

Money is available for those willing to work for it

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by [Pamela Griner Leavy](#)

Heads up to technology businesses seeking investors.

People have started looking at deals again, said John McDonald III, managing director and co-founder of Hyde Park Capital Partners LLC in Tampa.

McDonald served on a panel March 20 during the Tampa Bay Technology Forum's "What's Ahead for Tampa Bay's Tech Industry" breakfast meeting. "We are bullish on prospects for 2002 here and across the country," he told the more than 200 attendees at the Centre Club in Tampa.

Scrutiny dominates the investment mind-set, said McDonald.

"Two guys, their pet dog and a business plan doesn't cut it any more," he said.

McDonald said entrepreneurs need a good elevator speech, a professional executive summary, a good financial model, satisfied customers and a strong management team to draw investment attention.

Additional panelists included: Stewart Bertron, founder of Guide Capital LLC in Tampa; Michael Fountain, director of the Center for Entrepreneurship at the University South Florida; and Kurt Long, chief executive officer at OpenNetwork Technologies Inc. in Clearwater.

Investors can no longer afford deal investments without life capital or proven market needs, Bertron said.

"IPOs (initial public offerings) and acquisitions have generally dried up," he said. "The end of the food chain is not there."

Fountain told attendees there was more than \$100 billion available in pent-up investment capital for people interested in bioinformatics, a blend of biotechnology and software development.

Web services are key from an information technology perspective, said Long. The next "big thing" is not just putting Web sites on the Internet but developing how businesses exchange information and documents via computer transactions.

Fortress Technologies Inc., an Oldsmar-based network security firm, and managed security firm CastleGarde Inc. in Tampa, made company presentations during the meeting.

For more information, logon to the Tampa Bay Technology Forum Web site at <http://www.tbtf.org>.

Working, hiring, available

The "Pure and Shameless" networking social hosted by Fritz Eichelberger, client executive at Netigratez Inc. in Clearwater, drew some nontechnology drop-in guests March 21 at Kahunaville in Tampa's International Plaza.

The restaurant/surfer theme bar held a Singles Gourmet event that same night. Pure and Shameless attendees wore name tags detailing employment (or nonemployment) status with many tags stating "available."

Some Single Gourmet guests mistakenly entered the technology event and said they thought "available" meant ready for dating.

Tech north

The Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted its Chamber Technology Forum charter membership meeting on March 22.

Co-chairs were Ron Barnwell, executive director of the chamber business assistance council, and Sue Englander, president of EEI/Mod-Tech Inc. in Clearwater. Among those attending were: Patricia Rowell, St. Petersburg College provost; Edgar Benevente, CEO of Tech-Link Solutions LLC in Clearwater; Fred Rodgers, technology coordinator at Pinellas Technical Education Centers in Clearwater; and Chad Clark, controller at Integrated Services Group Inc. in Clearwater.

For more information, call the Chamber at (727) 461-0011.

Upcoming

"Bridging the Great Divide, Moving Your Investor Relations from Tactical to Strategic" is the theme of the National Investor Relations Institute, Central Florida Chapter, April 4 workshop scheduled from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Tampa.

"Latest trends and best practices" are available at the meeting to publicly traded companies, technology-based or otherwise, promoters say.

For more information, call Kathy Call at (941) 594-9705.