

## Vanguard Media Group Media Watch

Date: June 15 -21, 2007

Title: Forum links entrepreneurs, venture capitalists

Ad Value: \$1,500

In Business Las Vegas | June 15-21, 2007 29

## Forum links entrepreneurs, venture capitalists

By Stephanie Tavares / STAFF WRITER

Entrepreneurs from around the globe descended on Henderson recently to present their business concepts and convince investors and venture capitalists to fork over some serious dough.

The 2007 Vegas Venture Forum, held earlier this spring at the Green Valley Ranch conference center, brought dozens of investors and entrepreneurs together for two days of presentations, networking and competition.

The object of the forum was to support emerging businesses, attract promising business ventures to Southern Nevada and to support those already here. It was organized by the Technology Business Alliance of Nevada, Golden Capital Network, Vegas Valley Angels and Nevada's Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology.

The turnout for this year's event was larger than any previous year, and organizers said they were pleased with how the event played out.

"From my perspective I thought it was very successful," TBAN President Russ Ketchum said. "We had a lot of people show up last minute who we weren't expecting, more than we had anticipated and more than we had pre-sold. I think it went off very well. We had a lot of good companies presenting and a lot of positive feedback from the attendees that found a lot of value to what they saw."

The two-day event included seminars, short and long presentations, a business plan competition and several opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs to network.

"I've been involved with the Vegas Venture forum since the beginning and we are most excited for this year's program," said Vegas Valley Angels Chairman Mike Ballard.

The business plan competition winners were announced at the very end of day two. From a field of about 30 competitors and 10 semifinalists, DSX Therapeutics, based in North Las Vegas, was named best Nevada-based business and Superquad of Roseville, Calif., was named best overall business.

DSX Therapeutics has developed a range of patented products that will allow doctors to rapidly diagnose and, for the first time, effectively

treat severe sepsis and other inflammatory disorders. Superquad LLC manufactures and sells a driving and braking system for manual wheelchairs called a Wjiiit, which enables elderly or weak manual wheelchair users to customize their chairs for easier use.

Both companies were expected to get significant investment from investors at the event, following due diligence periods.

Ketchum said the quality of presentations this year are a marked improvement from years past. He said that investors and entrepreneurs this year really understood the potential of the forum.

"I thought there was a pretty good variety and I thought the quality of the presenters was superb," Ketchum said. "They're starting to realize that if they do a good job presenting at the

forum there's a good chance we'll get the funding they need. They have started taking the forum seriously and realizing it's a great medium to get their companies out there and get some exposure."

And he expects the forum to only get bigger and better in the future. Ketchum said the forum this year has already created momentum for next year's event and that someday down the line, they may have to start turning people away.

"We're getting a lot of good feedback, a lot of interested parties and interested investors," Ketchum said. "So we certainly expect this to grow and to become a greater force in Nevada as a test bed for new companies. Which is really what we're shooting for."



## What not to say

Bill Reichert, managing director of Garage Technology Ventures, described how his experience as a former entrepreneur put him in a unique position to spot the empty buzzwords and flaws in venture capital presentations. In an opening-night session, he advised entrepreneurs to resist the temptation to fill presentations with empty phrases, exaggerations and outright lies in the hope of impressing potential investors.

"We realized there was a group of phrases that kept coming up and the more we heard them the less credible they sounded," Reichert said.

1. Our projections are conservative.  
"Of course they're not conservative. No one believes they are conservative," Reichert said. "And why would you want to give conservative numbers? You want to project success."

2. Our market is a \$56 billion market.  
"If you were going for that, you'd have no luck. It's too big," Reichert said. "You're going for a niche within that market."

3. Our contract with [insert big company] will be signed next week. "Never promise a contract will be signed before it's actually signed," Reichert advised. "Surprise us with good news."

4. If we only sell 40 percent of the company we'll still have control. "As soon as you sell stock you have a fiduciary responsibility to those shareholders and if you are taking on angel-type investors they are going to expect to have input," Reichert said. "Don't try to fool yourself."

5. There's no competition in our space. That might be because there is no demand for your product, Reichert pointed out. This is a bad phrase to use because it begs too many questions.

6. We've assembled a world-class team. "You may have some extremely talented people with incredible abilities, but you probably don't have a world class team. That takes time," he said. "Tell them that you're competent and good enough for now. There are very few Bill Gates out there. Chances are you are not one of them."

7. Our sales cycle is three to six months. "Know your numbers," Reichert advised. "Of course your first three sales were fast. You'll eventually have someone who takes a year to buy and that will change your average. It takes a long time to have accurate projections. You have to really know the business well in order to make accurate projections."