uses. Orbit recently purchased Bond Manufacturing’s garden business which extends Orbit’s product and account portfolios.

Such exploration is encouraged by Platinum.

“Platinum has helped us to sharpen our focus so that we ensure that B-hyve elevates our entire Orbit lineup and with also with Platinum’s support, making sure we have broader customers and a broader portfolio of products,” Eyring said.