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Duff on Hospitality Law

Highlights from 2011 ZINO Zillionaire Investment Forum September 13, 2011

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I know. I know. Here it is the end of September and I am only now posting details on the 2011 ZINO Zillionaire Investment Forum that occurred weeks ago. What can I say, it is fall conference season and the many seminars, conferences, panels and presentations scheduled for the months of September, October, November and December are taking their toll. That said, I wanted to take the time to share highlights from this terrific all day investment forum put on by our friends at ZINO at Seattle's Museum of History and Industry.

For those of you not familiar with ZINO, the organization was founded in 2005 as a membership network of Seattle angel investors. We became involved last year after receiving an invitation to attend a ZINO investment forum dedicated to the hospitality industry. Impressed by the forum, the presenting companies and the investors participating (and following a little arm twisting by the wonderful ZINO marketing director, Mary Holmes), we became sponsors of ZINO and ZINO's efforts in the hospitality arena.

The Zillionaire Investment Forum is one of several events held by ZINO each year. This year's Forum included presentations by 30 early stage and startup companies seeking funding. The Forum's opening session, entitled "Hospitality, Food and Travel" featured a brief introductory discussion by a panel of well-known local hospitality experts and presentations by five companies in the hospitality industry. I had the distinct pleasure of presenting the opening session and moderating the discussion among panelists Kurt Dammeier of Sugar Mountain Capital, Howard S. Wright III of SH Worldwide, Bob Seidel, and successful chef and restaurateur Tom Douglas. Topics covered during our opening discussion included French toast (apparently the impetus behind Kurt's foray into food and cooking), birth control (yes, birth control does have a connection to Tom Douglas' path to celebrity chef status), Tibetan chefs, food trucks, concept development and the pros and cons of using money from friends and family to fund initial startups. As you might imagine, the discussion was lively and entertaining.

Following the panel discussion, the following five companies presented their company and business plan:

- BeDynamic
- Prosperity Organic Foods, Inc.
- Unicorn Booty
- Your Local Market
- Thrive

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Each of the company's presentations was well received and elicited numerous questions from our panel and attending investors. In fact, Prosperity Organic Foods, Inc. was recently announced as one of the Forum's six fund finalists and awaits word on whether it will be the recipient of funding from ZINO. Congratulations to Prosperity Organic Foods, Inc. and all of the presenting hospitality companies.

If you would like more information about ZINO or details about presenting at the next ZINO investment forum, please let me know.

Posted in Conference Notes, Food and Beverage

Tagged as BeDynamic, Cairncross, Prosperity Organic Foods, Seidel, SH Worldwide, Sugar Mountain Capital, Thrive, Tom Douglas, Unicorn Booty, Your Local Market, ZINO Society, ZINO Zillionaire Investment Forum

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